



Use of social networking sites by students and faculty for sharing information: A study of universities in Haryana

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the usage of social networking sites (SNSs) by the students and faculty for sharing information in universities of Haryana. The study is a questionnaire-based survey on the usage of SNSs among the students and faculty members of the selected universities of Haryana. The data of the study were collected through questionnaires, which were personally distributed to the identified population, i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate students, research scholars and faculty members by the researcher. The survey was based on a sample of 750 questionnaires; of which, 560 questionnaires were received. The study showed that all the respondents were found to be aware of and making use of such applications in their academic affairs. It was revealed from the study that Facebook is the most popular SNS by all categories of respondents. The resources available with five universities in Haryana, namely, CCS HAU, Hisar, CDLU, Sirsa, GJU S&T, Hisar, KU, Kurukshetra and MDU, Rohtak are well described in this paper.

Keywords: Social networking sites, use

1.INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites (SNSs) are virtual communities where people can create public profiles, connect with other people, and share information. SNS becomes a necessary part of people life and societies. Nowadays smartphone have the facility of built-in software like Facebook, What's App, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Viber, Skype, Line and much other software that can be downloaded from Google play store and many other online stores free of cost or on some nominal fee charges. Social networking sites have been subject to much recent debate within the educational community. While rapidly growing number of innovative educators praise the potential of social networking to engage learners with their studies, others fear that such applications compromise and disrupt young people's engagement with "traditional" education concept. The SNS has various benefits like easy access, communication and faster information and knowledge transfer.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Glowatz and O'Brien (2015) observed that out of the 74 respondents, 19 of the respondents (25.67%) were “Strongly Agreed” and 23 respondents (31.08%) were “Agreed” totally that they enjoyed the module meant for learning which used Facebook. Facebook provided them a means to remain engaged in their studies due to student collaboration and module-content discussion. **Al-Busaidi (2014)** carried out a study using the Delphi technique with the objective to assess Information Technology (IT) managers’ perception of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of using social networking sites (SNSs) for group work at government organizations in Oman. She reported that approximately 40 percent of the respondents had given the first rank to the statement that social networking sites were a waste of time, under the section weakness of the social networking sites. **Karimi and Khodabandelou (2013)** conducted a survey on 70 undergraduate Iranian students to quantitatively examine the use of Facebook for academic purposes. They found that around 91 percent of the university students were using Facebook, 17 percent MySpace and only 2 percent used LinkedIn, where 10 percent of the students used Twitter and 26 percent Google+ **Madhusudhan (2012)** during his study on the use of social networking sites by research scholars from the University of Delhi, observed that around 80 percent of the respondents were guided by their friends to educate themselves on the use of social networking sites followed by a trial and error method (58.75%), through external courses (37.50%), guidance from library staff (21.25%), guidance from supervisors (17.5%) and other sources (0.875%). **Saw et al. (2012)** conducted a study in Australia on 575 international and domestic students at Bond University to know the social networking sites preferred by the international students, to know the use of SNSs and disseminating the information they together and how this information can be used to enhance the international students’ experience. They found that the international students liked students from Malaysia who used the Facebook several times per day (90%) followed by USA (88%), Canada (85%), Norway (70%) and China (42%).



3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate the usage of SNSs by the students and research scholars of selected universities of Haryana. This study encompasses the following specific objectives.

1. To find out the most popular SNSs being used by the students and faculty members;
2. To find out the most used tools/gadgets for accessing SNSs;
3. To know the purpose of the use of SNS by students and faculty members;
4. To know the specific uses, preferences, and specialized academic SNSs;
5. To explore the problems being faced by students and research scholars while using SNSs.

4. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

This study covers the population sample from the selected universities of Haryana. The survey was based on various types of users, such as undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate(PG) students, research scholars(RS) in the field of Sciences, Social Sciences, Engineering, Management and Humanities. The following universities and their departments have been covered :-

1. Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (CCSHAU), Hisar
2. Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology (GJUS&T), Hisar
3. Chaudhary Devi Lal University (CDLU), Sirsa
4. Kurukshetra University (KU), Kurukshetra
5. Maharishi Dayanand University (MDU), Rohtak

5. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

The study is a questionnaire-based survey of usage of SNSs among the students and faculty members of universities of Haryana. The data for the study were collected through the structured questionnaires, which were personally distributed amongst the respondents consisting of UG and PG students, research scholars and faculty members. In total, 750 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents; of which, 560 questionnaires were received back, having a response rate of 74.67 per cent. Table 1, under the analysis and discussion of the study, shows the data of distributed questionnaires and the responses received among the selected universities.



6. MATERIALS AND METHODS

6.1 Frequency Analysis of Respondents under Study

There were 560 respondents from the five universities under the present study. Among the five universities, CCS HAU, Hisar had 110 respondents (19.64%); CDLU, Sirsahad 113 respondents (20.18%); GJU S&T, Hisar had 106 respondents (18.93%); Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra had 115 respondents (20.54%) and MDU, Rohtak had 116 respondents (20.71%). The maximum numbers of respondents were noticed from Maharishi Dayananda University, Rohtak as presented in Table 1. A majority of the respondents were students which 81.61 per cent while, only 18.39 per cent belonged to the faculty. Most of the students were females 60.71 per cent, while male respondents were 39.29 per cent. Most of the respondents belonged to the age group 'below 25 years' (68.57%) followed by '26 to 35 years' group (21.79%). Most of the respondents were post-graduates (53.39%) followed by undergraduates (27.14%) and research scholars (19.46%). The major stream of most of the respondents was the science stream (50.54%). Table I represents the combined data on sample size, gender and age groups of the respondents in respective universities.

Table 1. Frequency Analysis of Respondents under Study (N = 560)

Demographic Factors	Particulars	Numeric Code	Respondents Under Study	
			Frequency	(Per cent)
Universities	CCS HAU, Hisar	1	110	19.64
	CDLU, Sirsa	2	113	20.18
	GJU S&T, Hisar	3	106	18.93
	KU, Kurukshetra	4	115	20.54
	MDU, Rohtak	5	116	20.71
	Total			560
Profession	Student	1	457	81.61
	Faculty	2	103	18.39
	Total		560	100.00
Gender	Female	1	340	60.71
	Male	2	220	39.29
	Total		560	100.00
Age (years)	Below 25	1	384	68.57
	26 to 35	2	122	21.79
	36 to 45	3	46	8.21



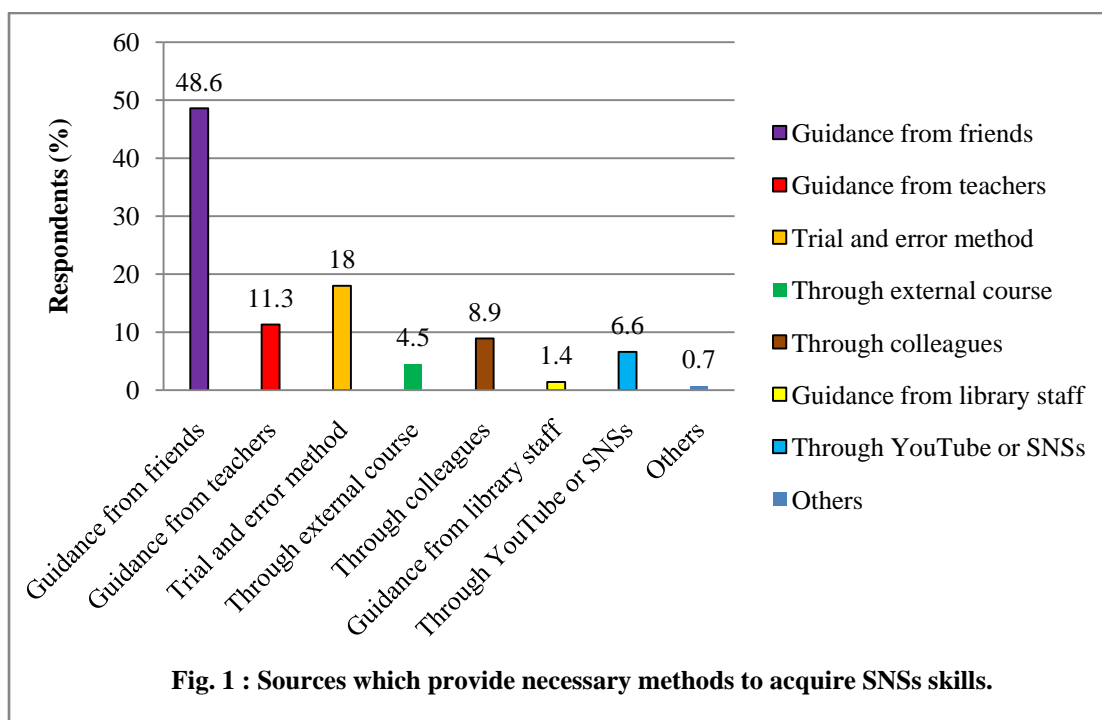
Demographic Factors	Particulars	Numeric Code	Respondents Under Study	
			Frequency	(Per cent)
	46 to 55	4	8	1.43
	Total		560	100.00
	UG	1	152	27.14
Qualifications	PG	2	299	53.39
	RS	3	109	19.46
	Total		560	100.00
	Arts	4	131	23.39
Discipline	Engineering	3	79	14.11
	Management	2	67	11.96
	Science	1	283	50.54
	Total		560	100.00

