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Factors Influencing the Usage of Social Networking Sites

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Abstract

The purpose is to analyse the factors that affect social media usage of undergraduate students. In order to achieve the objectives, 115 undergraduate students were considered using convenience sampling technique. The data was collected using structured questionnaire based on 5 point Likert scale. The statistical analysis techniques namely, descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis were applied. The paper considers the use of top social networking sites with maximum users on Facebook. The study concludes that source of information is the most important factor followed by relationship and skill development factor that affects the use of social media usage among the undergraduate students. The study suggests that social media and networking sites should become transparent in sharing relevant information, and provide valuable content to enhance the users' learning and skill development. The results may lack generalizability due to the use of convenience sampling technique. Therefore, it is suggested for upcoming researchers to test the proposed suggestions further.

Keyword: Social Media, Networking Sites, Users, Factor Analysis, Information

Introduction

Social Media is about holding conversations and sharing experiences with others who are connected through like-minded activities (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997). Social media websites allow users to engage and communicate with different user groups and build relationships. Social networking sites can be described as networks of friends for social or professional interactions (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). In fact, social networking sites have deeply changed the dissemination of information over the internet by making it easier to share and absorb (Akrimi & Khemakhem, 2012).

Kord (2008) revealed that the involvement of students in social media has increased considerably since 2004. Recent studies carried out by some researchers reported that 80–90% of students in the universities are actively involved with at least a particular social media (Gross & Acquisti (2005); Stutzman (2006) and Tufekci (2008)). Boyd (2007) indicated that teenagers and students embraced social media to interact with peers, for information sharing, and to re-formulate their personalities thereby getting their social lives off the ground.

Social networking sites have five individual uses like, meeting new people, entertainment, maintaining relationships, learning about social events, and sharing media (Nyland et al., (2007); Nyland & Near, (2007)). Most students used Facebook for relationship maintenance and not to meet new people (Boogart, 2006). Ivala & Gachago (2012) found that social media platforms such as Facebook and blogs enhance the students' performance. Prestridge (2014) revealed that Twitter supports student's engagement in learning.

The motivators that served as probable independent variables of social network use viz. Facebook are for, information, entertainment, discussion, connect, to shop, gaming, updating , product inquiry, and impression management (Krisanic, 2008). Users should have trust in the social networking sites and subsequently trust in the disseminated information (Buskens, 2002, p16). The present study therefore, is an attempt to categorize the factors influencing undergraduate students in the usage of social networking sites.

Objectives

The aim of the study is to classify factors, influencing the usage of social networking sites by university undergraduate students.

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Methodology

An exploratory research was carried out using survey method. The relevant secondary data has been collected from the journals, websites for building a conceptual base for conducting the research. A questionnaire is prepared using 26 statements including five point Likert-scale ranging from 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree and 5= Strongly agree in the study to analyse the factors affecting the usage of social networking sites. A total sample of 115 final year undergraduate students of Kaziranga University, Jorhat were selected using convenience sampling method. Data were collected from final year undergraduate students by administering and asking the questions from BBA, B.Com and B. Tech students numbering 35, 24 and 56 respectively. The Collected data was then coded, calculated, and analysed using SPSS tools. In the first step, simple statistical tools namely, descriptive statistics and secondly, factor analysis was used in order to analyse interrelationships among the factors.

Analysis and Findings

Data analysis was done using frequency distribution method and comparison was made to identify the social media behaviour of users. Out of 115 respondents, 52.2% of respondents belonged to age group of 20-21 years, followed by 37.4% over 21 Years and 10.4% between 17-19 years. 53% of respondents fall are females and rest 47% are males.

Member of Social Networking Sites

Table I indicates about the respondents' use of social networking sites and engagement with one or multiple networking sites. Data enunciates that maximum number of respondents are engaged in more than two social networking sites that is around one third of sample size.

Table 1: Member of Social Networking Sites

% of Membership of Social Networking Sites	
Member of one networking Site	23.5
Member of two networking Sites	42.6
More than two networking sites	33.9

Source: Primary Data

Uses of Social Networking Sites

Table 2 designated the use of social networking sites such as Facebook is the highest among the respondents (86.1%), followed by Google+ (53.9) and Twitter (20.9%). Conversely, MySpace and Xing have very few users' i.e. 8.7% and 3.5% respectively.

Table 2: Uses of Social Networking Sites

% of respondents using Social Networking Sites	
Facebook	86.1
Google+	53.9
Twitter	20.9
Linkedin	20.0
Myspace	8.7
Xing	3.5

Source: Primary Data

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because the categories overlap.

Classification of Factors

Factor analysis is a data reduction statistical technique that allows simplifying the correlational relationships between the numbers of continuous variables. Exploratory factor analysis is used to identify constructs and investigate relationships among key interval scaled questions regarding motives for choosing a social networking site from 115 respondents. To check the factor, steps such as computation of correlation and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy were considered as follows:

Computation of correlation matrices revealed the existence of sufficient correlation for factor analysis. KMO measure of sampling adequacy for individual variance indicated satisfactory correlation for all the variables (refer Table 3).

