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## Use of Academic Social Networking Sites by the Research Scholars in the Universities of Dharwad City: A study

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#### Abstract

*The study conducted by Nandez and Borrego (2012) reveals that the research scholars use the Academic Social Networking Sites (here after ASNSs) to get in touch with their peers, propagate research outcomes and follow other researchers. There are numerous Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNSs) which facilitate researchers stay in touch with the research / academic community in the similar fields of activity. The study conducted by Kenchakkanavar and Hadagali (2016) reveals that ResearchGate, Academia.edu and Slideshare are commonly used ASNSs. These ASNSs are mainly used to share jobs, education and research related information with their friends. Hence, the present study has been undertaken to determine the use of Academic Social Networking Sites by the research scholars of the two state universities.*

#### Keywords

Social Networkings Sites; Research Scholars;  
Universities; Dharwad

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## INTRODUCTION

World is moving fast and various new technologies are replacing traditional systems. Librarians need special knowledge and skills including techniques of using software and hardware, selection and assessment of resources, use of information systems, ability to search networks and databases, as well as problem-solving and research skills and the ability to teach users. Librarians should acquire these skills before entering the job market. The LIS education system must prepare librarians to enter the field through proper college curriculum so that library professionals are expert to handle new communication technology. New technology has made librarians network specialists, information mediators, and system designers. If librarians are to be the first to use new technology, they must have the skills and knowledge. Those can be acquired formally or informally. LIS programs must help develop skills such as communication, interpersonal relationships, research, specialized subject knowledge, analytical ability, updated IT skills, and flexibility.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To determine the use of Academic Social Networking Sites by the research scholars of the two state universities of Hubballi-Dharwad is the main purpose of the present study. The specific objectives of the survey are to:

1. To know the awareness and use of different Academic Social Networking Sites by the full time research scholars of two state universities;
2. To find out the most popular ASNSs used by the research scholars;
3. To study the time spent on ASNSs by the research scholars;
4. To know the use of ASNSs by the research scholars in their research work;
5. To identify the problems faced by the research scholars while using ASNSs; and
6. To study the impact of ASNSs on research scholars' research work.

## METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the survey method has been employed to conduct the research and questionnaire method as a tool to collect the data from the full time / regular research scholars. A total of 200

questionnaires were distributed, out of which 100 questionnaires in each university, i.e. Karnatak University, Dharwad and University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad (excluded Karnataka State Law University, Hubballi, as the number of regular research scholars in this university is in single digit). To collect the data from the full time research scholars, simple random sampling method has been adopted. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 156 duly filled in questionnaires were received back with an encouraging response rate of 78.00 %. The collected data was then fed into the computer to calculate the simple frequency.

**SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

There are three universities in Hubballi-Dharwad (twin cities) viz. The Karnatak University, Dharwad, the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad and the Karnataka State Law University, Hubballi. In the present study, the Karnataka State Law University, Hubballi is excluded from the study, as the number of regular research scholars’ is in a single digit.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

**Gender wise distribution of questionnaire**

The table 1 reveals the university wise distribution of questionnaires. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed among the research scholars of the Karnatak University, Dharwad and the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad. Out of 200 questionnaires, 156 duly filled in questionnaires were received back with an encouraging response rate of 78 %. Among the universities, 74 (47.44 %) research scholars from the KUD and 82 (52.56 %) from the UASD have responded. The study also reveals that all 156 (100 percentage) research scholars are aware of general Social Networking Sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter etc.

**Table 1:** Gender wise distribution of questionnaires

S. No.	Gender	KUD	UASD	Total
1	Male	53 (50.47%)	52 (49.53%)	105 (67.30%)
2	Female	21 (41.18%)	30 (58.82%)	51 (32.70%)
	Total	74 (47.44%)	82 (52.56%)	156 (100.00)

**Use of different Social Networking Sites (SNSs)**

A question was asked to the research scholars on the use of general Social Networking Sites (SNSs). Out of 156 respondents, 90 (58.82 %) respondents used Facebook, followed by 60 (38.46 %) respondents used Google+. The top three general SNSs used by the research scholars are Facebook, Google + and LinkedIn. The other details are presented in table 2.