6.2 Sources of information about social networking sites

The data pertaining to the use of the SNSs with the assistance of varied sources in order to acquire the skills are presented in Table2 and Fig.1 which clearly indicate that the majority of the respondents were guided by their friends that is 272 (48.6%). Some of the respondents used the social networking sites as trial and error method which is 101(18.0%), while some were guided by the teachers (11.3%). The results presented above are in conformity with the results of Madhusudhan (2012) who reported that about 80% of the respondents were guided by their friends to learn the use of social networking sites. This was mainly due to that the closest and more reliable source was a circle of friends which could be accessed easily for the information related to an individual's required skills.

Table 2. Sources of information about social networking sites

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Guidance from friends		48.6
Guidance from teachers		11.3
Trial and error method		18.0
Through external course		4.5
Through colleagues		8.9
Guidance from library staff		1.4
Through YouTube or SNSs		6.6
Others		0.7



6.3 Awareness about social networking sites

The maximum number of respondents had their account on Facebook 448 (80.0%) followed by YouTube 217 (38.8%), Twitter 121 (21.6%), LinkedIn 98 (17.5%), SlideShare 65 (11.6%), Blogs 26 (4.6%), Wikis 19 (3.4%), Flickr 16 (2.9%), any other 78 (13.9%) and least were on MySpace 15 (2.7%) (Table 3).

Table 3 Awareness among students about social networking sites

SNSs	Number	Percentage
Blogs	26	4.6
Facebook	448	80.0
LinkedIn	98	17.5
MySpace	15	2.7
Flickr	16	2.9
YouTube	217	38.8
SlideShare	65	11.6
Twitter	121	21.6
Wikis	19	3.4
Any other	78	13.9

