A STUDY ON USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND LIFE SKILLS OF PANJAB UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

*Dr. Rajni Thakur

ABSTRACT

The prime purpose of the paper was to explore the status of life skills of Panjab University students in relation to social networking sites usage through a descriptive study. Although no control was practiced on the economic status and family background of the sample but it was made sure that every student do possess a laptop or a mobile phone to be a part of social networking. To find out the status, scales of social networking and life skills were developed and administered by the researcher. In the present study the cluster sampling was used to collect the sample from various departments of Panjab University. The study found that the students with poor life skills were very highly engaged in the use of social networking sites that too in negative usage. The students with Good life skills were also found to be very highly engaged in use of social networking sites but in positive usage. While students with moderate life skills were engaged in very less number of sites usage. From the study it was concluded that social networking sites usage do affect the life skills of the students but it also depends on how it is being used.

Keywords: Social Networking, Family Background, Status, Life Skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's speedy technological advancements have led to the birth of a tech-savvy generation, especially in reference to the dependence on computers. Information and technology is the backbone of today's world and internet is most wondrous creation of information and technology. The entire world is becoming more and more obsessed with it. It has become the building block for today's socioeconomic development. In this era of technology, specifically the internet has taken the world by storm. The 21st century continues to usher in technological advances that change the nature of communication, socialization, private versus public information. One such change is the prominence that Social Networking websites currently enjoy, especially among the younger generations. Social Networking software has been defined as online spaces that allow individuals to present themselves unique identities, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2006).

*Assistant Professor in English, Government College of Education, Sector 20, Chandigarh.

Social Networking

Social Networking refers to an online service, platform, or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people. Web-based Social Networking services connect people of similar interests and activities across political, economic, and geographic borders. The main types of Social Networking services are those that contain category places (such as former school year or classmates), means to connect with friends (usually with self-description pages), and a recommendation system linked to trust. On Social Networking sites, most often, individual users are encouraged to create profiles containing information about them. Users can often upload pictures of themselves to their profiles, post blog entries for others to read, search for other users with similar interests, and compile and share lists of contacts. In addition, user profiles often have a section dedicated to comments from friends and other users. To protect user privacy, social networks usually have controls that allow users to choose who can view their profile, contact them, add them to their list of contacts, and so on. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Some social networks have additional features, such as the ability to create groups that share common interests or affiliations, upload or stream live videos, and hold discussions in forums. Geo-Social Networking co-opts Internet mapping services to organize user participation around geographic features and their attributes (Cristian ,2011).

Life Skills

Life skill refers to groups of psychological, social and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self management skills to lead to a healthy and productive life (Coffey and Kroull,1998).

The development of life skills is an important part of personality development, which can be beneficial for all young adults(Rao, 2003).

Life skills are defined as the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills constitute a continuum of knowledge and aptitudes that are necessary for a person to function independently and to avoid interruption of the employment experience. Life skills include self development, communication skills, job and financial skills development education, interpersonal and family relationship development and stress and anger management (Brolin, 1989).

2. PURPOSE OF STUDY:

Social Networking through internet has given us the ability to connect with people from around the globe with a few clicks of a button, making it easier than ever to keep in touch with our friends and family. Because of that, Social Networking is the biggest industry of our time. Now days the usage of social networks has become a trend, to keep in touch, especially amongst students as a communication tool. When a technical medium is used by the persons for longer period of time ,it does influence their lives and thus their life skills such as communication, problem solving, critical thinking, self discipline gets affected .As many students are already using a wide-range of Social Networking sites ,which highlights the significance of Social Networking sites in the lives of students and as a topic of research so as to show how networked practices mirror, support, and alter their known everyday practices .So, this study will be helpful to find out the effect of Social Networking on life skills of students.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the present study is stated as follows:

 "A STUDY ON USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND LIFE SKILLS OF PANJAB UNIVERSITY STUDENTS"

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the present study was:

To study the use of Social Networking Sites by Panjab University campus students with Good, Moderate and Poor Life Skills

5. HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis of the present study was:

Panjab University students with Good, Moderate and Poor Life Skills do not differ significantly with respect to their usage of Social Networking Sites.