**Table 2:** Use of different Social Networking Sites

S. No.	SNS	KUD	UASD	Total
1	Facebook	44 (48.89)	46 (51.11)	90 (58.82)
2	Google+	40 (66.67)	20 (33.33)	60 (38.46)
3	LinkedIn	34 (61.82)	21 (38.18)	55 (35.26)
4	Twitter	12 (66.67)	06 (33.33)	18 (11.54)
5	Tumblr	03 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	03 (1.92)
6	MySpace	01 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	01 (0.64)
7	Others	00 (00.00)	03 (100.00)	03 (1.92)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage*

**Use of Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNSs)**

An overwhelming response was received by the respondents on the awareness of the Academic Social Networking Sites. The study indicates that all the respondents (156) are aware of ASNSs like Research Gate, Google Scholar, Academia.edu etc. Among the ASNSs, Research Gate was heavily (102, 65.38%) used by the research scholars, followed by 100 (64.10 %) research scholars who used Google Scholar and 90 (57.69 %) respondents used Academia.edu. The top five ASNSs used by the research scholars are ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Academia.edu, Slide Share and Research ID. The study reveals that the respondents of both the universities are aware of different ASNSs and they are making use of these sites for their research work. It is also evident from the study that the use of ASNSs by the two university research scholars is more compared to general SNSs.

**Table 3:** Use of Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNSs)

S. No.	ASNS	KUD	UASD	Total
1	Research Gate	62(60.78)	40(39.22)	102(65.38)
2	Google Scholar	64(64.00)	36(36.00)	100(64.10)
3	Academia.edu	42(46.67)	48(53.33)	90(57.69)
4	Slide Share	28(45.16)	34(54.84)	62(39.74)
5	ResearchID	10(47.62)	11(52.38)	21(13.46)
6	Mendeley	10(71.43)	04(28.57)	14(8.97)
7	My Science Work	08(57.14)	06(42.86)	14(8.97)
8	SciSpace	07(63.64)	04(36.36)	11(7.05)
9	Scholastica	01(12.50)	07(87.50)	08(5.13)
10	FrontiersIn	01(16.67)	05(83.33)	06(3.85)
11	iAM Scientist	04(66.67)	02(33.33)	06(3.85)
12	Method Space	02(66.67)	01(33.33)	03(1.92)
13	Epernicus	01(100.00)	0	01(0.64)
14	Figshare	01(100.00)	0	01(0.64)
15	Diigo	0	0	0

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage*

**Time spent on the Academic Social Networking Sites**

The response for the time spent on the ASNSs is scattered from one hour to more than four hours respectively. The majority, i.e. 71 (45.51 %) respondents spent one hour and 51 (32.69 %) respondents spent two hours for using ASNSs, whereas, 18 (11.54 %) respondents spent more than 3 hours a day. The study reveals that the research scholars are spending more time on the ASNSs and using it for their research purpose.

**Table 4:** Time spent on the Academic Social Networking Sites

S. No.	Time	KUD	UASD	Total
1	One hour	30 (42.25)	41 (57.75)	71 (45.51)
2	Two hours	20 (39.22)	31 (60.78)	51 (32.69)
3	Three hours	09 (56.25)	07 (43.75)	16 (10.26)
4	More than four hours	15 (83.33)	03 (16.67)	18 (11.54)
	<b>Total</b>	74 (47.44)	82 (52.56)	156 (100.00)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage*

**Period of using Academic Social Networking Sites**

A question was raised to the respondents on the period from which the ASNSs have been used. A surprising result was observed that 82 (52.56 %) respondents used ASNSs from more than 2 years, followed by, 40 (25.64 %) respondents who used the ASNSs from 1-2 years. The other details are presented in table 5.

**Table 5:** Period of using Academic Social Networking Sites

S. No.	Period	KUD	UASD	Total
1	Less than a month	09 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	09 (5.77)
2	1-6 months	04 (40.00)	06 (60.00)	10 (6.41)
3	6 months to 1 year	07 (46.47)	08 (53.33)	15 (9.62)
4	1-2 years	19 (47.50)	21 (52.50)	40 (25.64)
5	More than 2 years	35 (42.68)	47 (57.32)	82 (52.56)
	<b>Total</b>	74 (47.44)	82 (52.56)	156 (100.00)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage*

**Academic Social Networking Sites and their use in Research**

The introduction of general SNSs has made impact on communication. Similarly, the ASNSs have made an impact on study, research and teaching. A question was posed to the respondents on why they use ASNSs. The study reveals that 86 (55.13 %) respondents used the ASNSs for finding conferences / seminars / workshops related information and finding useful information respectively, whereas, 85 (54.49 %) research scholars used to upload publications, followed by 78 (50.00 %) research scholars who have used the ASNSs for finding current news from the World Wide Web. The study reveals that the ASNSs have made an impact on research scholars' study and research.