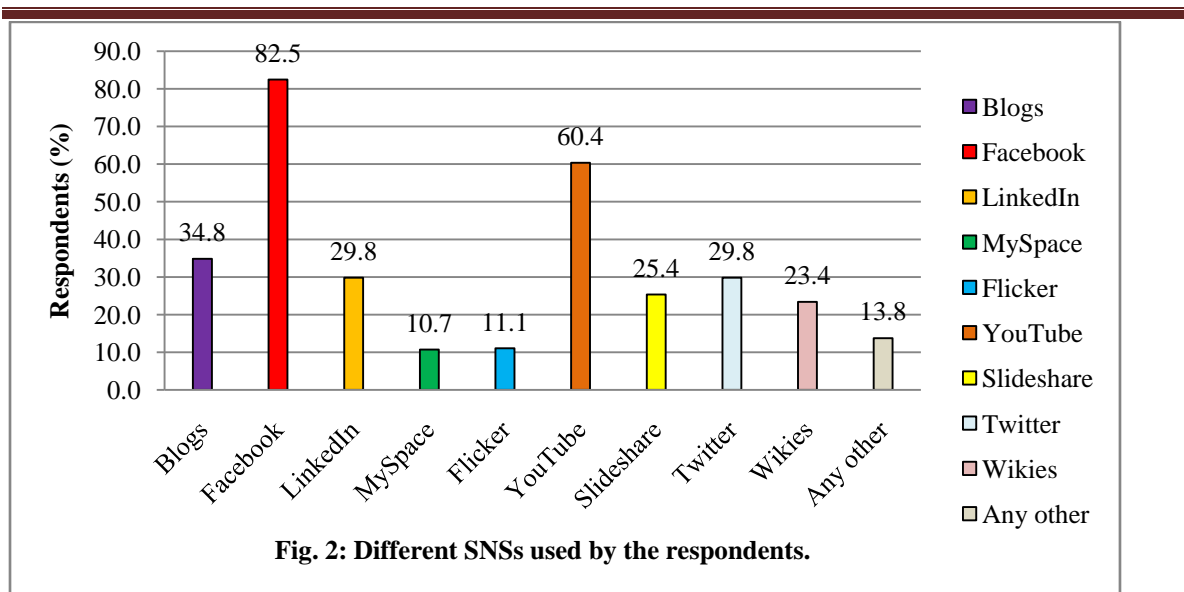


6.4 Frequency of visit to social networking sites

It is clear from Table 4 and Fig. 2 that a maximum respondents under study preferred Facebook (82.5%) followed by YouTube (60.4%) and Blogs (34.8%). MySpace was less frequently used by the respondents (10.7%). A maximum number of respondents had their account on Facebook (82.5%). A majority of them accessed their Facebook account, once a day (29.1%). Similarly, the second most preferred SNS was YouTube (60.4%) and the respondents having their account on YouTube accessed this SNS at least once a day (24.5%). The third most preferred SNS was Blogs (34.8%), which was accessed once a day (8.9%). Flickr, MySpace, Blogs and Wikis SNSs were comparatively less popular among the respondents. The results of the present study are in confirmation with the results of Karimi and Khodabandelou (2013) who conducted a study on 70 Iranian undergraduate university students (38.6% male and 61.4% female) at three Iranian public universities about using Facebook for academic purposes. They reported that a majority of the students (91%) used Facebook, which was 10 per cent higher than the present study.

Table 4. Frequency of Visit to Social Networking Sites

Frequency	Type	Few times in a year	Many times per month	Once a day	Many times a day	Total
Blogs	IC	58 (10.4)	60 (10.7)	50 (8.9)	27 (4.8)	195 (34.8)
Facebook	-do-	67 (12.0)	137 (24.5)	163 (29.1)	95 (17.0)	462 (82.5)
LinkedIn	-do-	62 (11.1)	63 (11.3)	34 (6.1)	8 (1.4)	167 (29.8)
MySpace	-do-	39 (7.0)	10 (1.8)	6 (1.1)	5 (0.9)	60 (10.7)
Flicker	ID	28 (5.0)	20 (3.6)	8 (1.4)	6 (1.1)	62 (11.1)
YouTube	-do-	44 (7.9)	125 (22.3)	137 (24.5)	32 (5.7)	338 (60.4)
SlideShare	-do-	44 (7.9)	56 (10.0)	34 (6.1)	8 (1.4)	142 (25.4)
Twitter	IC	63 (11.3)	52 (9.3)	39 (7.0)	13 (2.3)	167 (29.8)
Wikis	ID	25 (4.5)	53 (9.5)	31 (5.5)	22 (3.9)	131 (23.4)
Any other	-	31 (5.5)	15 (2.7)	23 (4.1)	8 (1.4)	77 (13.8)



6.5 Tools to access SNSs at various places

A majority of the respondents used the tools to access SNSs like Desktop (87.50%) followed by Laptop (75.89%), Smart phone/Cell phone (52.50%), iPod (22.14%) and lowest were in other category (10.36%). The various tools were used to access the SNSs at different places. The majority of the respondents used Desktop to access SNSs in library (36.07%) followed by Laptop at home (56.25%), Smart phone/Cell phone at home (23.39%) and iPod at hostel (13.93%) (Table 5)

