

Use of Facebook by Research Scholars of Karnatak University, Dharwad: A study

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Abstract - *The present paper throws light on the use of Facebook by the research scholars of Karnatak University, Dharwad, India. A survey was conducted using questionnaire as a tool to collect the data. All the regular research scholars belonging to science departments were considered for the study. Out of 247 questionnaires distributed, 217 duly filled in questionnaires were received with a response rate of 87.85%. The results indicate that 98.62% research scholars are aware of Facebook; majority, i.e. 173 (80.84%) research scholars find current news from worldwide in their subject fields; access denied (72.89%) by the university is the major hurdle for using Facebook, but most of the research scholars are using Facebook through their mobiles using mobile data plan facility; and the majority, i.e. more than 70% research scholars agree that Facebook has made a positive impact on their academic/research work.*

Keywords: Facebook, Karnatak University, Research Scholars, Social Networking Site, Social Networking Tools, Twitter

1. Introduction

The present society is predominantly technological which has brought revolutionary changes in all aspects of human life. Since human beings are social animals they always lived in communities and believe so much in interpersonal relationship¹. The internet has enabled such social interactions to go beyond the traditional venue of one's community². However, the

advancement in Information Technology has given birth to Social Networking Sites (here after SNSs). Over the past few years SNSs have been more popular especially among the students and teenagers³. SNSs are a new technology offering promising new outreach options for most of the Library and Information Centres⁴. These SNSs provide a platform for reaching users beyond the traditional library building and allow users to share their ideas, video / audio files, interact online with their peers⁵⁻⁷.

Nowadays the social networking tools especially Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace etc. have not only attracted tech savvy users but are also being used by most of them. Facebook was founded in 2004, and it is presently the biggest social networking service based on total active users and its global reach⁸. Facebook allows its users to have online profiles and invites others to be their friends thereby allowing others to view their profiles vice-versa. People can share their ideas, post their comments, discuss with the experts of similar field^{9,10}. The social networking site, especially Facebook has numerous educational advantages for teachers, research scholars and students¹¹.

2. Review of literature

The literature reveals that there are number of research conducted on the use of Facebook. Gray¹², et al. present the recent research and statistics indicate that students are interested and active in supporting their learning by using a popular SNS called Facebook. Haneefa and Sumitha¹³, Elhuda and Dimetry¹⁴, and Islam and Habiba¹⁵, examine more number of students use Facebook than any other SNS tools. The survey conducted by Singh and Gill¹⁶ find that Facebook, Twitter, You Tube are more common and widely used SNS tools by the students and research scholars. Giri¹⁷, et al. find collaboration and communication through Facebook were far more effective than the traditional approaches. Ibrahim¹⁸ et al. present the usage of Facebook has contributed enormously to online business especially.

Scale¹⁹ examines how Facebook is becoming a gateway for online search and the implications for libraries. Cheung²⁰ et al. and Hew²¹ describe Facebook is more prevalent among people to get instant communication and connection with their friends. Loving and Ochoa²² experiment that Facebook can be used as an online course management software solution for students' class. Vassilakaki and Garoufallou²³ explore the users' and librarians' perceptions towards SNSs and opine that there is a strong need for specific guidelines to assist the librarians and libraries in adopting Facebook. Ruleman²⁴ and Alkindi and Al-Suqri²⁵ explain as a result, the Library and Information Centres are also having their own Facebook pages to market their services like text-a-librarian service for reference assistance. Carrilat²⁶, et al. investigate how firms can use Facebook to recruit top job prospects. Junco²⁷ opines that it is important for those working in higher education to familiarize themselves with Facebook and other such technologies.

3. Objectives of the Study

The prime objective of this paper is to study the use of Facebook by the research scholars. The present study is underpinned specifically by the following questions:

- Whether the research scholars are aware of Facebook?
- How much time do the research scholars spend for using Facebook?
- How Facebook helps the research scholars for their research work?
- What are the problems the research scholars do face in using Facebook?

4. Methodology

A questionnaire was used to collect the data from the research scholars. The questionnaire was evaluated by experts in the profession and research scholars of various departments to demonstrate its appropriateness. A questionnaire was distributed to a total of 13 science departments. The study is limited to science departments only since the research productivity of Karnatak University at Dharwad is very high in science disciplines compared with other streams²⁸. A total of 247 regular research scholars were considered for the present study. The questionnaire was distributed to all 247 regular research scholars, out of which 217 duly filled in questionnaires were received back with a response rate of 87.85 per cent. The data then collected were gathered and MS-Excel was used to get frequencies, percentages and tabulations.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

It is evident from the study that 128 (58.99%) respondents are male and 89 (41.01%) respondents are female. A question was raised on their age to know which age group research scholars are using Facebook frequently. The data reveals that 71 (32.72%) research scholars belong to the age group between 26 and 28, whereas, 54 (24.88%) respondents use Facebook who belong to 29 and 31 group, followed by 47 (21.66%) respondents who belong to 23 and 25 age group. The data reveals that most of the respondents are youngsters. Among 217 regular research scholars 197 (90.78%) are pursuing their PhDs whereas, 14 (6.45%) respondents are working as project fellows. Some of the research scholars are working as project fellows funded by various national funding agencies and Government departments. Only 4 (0.93%) respondents are Post-Doctorate Fellows.

