

## Social Media – Its Academic Use and Cultural Impact among Students of South Indian Universities

Dr. K. Ebiraj

M.Sc. M.Phil., Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Media Studies.

**How to cite this article:** K. Ebiraj (2024) Social Media – Its Academic Use and Cultural Impact among Students of South Indian Universities. *Library Progress International*, 44(3), 7751-7757.

### ABSTRACT

Human beings devise strategies to coexist and sustain relationships for their survival. Technology which has become part and parcel of human existence develops and transforms relationships by aiding and enabling them. Commercial interest is concomitant to the rapid growth of technology especially after the advent of internet. A steady expansion and sophistication of purposes, and usage pattern are evident across many different social-networking sites and enables both positive and negative growths in different spheres of social interaction. Among the multiple benefits that youth often derive while interacting online, the educational benefit assumes importance and relevance. In this study, a battery of structured questionnaire was administered among South Indian University students to study the popularity, usage, and the academic impact of social media. The parameters measured included the academic activity, preference of academic content and its influence, participation and the users' performance in the class room activity. A total of 500 users were selected from across five universities. The results revealed that majority of students spent upto three hours per day on the internet and that they visited more than six different types of social media, like *WhatsApp*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube* etc.,. It was learnt that they primarily used social media for their leisure and personal socialization.

Key words: Social media, Academic usage, university, students

### 1.Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a revolution in the social media, which has created a platform for people to exchange ideas, connect with, relate to, and gather to support a cause, ask for advice, and provide guidance. Social media has the power to breakdown communication barriers and create decentralized communication channels, giving each one a voice, thus allowing for democratic participation, even for those in repressive countries. The opening up of such vast opportunities has paved the way for large varieties of natural, formal, informal, scholarly and unscholarly writings to burgeon. It enables common interest based groups such as students to work in collaborative group projects outside their regular class. Further, with inputs from a wide range of commentators, it also fosters creativity and collaboration on several issues including education, economy, politics, race, health, relationships, etc. Modern communication technology has undoubtedly shrunk the entire world into a “Global Village”, helping people to be better informed, progressive, and keeping abreast with developments around the world. Technology has exposed mankind to better ways of doing things. Nevertheless, technology also brings along its own demerits.

### 2. Review Of Literature

A study by Alwagait, Shahzad, and Alim (2015) identified that there was no linear relationship between social media usage in a week and the GPA score. Besides social media use, time management is a factor that adversely affects students' studies. Cookingham and Ryan (2015) reported that adolescent healthcare providers were important contributors to this new field of study and must resolve to stay informed and to engage this upcoming generation on the benefits and risks of social media use. It has been reported that social media has a negative impact on the sexual and social wellness of many of its adolescent users. Li and Sakamoto (2014) investigated the way in which people perceive and share information on social media as well as the effect of

collective opinion on the quality of information on social media. Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013) observed that collaborative learning positively and significantly was associated with interaction with peers, interaction with teachers and engagement, which in turn impact the students' academic performance.

### **2.1 Internet and youth culture**

Brian Wilson's (2006) study on "Ethnography, Internet and Youth Culture: Strategies to Examine Social Resistance" reports that integrating traditional and virtual ethnographic methods can aid researchers exploring relationships in online/off-line cultures to examine the spread of youth resistance and its global character. To support his argument, Wilson draws inputs from other studies on youths activism and the rave sub-culture. These studies have led him to believe that a research approach sensitive to everyday experiences and the power structures shaping these experiences can still effectively guide understanding of the dynamics and confrontations within internet-influenced cultures.

### **2.2 Cultural impact on technology**

"Digital gatherings of people: Engagement with expressions and culture online" (2012) that presents the discoveries by the Arts Council, England affirms that incorporating human expressions through computerized media is presently a standard practice. Essentially, this commitment expands (and not replaces) the live involvement. Despite the fact that live music is the trend among Gen-X, young people still choose shared and live experiences in diverse artistic and cultural gathering. However, this doesn't undermine the role of the web as a channel of promotion, since several users continue to use the web to share or make productive content.

In particular, an overview of a 2000-strong example of the English adult online populace finds that about 53% of the online population has utilized the internet to draw in with human expressions and social division over the most recent a year. Communication involving expressions and social substance in computerized conditions can be primarily characterized into five: get to, learn involvement, share and make. Presently, individuals utilize advanced media basically as a supplement to, as opposed to a substitute for, the live understanding.

Among others, music has been identified as the class that demonstrates the highest level of online commitment – in any case, open doors for other social types stay solid. Internet based life – specifically Facebook – has turned into a noteworthy instrument for finding and also sharing data about expressions and culture, second just to natural inquiry through Google and other web crawlers. Brands are extremely critical for audiences in discovering and distinguishing content on the web.