Table 5. Tools to Access SNS at Various Places

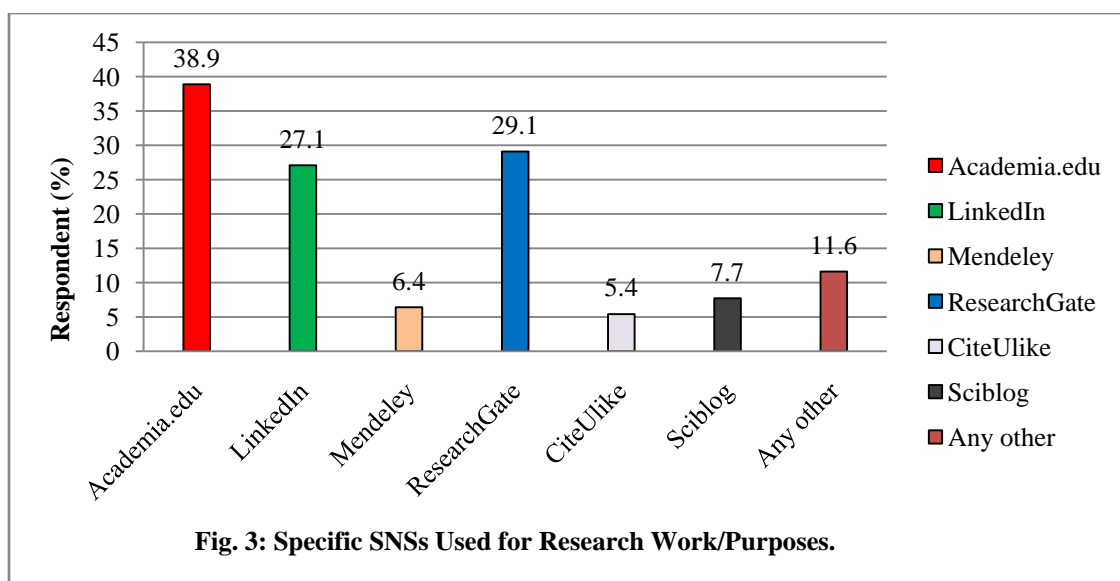
Access tools	Library	Home	Cyber cafe	Hostel	Others	Total
Desktop	202 (36.07)	176 (31.43)	86 (15.36)	21 (3.75)	5 (0.89)	490 (87.50)
Laptop	28 (5.00)	315 (56.25)	11 (1.96)	68 (12.14)	3 (0.54)	425 (75.89)
Smart phone/cell phone	11 (1.96)	131 (23.39)	107 (19.11)	42 (7.50)	3 (0.54)	294 (52.50)
iPod	5 (0.89)	25 (4.46)	7 (1.25)	78 (13.93)	9 (1.61)	124 (22.14)
Others	5 (0.89)	8 (1.43)	6 (1.07)	10 (1.79)	29 (5.18)	58 (10.36)

6.6 SNSs for research purposes

It is more evident from Table 5.18 that the majority of the respondents preferred the Academia.edu (38.9%) for research work. Likewise, ResearchGate was also preferred by majority of the respondents (29.1%) followed by LinkedIn (27.1%), Other SNSs (11.6%), Sciblog (7.7%), Mendeley (6.4%) and CiteUlike (5.4%) (Fig. 3).

Table 6. Percent analysis of SNSs for research purposes

SNSs	N	Percent
Academia.edu	218	38.9
LinkedIn	152	27.1
Mendeley	36	6.4
ResearchGate	163	29.1
CiteUlike	30	5.4
Sciblog	43	7.7
Any other	65	11.6