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.802
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1383.167
	df	325
	Sig.	.000

KMO measure of sampling adequacy was calculated to test the sampling adequacy. The output value of 0.802 proves sampling adequacy. The overall significance of correlation matrices was tested with Bartlett's test of sphericity and providing support for validity of the factor analysis of data set (refer Table 3).

The KMO value and Bartlett's test of sphericity results show that the data are suitable for factor analysis. Hence, the principal component analysis was employed for extracting the data, which allowed determining the factors underlying the relationships between numbers of variables. Total variation explained suggests that it extracts one factor accounts for 67.184 per cent of variance of the relationship between variables.

However, loading on factors can be either positive or negative. Negative loading shows a variable has an inverse relationship with the rest of the factors. Higher loading emphasized the importance of the factor. But, Comrey (1973:1346) suggested that anything above 0.44 could be considered salient and increased loading is becoming more vital in determining the factor. Loadings found in the research are both positive and negative (refer Table 4).

Table 4: Communalities

Communalities				
	Initial	***Extraction***	***Mean***	***Std. Deviation***
SNSs allow to keep in touch with family members	1	0.773	3.71	1.130
SNSs allow to keep in touch with friends	1	0.737	4.27	.831
SNSs play essential role on learning	1	0.772	3.79	1.013
SNSs help in developing communication skill	1	0.672	3.71	1.176
SNSs provide easily available information	1	0.628	3.97	1.021
SNSs becoming a hobby for people to kill the time	1	0.568	3.96	1.055
SNSs help to communicate with people in a better-way	1	0.682	3.66	1.099
SNSs give you the feeling of face to face conversation	1	0.662	3.21	1.151
SNSs allow to make friends with strangers	1	0.685	3.78	1.090
Privacy policies are effective in SNSs	1	0.772	3.74	1.125
Social networking is important	1	0.603	3.72	.969
SNSs will allow to find a job	1	0.632	3.72	1.022
SNSs will allow to know the updates about others - achievement and activity	1	0.617	4.02	.955
SNS works as reference for successful product purchase	1	0.669	3.72	1.039
SNS gives the information about new product or services	1	0.708	3.95	.926
SNSs allow us to invite people for participation in an event	1	0.633	3.98	.946
SNS helps in conversation about recent activities	1	0.623	4.06	.881
SNS helps people to meet new people	1	0.652	3.85	1.164
SNSs allow people to play game	1	0.729	3.63	1.210
SNS assists in making professional and business contact	1	0.678	3.75	1.115
Advertising in SNS is very annoying	1	0.595	3.43	1.178
Purchased a product or service based on an advertisement on a social networks	1	0.748	3.50	1.087
SNS provides enough opportunity to students to promote themselves and their activity	1	0.774	3.76	.979
SNS reduces the Security	1	0.757	3.66	1.123
SNS makes the information transparent to users	1	0.651	3.74	1.060
SNS requires heavy time to manage the account	1	0.45	3.53	1.216

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation is necessary when extraction technique suggests that there are two or more factors. The rotation of factors is designed to give an idea of how the factors that were initially extracted differ from each other and to provide a

clear picture of which item loads on which factor. There are only seven factors, each having eigenvalue exceeding 1 for social networking sites' users. The eigenvalue for seven factors were 8.028, 1.959, 1.753, 1.627, 1.577, 1.432 and 1.091 respectively. The percentage of the total variance is used as an index to determine how well the total factor solution accounts for what the variables together represent. The index for present solution accounts for 67.184 per cent of the total variations for intentions of choosing a social networking site. The extraction process economizes on number of factors (from twenty six statements to seven factors) while 32.816 per cent information content for factors in the causes of choosing social networking sites have been lost. The percentages of variance for seven factors were 30.878, 7.535, 6.740, 6.260, 6.067, 5.508, and 4.196 respectively. Extraction and retention of seven factors have revealed, the communality 0.773 for variable 1, 0.737 for variable 2, 0.772 for variable 3, and so on (refer Table 4). It indicates that 77.3 per cent of the variance of variable 1 is being captured by the seven extracted factors together. The proportion of variance in any one of the original variables, which is being captured by the extracted factor, is known as communality (Nargundkar 2002). Large communalities indicate that a large number of variance has been accounted for by the factor solution. Varimax rotated factor analytic results give factor influencing the choice of users for the social networking sites (refer Table 5). The seven factors were as follows:

Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component						
	1	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***	***7***
SNS gives the information about new product or services	.783						.255
SNSs allow us to invite people for participation in an event	.711				-.164	.290	
SNS helps in conversation about recent activities	.659	.155			.264	.268	-.104
SNS will allow to know the updates about others - achievement and activity	.628	.348	.261		.137		
SNS works as reference for successful product purchase	.623	.222	.361	.181			.246
SNS will allow to find a job	.607	.115	.182	.267	.321	-.137	.155
Social networking is important	.411	.245	.322		.373	.109	.342
SNS plays essential role on learning	.158	.839		.159			.124
SNSs allow to keep in touch with family members	.139	.735	.264	.294		.179	.146
SNS helps in developing communication skill	.246	.680	.184	.320	.103		
SNSs allow to keep in touch with friends	.232	.587	.496		.233	.103	-.147
SNS reduces the Security	.194	.150	.820	-.124			
SNS makes the information transparent to users	.155		.717	.295			.110
Advertising in SNSs is very annoying			.652	.238	-.118	.238	.178
SNSs becoming a hobby for people to kill the time	.110	.189	.462	.130	.345	.412	
SNSs help to communicate with people in a better-way		.215	.122	.708	.201		-.263
SNS gives you the feeling of face to face conversation	.115	.274		.664	.270		.240
SNS requires heavy time to manage the account	.181		.148	.590	-.116		.165
SNS provides easily available information	.297	.438	.156	.515	.199	.134	
Privacy policies are effective in social networking sites	.126	-.192	.164	.294	.756		.179
SNSs allow to make friends with strangers		.341			.726	.192	
SNSs allow people to play game			.210		.154	.807	
SNS assists in making professional and business contact	.243			.378	-.115	.645	.212
SNS helps people to meet new people	.227	.460		-.127	.399	.461	
SNS provides enough opportunity to students to promote themselves and their activity	.105	.200	.208		.137		.808
Purchased a product or service based on an advertisement on a social networks	.246			.393		.236	.683

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

a. Rotation converged in 13 iterations.

Source of Information

It is the most important factor with seven loads and accounts for 30.878 % of variation. The variables namely, Social networking is important (0.411) as Social networking sites allow finding a job (0.607), know the updates about others-achievement and activity (0.628), provide reference for successful product purchase (0.623), give the information about new product or services (0.783), invite people for participation in an event (0.711), help in conversation about recent activities (0.659), and it signifies SM users are focused on information while using a social networking sites.

Relationship and Skill Development

It has four significant variables accounting for 7.535% of variation. The variables such as Social networking Sites allow for keeping in touch with family members (0.735), keeping in touch with friends (0.587), play essential role on learning (0.839), help in developing communication skill (0.68), and show that maintaining relationship with family, friends and developing skills is important concern for social media users as and when they decide to visit any social networking sites.

Transparency of Information

It has also four variables having 6.740% of variation. The variables viz., Social networking sites becoming a hobby for people to kill the time (0.462), Advertising in SNS is very annoying (0.652), reduces the Security (0.82), SNS makes the information transparent to users (0.717) demonstrate about the focus of transparency of information when respondents decide for any SNS.

Exchange of Information

It consists of three variables producing 6.260% variation. The variables specifically, SNSs provide easily available information (0.515), SNSs help to communicate with people in a better-way (0.708), SNSs give you the feeling of face to face conversation (0.664), SNS requires much time to manage the account (0.59), signifying that direct information exchange is a vital factor for SM users when they go for SNSs.

Privacy

It comprises of two variables with 6.067% variation. Privacy variables such as SNSs allow to make friends with strangers (0.726), Privacy policies are effective in SNSs (0.756) signifying that privacy to online users regarding information exchange and relationship building is important for SM users before they choose for any SNS.

Professional and Personal Networking

It has three variables having 5.508% of variation. Professional and personal networking variables viz., SNS helps people to meet new people (0.461), SNSs allow people to play games (0.807), SNS assists in making professional and business contact (0.645), signifies easy networking and contact building in SM influencing users to decide for any SNS.

Advertisement and Promotion

It includes two variables and accounts for 4.196% of variation. The variable Purchasing a product or service based on an advertisement on a social network (0.683), SNSs provide enough opportunity to students to promote themselves and their activity (0.808), signifies that promotion and advertisement plays an influential role in deciding any SNS.

Conclusion and Future Direction of Research

SMs have allowed like-minded people from across the globe to share their thoughts, believes and ideas. Research highlights that user for SNSs are quite high, and Facebook occupies top position among the SNSs. In addition to that, majority of users are engaged with multiple SNSs. Moreover, factor analysis revealed about seven unique factors namely, source of information, relationship and skill development, transparency of information, exchange of information, privacy, professional and personal networking, and advertisement and promotion. Research ensures that source of information is the most important factor for users to choose a social networking site. Social media and networking sites should provide relevant information, maintain a transparency and provide the

content that allows the users in their development. Users hope that SNS helps in professional and personal networking across the globe and also expect about the advertisement including promotion of new products in the sites.

Limitations of this study include a few commonly associated problems of sampling. This research is subject to some limitations that may provide fruitful avenues for future research. Firstly, certain limitations may arise from sample selection because the population was undergraduate students. Secondly, some of the respondents did not respond to queries fully and information was withheld. Sometimes the respondents were reluctant to give information about their usage and demographic profile.

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