Individuals who engage online with expressions and social substance have a tendency to partake in human expressions through live occasions. Individuals can be categorized into five based on their conduct and mentalities to expressions of the human experience and advanced media. Three of these categories, namely, confident center (29%), late adopters (21%), and leading edge (11%) are quite compelling to expressions and social associations.

### **Objective:**

1. To study the nature of excessive socio cultural impact on university students
2. To ascertain the qualitative themes emerging from the dynamics of cultural participation in SNS.

### **3.0 Methodology**

The survey method was found to be more appropriate to study the usage of social media among the students of South Indian universities. The research tool employed consisted of a well designed questionnaire with 11 close ended questions on social media usage among university students.

The sample consisted of 470 students from universities in South Indian capital. As the study requires that the respondents shall be users of social media, these respondents were selected on the basis of their familiarity with the social media through purposive sampling.

The second questionnaire was designed to examine the socio-cultural impact on university students. The third instrument was a self-designed open ended questionnaire constructed to carry out open statement of the participants. The questionnaire comprised of 10 questions to collect information spread over diverse spheres of the lives of these participants including their personal sphere (emotions, thoughts, preferences, identity, social

acceptance), etc. All the collected data were entered in the (SPSS) and the percentage usage of social media for different purposes was determined.

#### 4. Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1. Distribution of the academic impact of the respondents based on their order of birth**

Variable	Order of Birth	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Df	p- value
Academic Impact	First Born	222	247.71	5.365	2	0.068
	Second born	164	233.20			
	Last Born	84	207.71			
<b>Total</b>		<b>470</b>				

The sample consisted of 222 first born students, 164 second born students, and 84 last born students. The mean ranks of the academic impact for the first born, second born, and the last born students were 247.71, 233.20, and 207.71, respectively. The range obtained for the first born, second born, and last born students was 5.365 indicating that there is no significant difference between first born, second born and last-born students with regard to the academic impact. Because respondents denote using internet is a way to forget about the things they must do but really don't want to do. According to Jacobsen (2015), eldest children tend to be high achievers and leaders, with a controlling and bossy nature and are more likely to take up responsibilities.

**Table 2. Distribution of the academic impact of the respondents based on their area of living**

Variable	Area of living	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p- value
Academic Impact	Rural	157	237.79	.292	2	.864
	Urban	219	236.73			
	Semi urban	94	228.80			
<b>Total</b>		<b>470</b>				

The data in Table 2 were obtained from a sample that comprised of 157 rural students, 219 urban students, and 94 semi-urban students. The mean rank of the academic impact was 237.79 for the rural students, while it was 236.73 for urban, and 228.80 for the semi-urban students. The obtained range of 0.292 for the rural, urban, and semi-urban students indicates the absence of significant differences in the academic impact between the three groups of students. Most of student responded that internet is the important part of life.

Reports show that there are about 143 million social media users across India. Urban areas of the country witness 35% increase in the number of social media users, with an estimated 118 million users as of April 2015. On the other hand, the number for rural India stood at 25 million, up from close to 12 million last year, recording a growth of 100 %. A report on social media in India observed that the four largest metro cities in the country account for nearly half of the urban social media. Further, young men and college students constitute almost 60% of social media users in urban India".

**Table 4. 3**

S.no	Qualitative Theme	Participants
1.	Social Acceptance	<p>"Social Networking sites are places of contentment especially for a person who is non sociable and an introvert".</p> <p>"Internet enables one to connect with friends, acquaint with new people, form communities that changes life altogether.</p> <p>"It is really interesting because individuals can share their opinion, play games, and gain friendship with many people all over the world.</p>
2.	Internet brought changes in life	<p>"It is obvious that internet is time consuming and addictive. Though used to stay updated, it takes up time which could be better utilized otherwise.</p> <p>"Most of the people use internet to chat online, play online games or just catch up with each other on networking sites, which are definitely less productive as these activities allow one to skip outdoor games, miss tuitions, food, and</p>