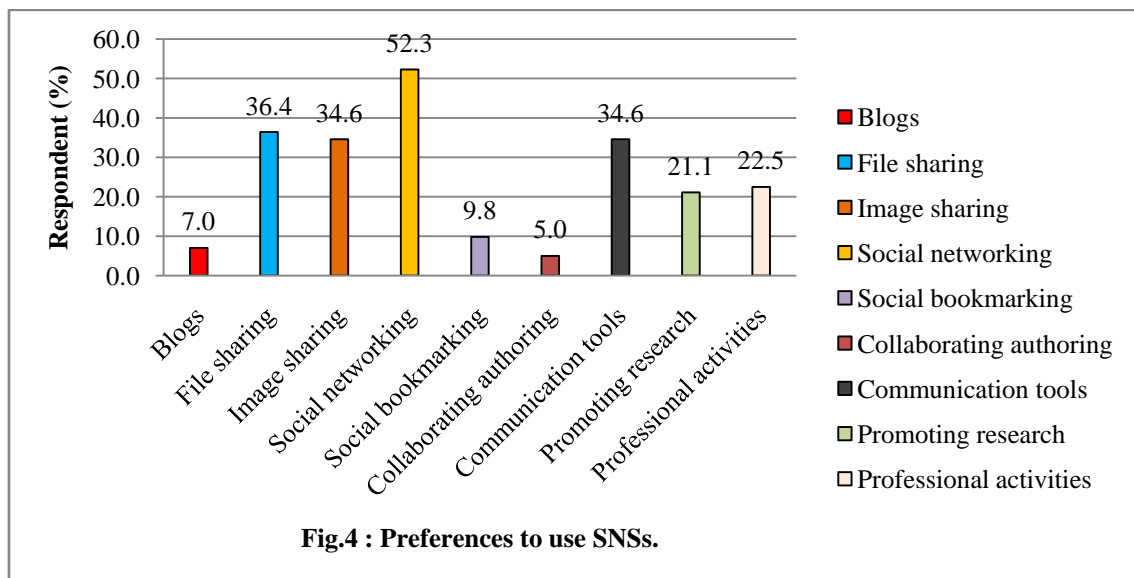
6.7 Specific uses of SNSs:

Data pertaining to specific uses of SNSs are given in Table 7. Maximum number of respondents said that they used the SNSs for social networking (52.3%), followed by file sharing (36.4%), image sharing (34.6%), communication tools (34.6%), professional activities (22.5%), promoting research (21.1%), social bookmarking (9.8%), Blogs (7.0%) and least for collaborating authoring (5.0%) (Fig.4).

Table 7. Specific uses of SNSs

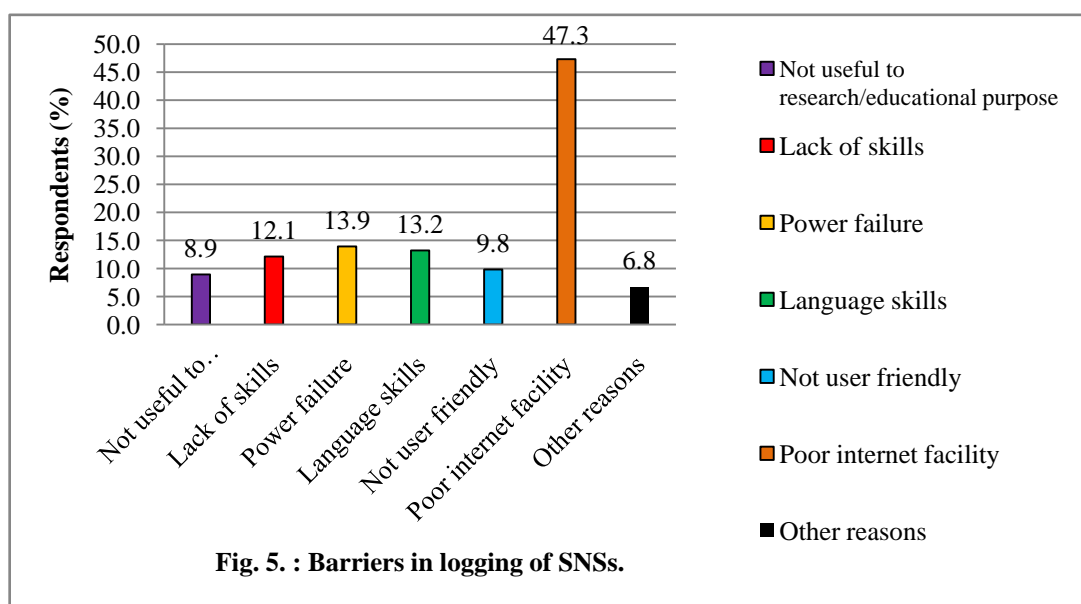
Specific Purpose	No. of Respondents	Per cent
Blogs	39	7.0
File sharing	204	36.4
Image sharing	194	34.6
Social networking	293	52.3
Social bookmarking	55	9.8