**Table 6:** Academic Social Networking Sites and their use in Research

S. No.	Purpose	KUD	UASD	Total
1	For finding conferences / seminars / workshop related information	47(54.65)	39(45.35)	86(55.13)
2	Finding useful information	51(59.30)	35(40.70)	86(55.13)
3	Uploading publications	56(65.88)	29(34.12)	85(54.49)
4	For finding current news from World Wide Web	50(64.10)	28(35.90)	78(50.00)
5	For interaction with subject experts, consultants etc.	38(61.29)	24(38.71)	62(39.74)
6	Linking of information to social media sites	28(59.57)	19(4.43)	47(30.13)
7	Promoting their own thoughts	15(62.50)	09(37.50)	24(15.38)
8	Giving feedback to friends	14(60.87)	09(39.13)	23(14.74)

*Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage*

**Problems faced by the research scholars while using the ASNSs**

Though there are many advantages of the ASNSs but there are problems which encounter either from the ASNSs and problems associated with the people / institutions using it. The literature on the SNSs and the ASNSs reveals that most of the institutions banned access to the SNSs and some of the ASNSs. The majority, i.e. 67 (42.95 %) research scholars said that access denied by the institutions is the major problem of using the ASNSs, followed by, 46 (29.49 %) research scholars said that unwanted notice from the sites hinders the usage of the ASNSs. Ensuring privacy is the third major problem faced by the research scholars. The other details are presented in table 7.

**Table 7:** Problems faced by the research scholars while using the ASNSs

S. No.	Problem	KUD	UASD	Total
1	Access denied by the University	38 (56.72)	29 (43.28)	67 (42.95)
2	Unwanted notice	17 (36.96)	29 (63.04)	46 (29.49)
3	No privacy ensured	15 (48.39)	16 (51.61)	31 (19.87)
4	Not user friendly	05 (19.23)	21 (80.77)	26 (16.67)
5	It is not useful for research	01 (16.67)	05 (83.33)	06 (3.85)
6	Others	02 (22.22)	07 (77.78)	09 (5.77)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage*

**Impact of the ASNSs on Research work**

A question was asked to know the impact of the ASNSs on research scholars' work. The study reveals that 94 (60.26 %) respondents agree and 54 (34.62 %) strongly agree with the statement that there is an impact of the ASNSs on respondents' research work. The response for other factors is quite low. The other details are given in table 8.

**Table 8:** Impact of the ASNSs on research work

S. No.	Opinion	KUD	UASD	Total
1	Strongly Agree	20 (37.04)	34 (62.96)	54 (34.62)
2	Agree	52 (55.32)	42 (44.58)	94 (60.26)
3	Uncertain	01 (14.28)	06 (85.72)	07 (4.49)
4	Disagree	01 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	01 (0.63)
5	Strongly Disagree	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
	<b>Total</b>	74 (47.44)	82 (52.56)	156 (100.00)

*Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage*

## SUGGESTION

Based on the opinion given by the research scholars and the observations made during the study, the suggestion has been made. It is observed from the study that the access to the SNSs and some ASNSs are banned in both the universities. But still the research scholars are making use of the SNSs with the help of mobile data plans. Hence, it is suggested to the authorities of the respective universities that the access to the SNSs and some the ASNSs should be given to research scholars to make use of these SNSs effectively and efficiently since these the SNSs or the ASNS have made an impact on their research endeavours.

## CONCLUSION

The Academic Social Networking Sites have made a great impact on the research scholars' study and research. The outcomes of the study reveal that Facebook is the most used Social Networking Sites by the Research scholar of the Karnatak University, Dharwad and the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad. The present study accomplishes the use of the ASNSs by the research scholars of two state universities. The findings of the study indicate that Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn are the most commonly used general the SNSs by the research scholars. The same results were also found in the study of Kenchakkanavar and Hadagali (2015). ResearchGate, Google scholar and Academia.edu are the most widely used ASNSs by the researchers. The similar results were also observed in the study conducted by Kenchakkanavar and Hadagali (2016). The majority of the researchers spend two hours a day on SNSs. Most of the research scholars used the ASNSs for finding conferences / seminars / workshops related information and for finding useful information respectively. The access denied by the universities and unwanted notice from the respective platforms are the common problems cited by the research community. The Academic Social Networking Sites should protect the misuse of copyrighted materials.

The study also reveals that the majority of the researchers opine that there is an impact of the ASNSs on their research work. The literature also reveals that there are number of advantages of these ASNSs on research work. Hence, the LIS professionals need to be proactive in providing awareness programmes on the usefulness of the Social Media platforms in study and research.

Conducting regular training programme in this regard is sin-qua-non. It is also observed from the study that in both the universities the access to social media platforms is banned which is quite discouraging. Providing library services either from the SNSs or the ASNSs will bring lot of changes in their research work. Hence, such studies will help the budding researchers to shed light on the advantages of the ASNSs and their usefulness in study and research.

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