6. TOOLS USED

Tool for Social Networking: A self-prepared questionnaire was designed and developed for the purpose. The scale of Social Networking was a quantitative scale which consisted of 39 questions with responses as 'yes' ,'no' and 10 questions with more than 2

responses (qualitative) in these questions the respondent was given freedom to tick mark any number of responses as suited them to get a highly reliable data.

Tool for Life Skills: A self-prepared questionnaire was designed and developed for the purpose. The scale of Life Skills was a 5 point scale having 29 questions that includes Never (N), Occasionally (O), Sometimes(S), Usually(U), Always (A).Students had to answer the questions by critically analyzing each statement for self & tick on the scale.

7. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Most of the educational phenomenon consists of large number of units. It would be impracticable to test, to interview or to observe each unit of population under controlled conditions in order to arrive at principles having universal validity. Population is so large that their study would be expensive in terms of time, money, efforts and manpower. Sampling is a process by which small number of individuals, objects, events are selected and analyzed in order to findout something about entire population from which it was selected, thus a representative group selected from the entire population which is called sample population. It is often desirable in order to reduce expenditure, save time and energy, permit measurement of greater score or produce greater accuracy. Sampling procedure provide generalization on the basis of relating small proportion of population is called a sample. The present study was limited to 100 post-graduate students, selected randomly from Panjab University, Chandigarh.

8. DESIGN OF STUDY

The present study was conducted employing descriptive survey method whereby two variables Social Networking and life skills were studied among students of Panjab University. This method is concerned with collecting detailed description of existing phenomenon with the intent of employing data to justify current conditions and to make intelligent plans for improving them. For the purpose, self-prepared questionnaires of Social Networking (qualitative) and life skills were used. Wherein the respondents were requested to place a tick mark on one cell of the alternatives in life skill scale while in case of Social Networking scale the respondents were given freedom to tick mark any number of alternatives in case more than two options were provided , to get as much reliable or authentic data as possible. For evaluating the relationship or effect of Social Networking and/on life skills of students mean , standard deviation, t-ratio and percentage was used.

8. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

After the selection of the sample, both the scales of social networking and life skills were developed and administered on the sample. After the collection of data, the Life Skills Scores of the subjects were divided into three categories namely students with good life skills(SGLS), students with moderate life skills (SMLS) and students with poor life skills(SPLS) . The 27% of the high scorers of life skills scale i.e 27 students were taken as students with high life skills (SGLS), whereas the 27% of the low scorers of life skills scale i.e 27 students were considered as the students with poor life skills (SPLS), and the remaining in-between i.e. 46 students were considered as the students with moderate life skills (SMLS). After that, for the purpose of interpretation, the percentage value of responses of the Social Networking Scale were computed and interpreted, in relation to the students with good life skills, moderate life skills and poor life skill.

9. FINDINGS

The Hypothesis of the present study was rejected i.e.
"Panjab University students with Good, Moderate and Poor Life Skills do not differ significantly with respect to their usage of Social Networking Sites"
In the present study specific findings are as follows-

In reference to the computed results, it can be concluded that the students with poor life skills were highly engaged in Social Networking activities like being familiar with the term(96.21%), to be a member of 4 and above social networking sites & visiting 4 and above sites actively (40.74%) ,highest number of Facebook (100%) and Twitter (59.25%) users, various reasons for joining these sites (37%) ,communicating with friends (28.39%), being most benefitted through social networking sites as 'having more friends'(44.44%)& 'easily able to connect with friends'(62.96%)& 'a great way to enjoy leisure time'(22.22%) ,meeting a stranger whom one knows only through these sites(74.07%), wishing a mobile with android features (66.66%), video chatting(59.25%), most familiar with the features of these sites(41%), members of latest sites like Google+ (62.96%) ,highest number of followers of personalities(21-30) on these sites (11.11%), language getting affected by usage of these sites (88.88%), experience of abused messages (59.25%), grades being affected (62.96%), social networking being a threat (77.77%) , losing sleep due to late night log-ins (81.48%), priority for social networking than anything else (77.77%), mind pre-occupied with updates on profile (62.96%), being bothered by likes or dislikes on profiles(55.55%), development of social

skills through these sites (77.77%), life being bore/dull without social networking sites (62.96%), understanding people better (77.77%), low in or not using educational/professional links on these sites (70.37%). It implies that those students who were very highly engaged in social networking were possessing Poor Life Skills, as a result of negative use/misuse of social networking.