		<p>college.</p> <p><i>“Technical problems arising during the use of internet can cause individuals to get irritated. People use it continuously irrespective of class or home. The obsession is so high that they cannot live without it.</i></p>
3	Internet influencing appearance	<p><i>“Social networking changes one’s attitude as there is no face-to-face contact”.</i></p> <p><i>“It causes people to spend money on expensive things just to portray themselves to influence others online”.</i></p> <p><i>“Gullible users should be cautious of making friends with strangers by their looks or appearance to avoid becoming victims of fraudulence”.</i></p>
4	Internet influencing behavior and attitude	<p><i>“Social behavior of those addicted to SNS deteriorates. Such individuals are not cordial and are cut off from the real world. They don’t like to mingle with friends and family members.”</i></p> <p><i>“They also develop frequent back ache, besides cervical problems, insomnia, poor eyesight, and obesity as they don’t move their body much.”</i></p>
5	Internet influencing dressing style	<p><i>“They tend to adopt more western dress rather than cultural dress as the offers and the advertisements of online shopping lure one to acquire it”.</i></p> <p><i>“They hide their age to have a face book account. People even fake their gender to fool others. This simply ruins ones reputation and lifestyle”.</i></p>
6	Internet affects daily habits.	<p><i>“People are so addicted to SNS that they don’t bother about skipping their food or their daily practices.</i></p> <p><i>“They lack concentration in education or attending classes as they are heavily dependent on online sources unaware that there are lots of pirated files around the web.</i></p>
7	Reduces social contacts with relatives.	<p><i>“There is a loss of familial bond when one becomes obsessive over SNS. The users seclude themselves from the outside world and prefer to remain indoors lost within their online world.</i></p> <p><i>“Direct contact with others is lost completely owing to excessive involvement in the virtual world. Direct communication with people becomes difficult and as a result, they become strangers to their own relatives.</i></p>
8	Open Self Expression	<p><i>“According to the opinion of the most of the people, SNS is preferred because it does not involve face to face contact.</i></p> <p><i>“People feel free to share their thoughts without feelings of fear or shyness.</i></p> <p><i>“They are not scared of being caught for posting mean content.</i></p>
9	Emotional Support	<p><i>“Social networking sites give people the opportunity to reconnect with their old friends, colleagues, and mates.</i></p> <p><i>“It also helps people to make new friends, share content, pictures, audios, and videos amongst them.</i></p> <p><i>“Social media changes the life style of people. Sharing their feelings and thoughts and receiving responses from online friends offer them emotional support.</i></p>

10	False Self-Portrayals	<i>"Many users post images of themselves, often editing them to look entirely different than they actually are."</i>  <i>"Such attractive images on social media become baits that influence several people on the internet."</i>
----	-----------------------	---

Media impacts many facets of our daily life including our thoughts, feelings and emotions. Sometimes it affects our entire behavior. The goal of most communication researches is oriented to examine the impact of mass communication. Media consumption pattern attitude towards media content or the effect that media has on individuals and society has been the primary focus of such research. Analysis of the data reveals that apart from aiding individuals in improving their knowledge and achieving a feeling of being connected (globalization), internet plays a very insignificant role in improving their economic status, increasing self-confidence, improving their status among their friends and peers, increasing social contact, and helping in personality development.

### 5.0 Findings:

- The research indicates that internet has brought noticeable behavioral changes among the respondents.
- The research gathered many apparent evidence to prove that the use of internet has caused sociological changes among its users and internet has contributed to the overall development of its users.
- The study reveals that while social networking has become part and parcel of everyday life, internet users are also apprehensive of posting personal/private information on social networking sites.
- Victims of "cyber bully" or harassment were not present among the respondents of the study.
- Though blogging has become quite popular, the present research finds a high level of interest in blogging among the respondents.
- The respondents of the study included those who were addicted to the internet. However, the research found that the youth respondents tend to indulge in surfing the internet more than the adults.
- Almost a third of the respondents (31%) confirmed that they would feel 'completely lost' and 'isolated' if they mislaid their social media.

### 6.0 Conclusion

Social networking sites (SNSs) are continuously altering the way individuals communicate. These online environments allow users to make friends, network with colleagues, and share their personal views with others. The current study attempted to study the prevalence and dynamics of excessive social networking among the university students. It was observed that most Indian students begin to network socially around mid-adolescence. Gender, nature of family, and working parents were found to be factors that contributed to their online involvement. This study found that Facebook was the most preferred SNS for chatting and making friends. Activities such as gaming, watching movies, and listening to music were enjoyed the most besides social networking. Most of the participants were found to involve in social networking at night, interact with the opposite sex, have interest in electronic gadgets, ignore daily activities, hide their online tasks from others, use SNS secretly, and ultimately feel frustrated in its absence. Thematic analysis reveals that social acceptance, physical maladjustment, and tool for career growth were found to be the most common experiences around social networking. This study presents an authentic triangulation of research methods to study the realm of social networking, which has been largely addressed through a closed quantitative approach. Contextualization, immersion in the setting, and emic's principle were the instruments used in this qualitative research to ensure that the acquired data is rich and descriptive. This grounding in the local milieu and culture makes the present study thorough in the assimilation of textual material. This study also forms a background for future researchers and clinicians to better understand the phenomena of internet addiction and identity processes in the Indian scenario, thus creating scope for effective management.

### Reference:

1. Alwagait, E., Shahzad, B., & Alim, S. (2015). Impact of social media usage on students academic performance in Saudi Arabia. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 51, 1092-1097.