Collaborating authoring	28	5.0
Communication tools	194	34.6
Promoting research	118	21.1
Professional activities	126	22.5



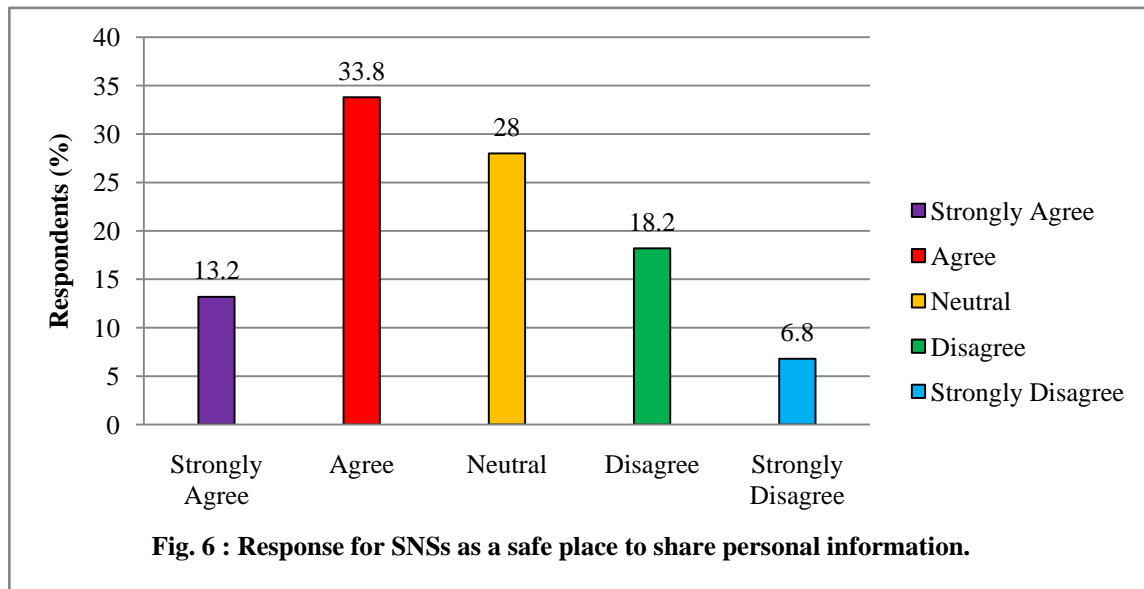
6.8 Problems faced while using social networking sites

Respondents from various universities under the study found some barriers when they used the SNSs (Fig.5). Most of the respondents gave the reasons of poor internet facility (47.3%), followed by power failure (13.9%), language skills (13.2%), lack of skills (12.1%), not user friendly (9.8%), not useful to research/education purpose (8.9%) and other reasons (6.8%).



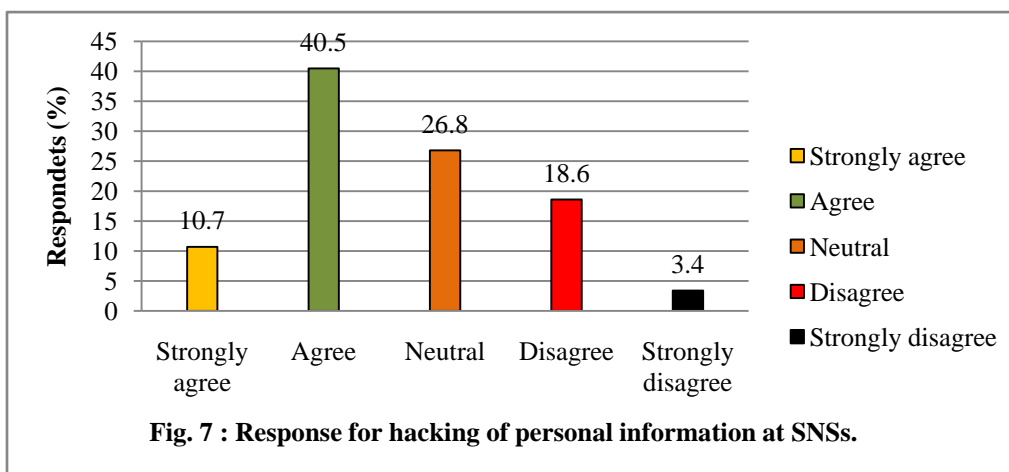
6.9 Safety of Sharing Personal Information at SNSs:

The data pertaining to SNSs as a safe place to share personal information are given in Table Fig.6. It clearly indicates that most of the respondents were ‘agree’ with this statement 33.8 per cent respondents who thought that it was safe to share personal information on SNSs followed by ‘neutral’ (28.0%), ‘disagree’ (18.2%), ‘strongly agree’ (13.2%) and ‘strongly disagree’ (6.8%).



6.10 Hacking of Personal Information at SNSs

Most of the respondents from CCS HAU, Hisar were ‘agree’ with the above statement that there were chances of hacking of personal information at the social networking sites and the number of responses in agreement with this statement recorded were 8.9 per cent as shown in Fig.7.





Findings of the study

Findings of the study showed that faculty members and students have a positive attitude towards the role of social networking sites for their academic purposes. Notably, the respondents mostly prefer Facebook which is the most preferable SNS among the others. Finding also demonstrates that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that SNSs help their educational field and it builds up a good relationship between their friends, family, educators, etc. This study reveals that respondents are strongly agreed that they get up-to-date information through SNSs and share their thoughts, information to the others.

- The findings indicated that out of a total of 560 sample respondents, 340 (60.71%) 'Females' and 220 (39.29 %) 'Males' constituted the sample.
- Most of the respondents were students; 81.61% and only 18.39% belonged to the faculty members.
- Most of the female students fell in the age group of 'below 25 years' followed by '26 to 35 years' group (21.79%).
- Most of the students were post-graduates (53.39%), followed by undergraduates (27.14%) and research scholars (19.46%).
- Most of the respondents belonged to the science discipline (50.54%).
- Most of the respondents 272 (48.6%) were guided by their friends.
- A majority of them 163 (29.1%) access and their Facebook account once a day.
- Most of the respondents (36.07%) used Desktop to access SNSs in library.
- A maximum number of respondents (52.3%) confirmed that they used the SNSs for social networking.
- Most of the respondents (47.3%) offered the reasons of poor internet facility.
- A majority of the students also pointed out poor internet facility as one of the obstacles in using SNSs.
- Most of the respondents were 'agreed' on this statement that 33.8% of the respondents thought that it was safe to share personal information on SNSs.
- The maximum number of responses were obtained in agreement with the above statement that there were chances of hacking of personal information at various SNSs which was 40.5%.



On the basis of findings from the research undertaken, the researcher comes out with following recommendations:

- Knowledge about the features and functions of Social Networking Sites should be clear for the SNSs users. Only then they can utilize these sites in a proper way.
- Since many of them are using SNS sites, Universities should make use of these sites to educate the youngsters.
- Education must be provided, especially with reference to computer literacy.
- Universities must provide sometime within their time table to access and learn to use the social networking sites and understand the benefits and challenges.
- Public funded agencies and private donor institutions should encourage and support research projects related to social networking sites.
- These sites could be used as a means for sharing study materials.

Conclusion

The results of the present study show that a majority of the students were aware of social networking sites and use these sites for find information. However, a good number of respondents use these social sites for academic purpose also. It should be noted that social networking sites can be used as an interactive platform for academic and friendly communication and can be source of information, knowledge and help. Facebook is the most used social networking site by the respondents of universities of Haryana. Training and awareness programmes should be given to educate students and faculty members about the applications, benefits, and risks associated with social networking sites.



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