While in case of students with Good Life Skills also , a high percentage of engagement was found but in case of activities like use of educational links (88.88%), using these sites for professional development(74.07%) ,minimum number of visits(2-5 times in a day) (25.92%) ,different ways of using these sites ,creating own profiles(92.59%), these sites being useful as a student(74.07%), wishing to possess an i-phone with BBM messages(66.66%), being aware of the privacy settings on these sites(92.59%), face to face communication being affected due to usage of these sites(62.96%), being aware of the widened gap with neighbours(69.96%) , connecting with school/college /university on these sites(81.48%), looking life in a broader sense(85.18%). It implies that those students who were highly engaged in social networking were also possessing Good Life Skills, as a result of positive use of social networking sites , but in less number of cases as compared to the students with Poor Life Skills. So it may be concluded that the use of social networking is also accompanied by the way one uses it, that affects the life skills of the person.

In case of students with Moderate Life Skills, high percentage of usage of social networking was found in the least number of cases and that too in activities like maximum visits on these sites(every hour-15.2%, couple of hours-21.73%,more than 5 times a day-2.17%), getting excited on a single notification on profiles(50%) and being a member of these sites to prevent oneself from social isolation(69.56%). So it can be concluded that in some cases, social networking do significantly affect the life skills but at moderate level.

10. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of present study indicate the following educational implications of the findings:-

According to the present study the students, very high in usage of Social Networking are having poor life skills, so these students must pay attention on this area. They can improve it, by minimizing or regulating their behavior in relation to Social Networking.

As the students with Good Life Skills are high in usage of Social Networking as well. So it implies that if Social Networking Sites used and managed in positive way can led to enhancement of good life skills.

In addition, some students are partially affected by social networking and are possessing moderate life skills. So these students need to be given proper guidance and direction and it can be done with the help of parents and teachers, as facilitators.

To conclude, we may say that as the students are more exposed to the virtual community of social networking today, whether it is for the purpose of maintaining relationships or seeking self disclosure and making new friends, they stand free in the ways they might use these sites. So there lies a great need to channelize their energies, efforts and smart usage of leisure time without being a victim of the virtual community and for the purpose, the teachers and parents can play a vital role. They can gather the information as much as possible through various modes regarding social networking so that they can pass on the refined knowledge further leading to much more inform and efficient tech-savvy generation rather than being carried away by the idea of being a part of the most popular 'I'.

REFERENCES

Brolin,D.E(1989): Life centered career education: competency based approach(Third edition). Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. Retrieved on 12/03/2012 from /pre-9216/life.htm

Coffey and Kroull (1998) Choosing Life skills-A life guide for selecting life skills programme for Adult and Juvenile offenders.US; District of Columbia,pg 81;1.

Cristian, S.(2011):"The impact of Social Networks on society". American studies. Retrieved on 23/11/2011 from Americanstudiescta.wordpress.com/2011/06/14/the-impact-of-social-networks-on-society-by-staicu-cristian/

Ellison N, Steinfeld C, Lampe C (2006) *spatially bounded online social networks and social capital: The role of Facebook.* Paper presentation at: Annual Conference of the International Communication Association; June 19-23, Dresden Germany. Abstract received from www. Msu.edu/~nellison/pubs.html. Retrieved on 22/03/2012.

Rao, U.N.B (2003): From adolescents to achievers. In Employment newspaper,8-14,Nov.2003,India

Websites Consulted:

- www.ericdigests.org
- www.eric.ed.gov
- www.unicef.org
- wikipedia.org