5.1 Time spent on Facebook

A question was asked on time spent on Facebook by the research scholars. The table 1 reveals that out of 214 (because among 217 research scholars studied, 214 (98.62%) research scholars are aware of Facebook 97 (45.33%) spend one hour time on Facebook, whereas, 48 (22.43%) respondents spend between 2 and 3 hours, followed by 39 (18.22%) research scholars who spend less than an hour. There are 22 (10.28%) research scholars who spend more than three hours, whereas, 08 (3.74%) scholars are always online. This shows that research scholars are influenced by the Facebook due to its advantages and popularity.

Table 1. Time spent on Facebook

Time	No. of Research Scholars
Less than one hour	39 (18.22%)
One hour	97 (45.32%)
2-3 hours	48 (22.43%)
More than 3 hours	22 (10.29%)
Always online	08 (03.74%)
Total	214 (100%)

The data in parenthesis indicate percentage

5.2 Facebook and its usefulness in research work

A multiple choice question was posed to the research scholars on how Facebook helps in their research work. The data indicate that 173 (80.84%) research scholars find conferences /seminars / workshops related photos, files, audios, videos, and websites links, followed by 157 (73.36%) research scholars find useful information related to their research work and equal number of respondents use Facebook to share education, jobs related information with their friends. The other details are given in the table 2.

Table 2. Facebook and its usefulness in research work

Purpose	No. of Research Scholars (n=214)
Finding conferences/seminars/workshops related information	167 (78.03%)
Interaction with subject experts, consultants etc.,	91 (42.52%)
Finding current news from worldwide	173 (80.84%)
Finding useful information related to research	157 (73.36%)
Promoting own thoughts	101 (47.19%)
Giving feed back to friends	153 (71.49%)
To participate in discussion	131 (61.21%)
Sharing education, jobs related information with friends	157 (73.36%)
Sharing research related photos, files, audios, videos & websites links	164 (76.63%)
Contact with other research scholars	119 (55.60%)
Publish writings	74 (34.57%)
Promoting own research	127 (59.34%)

The data in parenthesis indicate percentage

5.3 Problems faced by research scholars while using Facebook

There are problems faced by the research scholars while using Facebook and the data are mentioned in table 3. The study reveals that out of 214 respondents 156 (72.89%) respondents

tell that access denied by the university is the major hindrance while using Facebook. It is also observed that most of the research scholars are using Facebook from the data plans through their mobiles. Even though the access is denied by the university a good number of research scholars are using Facebook. Some of the respondents are using Facebook from browsing centers. Most of the research scholars i.e. 133 (62.14%) respondents attribute that poor internet connectivity is a challenging task. Whereas 121 (56.54%) respondents are fed up with limited access to computers. More than 78 (36.44%) respondents are worried about their privacy of information. The other details are given in table 3.

Table 3. Problems faced by the research scholars

Place	No. of Research Scholars (n=214)
No privacy ensured	78 (36.44%)
Access denied by the university	156 (72.89%)
Not user friendly	07 (03.27%)
Slow system speed	37 (17.28%)
Poor internet connectivity	133 (62.14%)
Unwanted notice from others	121 (56.54%)
Limited access to computers	79 (36.91%)
It has no role in making awareness	03 (01.40%)
No Wi-Fi connection	83 (38.78%)
Mobile data card problems	19 (08.87%)
Note: Percentage cannot be rounded after 100 since it is multiple choice question	

The data in parenthesis indicate percentage

5.4 Impact of Facebook on academic / research work

The majority i.e. 119 (55.60%) respondents agree that there is an impact of Facebook on their research work. Some of the research scholars are of the opinion that they have developed links with the experts in the similar field of study. More number of research scholars agree with the statement that there is an impact of Facebook on their research work in all respect. The data is presented in table 4.

Table 4. Impact of Facebook on academic/research work

Opinion	No. of Research Scholars
Strongly agree	31 (14.48%)
Agree	119 (55.60%)
Uncertain	39 (18.23%)
Disagree	17 (07.95%)
Strongly disagree	08 (03.74%)
Total	214 (100%)

The data in parenthesis indicate percentage

6. Suggestion

It is evident from the data that access denied by the university is the major problem faced by the research scholars (72.89%). In Karnatak University, Dharwad almost all major buildings, libraries and departments do have Wi-Fi facility in the campus. But the access is restricted to most of the social networking and entertainment related sites. However, the authorities tell that there is a misuse of most of the social networking sites by the student's community. Looking into this fact in mind it is recommended to the authorities that the access should be made available to SNSs and ban should be lifted. To avoid the consequences action should be initiated on such students instead of imposing ban on all the students and employees.

7. Conclusion

It is evident from the data that out of 217 research scholars 128 (58.99%) respondents are male and 89 (41.01%) are female. Among 217 regular research scholars 197 (90.78) are pursuing Ph.D. more than 71 (32.72%) research scholars belong to the age group between 26 and 28, 214 (98.62%) research scholars are aware of Facebook. It is equally important to know how much time they spend on Facebook. About 45.33% respondents spend one hour time on Facebook and eight scholars are always online. A multiple choice question was posed to research scholars on how Facebook helps in their research work. The data indicate that 80.84% research scholars use it to find current news from worldwide and 76.63% find conferences / seminars / workshops related information. Access denied by the university (72.89%) is the major obstacle while using Facebook, followed by poor internet connectivity (62.14%) the majority i.e. more than 70% research scholars agree that there is an impact of Facebook on their academic/research work and it allowed them to develop links with the experts in the field.

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