2. Culture & Technology in South Korean and U.S. Online Military Strategic Communications”, <http://www.aeimc.org/events/convention/abstracts/2008/intl.php>, accessed September 23, 2008.
3. Carpenter CJ, Spotswood EL. Exploring romantic relationships on social networking sites using the self-expansion model. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2013; 29(4): 1531-37. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.01.021
4. Duggan M, Brenner J. The Demographics of Social Media Users — 2012. 2013. Sources: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Social-media-users.aspx>; Retrieved on dated 20novemebr-2013.
5. Ellison N, Steinfield C, Lampe C. The benefits on Facebook "Friends": Social Capital and College Students Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*.2007; 12 (4): 1143-68. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x
6. Erfanian M, Javadinia SA, Abedini M, Bijari B. Iranian Students and Social Networking Sites: Prevalence and Pattern of Usage. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*.2013; 83: 44-46. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.009.
7. Hwang Sungwook, Culture and Technology in South Korean and U.S. Online strategic communications, [http://www.aejmc.org/\\_events/convention/abstracts/2008/intl.php](http://www.aejmc.org/_events/convention/abstracts/2008/intl.php) , accessed September 23, 2008
8. Pempek TA, Yermolayeva YA, Calvert SL. College students' social networking experiences on Facebook. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. 2009; 30(3): 227-238. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2008.12.010.10.1016/j.chb.2013.01.012.
9. Lee D. The role of attachment style in building social capital from a social networking site: The interplay of anxiety and avoidance. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2013; 29(4): 1499-1509. doi:
10. Oh HJ, Ozkaya E, LaRose R. How does online social networking enhance life satisfaction? The relationships among online supportive interaction, affect, perceived social support, sense of community, and life satisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2014 (in press); 30: 69-78. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.053.
11. Rau PLP, Gao Q, Ding Y. Relationship between the level of intimacy and lurking in online social network services. *Computers in Human Behavior*.2008; 24(6): 2757-70. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2008.04.001.
12. Kimbrough AM, Guadagno RE, Muscanell NL, Dill J. Gender differences in mediated communication: Women connect more than do men. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2013; 29(3): 896-900. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.005.
13. Muscanell NL, Guadagno RE. Make new friends or keep the old: Gender and personality differences in social networking use. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2012; 28(1): 107-112. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2011.08.016.
14. Sin SCJ, Kim KS. International students' everyday life information seeking: The informational value of social networking sites. *Library & Information Science Research*. 2013; 35(2): 107-116. doi: 10.1016/j.lisr.2012.11.006.
15. The Information Super Highway: Social and Cultural Impact <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/~howard/Papers/brook-book.html>, accessed December 10, 2011.
16. The Social Impact of Mobile Telephony, [http://www.itu.int/telecomwt99/press\\_service/information\\_for\\_the\\_press/press\\_kit/backgrounders/backgrounders/social\\_impact\\_mobile.html](http://www.itu.int/telecomwt99/press_service/information_for_the_press/press_kit/backgrounders/backgrounders/social_impact_mobile.html), accessed December 10, 2011.

17. The Impact of Online Conversation on the Interbrand Global Survey,” <http://www.immediatefuture.co.uk/the-top-brands-in-social-mediareport-2008>, accessed December 6, 2009. Wodzicki K, Schwämmlein E, Moskaliuk J.
18. Actually, I Wanted to Learn!: Study-related knowledge exchange on social networking sites. *The Internet and Higher Education*. 2012; 15(1): 9- doi: 10.1016/j.iheduc.2011.05.008.
19. Jackson LA, Wang JL. Cultural differences in social networking site use: A comparative study of China and the United States. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 2013; 29(3): 910-921. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2012.11.024.
20. Young K. Internet Addiction Test, Net addiction: The Centre for Internet Addiction. 1995; Retrieved from [netaddiction.com/internet-addiction-test/](http://netaddiction.com/internet-addiction-test/)
21. Thomson E, Hanson TL, McLanahan SS. Family Structure and Child Well-Being: Economic Resources vs. Parental Behaviors. *Social Forces*. 1994; 73: 221-42. doi: 10.1093/sf/sos119.
22. Lenhart A. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Teens, online stranger contact & cyberbullying: What the research is telling us. Town Hall presented at National Education Computing Conference, San Antonio, TX; 2008.
23. Pun R. Mobile Consumer Survey: 71% of People Use Mobile to Access Social Media. 2013.
24. Internet use and Social networking by Young People, No-1. Media and Communication in Australian Families Series-1 by Australian Communication and Media Authority. 2008.
25. Malhotra R. Identity Processes of the Youth in an ‘Addictive’ Engagement with Cyberspace: A Psychoanalytic Exploration (Doctoral dissertation). Thesis submitted to University of Delhi, India; 2013.