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"CHANGING PERSPECTIVES IN COMMERCE, MANAGEMENT, ECONOMICS AND TECHNOLOGY"

15th February, 2019

T.Z.A.S.P. Mandal's

Pragati College of Arts & Commerce, Dombivli (E),

D.N.C. Road, Dombivli (E), Dist. - Thane, Maharashtra- 421201

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First Edition: 15th February, 2019

Organized by:
T.Z.A.S.P Mandal's
Pragati College of Arts & Commerce, Dombivli

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USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ACADEMIC INFORMATION SHARING AMONG UNDERGRADUATE: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The user study has been conducted among professional courses students of Pragati College of Arts and Commerce, Dombivli. The paper deals with perception of students about use of social media platform for information sharing related to academics. The focus of this study to investigate students perception about social media for academic & research information sharing, the challenges to their use of such platform to share academic information and prospects for the effective use of social media for academic information sharing.

Keywords: *Social Media, Information sharing, Library*

Introduction

Over 3 trillion people, (Representing 40% of the global population) are using the Internet. Out of this number, about 74% are engaged in social media tools. Social networks refer to tools used to enable users for social interaction. Social media are online technology platforms that help to connect people together far and near. The use of social networks is a growing phenomenon in both corporate and academic life. Students find it very easy to express their ideas, thoughts, information sharing through social media platform. Social media becomes an integral part of the student's full life, took up most of his spare time. The mention of an online community in academia brings to mind an image of students chatting aimlessly away. Lots and lots of literatures exists in the area of social media use among university students but only a handful exist in the area of its use for academic information sharing. This study therefore undertaken to investigate if students of Prgati College of Arts & Commecre, Dombivli use these social media to share academic information or for fun only, the challenges to their use of social media to share information related to academics & students perception about use of social media in academics.

Literature review

Over the past ten years there has been an increasing interest in the new generation of web-based technologies, tools and services offered by social media. This Social media, popularly known as Web 2.0 is becoming a central topic in our information world. The concept was coined officially by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty. Social media is a place where everyone can add or edit information. It is a web where digital tools allow users to create, change and publish dynamic content (Aharony,2008).

In a 2011 research on uses of social sites, Nwosu (2011) findings revealed the same pattern in Nigeria as those revealed in US on reasons for the use of social media, with 170 0f the 200 sample respondents using social media as a platform of chatting, dating, e-mailing, photo/video sharing, and connecting with friends, while the remaining 30 said they sometimes use it to search for information besides connecting with friends. In particular, higher institutions students form a large proportion of users on social media networks. Social network sites help fulfill communication needs and wants among students. It is a convenient method of communication and provides the ability to stay connected with friends and family, but on the users own rate and time (Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009). Users can manage their interactions within their own schedule by choosing when they want to read and respond. The internet communication is a solitary activity usually done alone. However, it is efficient because it is a one-to-many method of communication that allows users to quickly spread information. The

gratification received from this social information helped users feel that they were a part of a peer network of knowing what was going on about events and activities (Quan Haase et al., 2010 as cited in Sanusi, Adelabu and Okunade, 2014). Data from the study of Mujeeb-ur, Li, Abdul and Syed (2014) show the respondents were asked about the frequent use of social media majority of 89% respondents replied that they have regularly use social networking sites and similarly the study was conducted in Malaysia (Hamat, Embi & Hassan, 2012) showed that more than 80% of the university students were having account on social media and they use social media frequently. While 11% of the respondents said they sometimes use social media. The respondents were also inquired about the favorite /frequently used social media, as expectedly the result showed that 96% of the respondents used Facebook, whereas 3.5% respondents were frequent users of twitter and only one per cent used other social network sites. Despite the fact that social media are used by students, none of the studies reviewed reported using social media for academic information sharing.

Sanusi, Adelabu and Okunade (2014) reported that there are several challenges to the use of social media for academic information sharing. The author highlighted that lack of basic amenities, lack of conducive environment, access to computers, structure of educational system, cost of internet connection, and lack of enthusiasm on the part of instructor are all challenges militating against the use of social media for academic information sharing. A summary of findings of Abir and Ali (2013) highlights three main findings: college students spend a long time on social networking sites; college students are facing problems in trusting, filtering and selecting all the different information accessed from social networking sites; and social networks affect students in both positive and negative ways. Abdelraheem (2013) found that students' use of social media for social purposes was found to be more than their use for academic purposes. Facebook was found to be the most used and popular sites and after it the YouTube sites. However, Abdelraheem (2013) submitted that though social media may make learning easier, comfortable and more fun for the students.

Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To access students perception about use of social media for academic information sharing.
- To understand the challenges encountered in using social media platform for academic information sharing.
- To know the prospects for use of social media for academic information sharing.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive research that adopts survey method. A sample of 100(50%) of Professional(BMS & BScIT) Course students was randomly selected from a population of 200 students of BMS & BScIT courses of Pragati College of Arts & Commerce. About 6 students did not complete the questionnaire hence the researcher made use of 94 students. The data collected through questionnaire was organized, tabulated & interpreted by using simple statistical method.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Respondents data Gender wise

Gender	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Male	30	31.91
Female	64	68.09
Total	94	100

The analysis of data in Table 1 shows that out of 94 respondents 30(31.91%) were male students and 64(68.09%) were female students.

Research question 1: What are the reasons for the use of social media by students?

Table 2: Reason for Use of Social Media

Particular	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Information Sharing	53	56.38
Connecting with loved ones	11	11.70
For news	14	14.89
For social interaction	29	30.85
For obtaining research information	39	41.49
For photo sharing	14	14.89

The data on table 2 shows that 56.38% students are using Social media for Information sharing, 41.49% for obtaining research information and 30.85% using it for social interaction. While 14.89 % students using it for news and photo sharing and only 11.70% using it for connecting with loved ones. Researcher found that major reason for the use of social media for information sharing, obtaining research information and social interaction.

Research Question 2: To what extent do the social media for academic information sharing?

Table 3: Use of social media for information sharing

Academic information	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Assignment	31	32.98
Research	29	30.85
Preparation for notes	39	41.49
Group discussion	27	28.72
Tests	14	14.89

The data on Table 3 shows that most of the students use social media for sharing notes(41.49%), assignment(32.98%), sharing research information(30.85%%), group discussion(28.71%) and tests(14.89%). This finding contradicted to the findings of Nwosu(2011) who pointed out that most times the students make use of social media for socialization rather than academics.

Research Question 3: What is the frequency of use of social media for academic information sharing?

Table 4: Frequency of use of social media for academic information sharing

Academic information	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Daily	65	69.15
Weekly	9	20.12
Monthly	9	20.12
Never	3	3.19

The above table 4 shows that 69.15% students using social media daily for the academic information sharing. 20.12% students using social media for academic information on Weekly and monthly basis. While 3.19% students never using social media for academic information sharing.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges to the student's use of social media for academic information sharing?

Table 5: Challenges to the use of social media for academic information sharing.

Academic information	No. of respondents	% of respondents
The platform is for fun and not for academics	14	14.89
Network Problems	44	46.80
None of my friends share research information	17	18.08
Friends do not comment on academic information posts	16	17.02
Lectures do not support the use of social media for information sharing	16	17.02

The data on Table 5 shows that major challenge faced by students in use of social media for academic information sharing is Network problems (46.80%). 18.08% found that none of their friends share research information and 17.02% students revealed that friends do not comment on academic information posts and lectures do not support the use of social media for information sharing. This study support the findings of Sanusi, Adelabu and Okunade(2014). While, 14.89% believe that the platform is not for academics. This shows that the challenge to the use of social media includes perception of students on the use of the platform.

Research Question 5: What are the prospects for the use of social media for academic information sharing?

Table 6: Prospects for the use of social media for academic information sharing

Academic information	No. of respondents	% of respondents
A social media platform for research should be created	20	21.27
The library should promote use of the platform by extending or rendering their services through the media like Library 2.0 and web 2.0	16	17.02
Students should be advised rather than being mocked to use the platform for sharing research information	15	15.95
Class representatives should be encouraged to pass lecture notes and research information through social media platforms	19	20.21
The college should develop software that should strictly be used to transmit research information among students and lecturers.	22	23.40
Lecturers should promote the use of social media platform by posting assignments, instructions, lecture notes and lecture hours via the platform	30	31.91

The Table 6 shows that 21.27% students realized for a social media platform for research should be created, 17.02% students suggest library should promote use of the platform by extending or rendering their services through media like Library 2.0 and Web 2.0, 15.95% students should be advised rather than being mocked to use the platform for sharing research information. 20.21% feels that class representative should be encouraged to pass lecture notes and research information through social media platforms, 23.40% suggested college should

develop software that should strictly be used to transmit research information among students and lecturers. While, 31.91% said that lecturers should promote the use of social media platform by posting assignments, lectures notes and lecture hours via the platform. This shows that student's response to the prospects for use of social media for information sharing is affirmative. This finding is supported to the findings of Mujeeb-ur, Li, Abdul and Syed(2014).

Conclusion & recommendations

Thus finding of this study shows that though social media platform originally meant for socialization; today it can be used as a platform to promote information sharing relating to academics. The students also realized the same and using this platform for sharing academic information among them. However students facing some challenges such as network problems, lack of academic information sharing, lack of comments on academic posts, still some felt that the platform is for fun and not for academics. However these challenges could be avoided if a social media platform for research is created; if lecturers promote the use of social media platform by posting assignments, instructions, lectures notes and hours via the platform; if class representatives are encouraged to pass lecture notes through social media platforms, if library promote their resources and services through use of social media tools like web 2.0 tools, if the college develops software that should strictly be used to transmit research information among students and faculty.

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