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College Students' Attitude towards Social Networking Sites: Evidence from Sattur Taluk, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The exponential growth of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has brought substantial changes in the communication styles, learning approaches, and social engagement of college students. The present study investigates students' attitudes towards SNS with specific reference to usage behaviour, perceived advantages, satisfaction level, and problems encountered. The study is based on primary data collected from 191 college students drawn from six higher educational institutions in Sattur Taluk, Tamil Nadu, through a structured questionnaire. Analytical tools such as percentage analysis, weighted arithmetic mean, Garrett ranking technique, and Chi-square test were employed for data interpretation. The results indicate that SNS usage is widespread among students, with smartphones and laptops being the primary access devices. Although SNSs play a constructive role in enhancing knowledge sharing, career awareness, and extracurricular exposure, excessive usage leads to issues such as time mismanagement, addiction, and privacy risks. The Chi-square analysis reveals no significant association between demographic variables and the level of satisfaction with SNS. The study provides valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers to promote balanced and responsible use of SNS in higher education.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites, College Students, Attitude, Usage Behaviour, Satisfaction, India

1. Introduction

Social Networking Sites (SNS) have emerged as powerful digital platforms that enable individuals to communicate, collaborate, and share information beyond geographical constraints. Among college students, platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn have become indispensable for social interaction, academic coordination, and career-related exploration. The rapid expansion of internet connectivity and the affordability of smart devices have further intensified the adoption of SNS among youth in higher education.

While SNS offer numerous benefits, including instant communication, access to information, and opportunities for collaborative learning, they also pose several challenges. Excessive and unregulated usage may result in reduced academic concentration, time wastage, and weakened interpersonal relationships. Hence, understanding students' attitudes, satisfaction levels, and the problems associated with SNS usage has become a matter of academic relevance.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines the attitude of college students towards SNS in Sattur Taluk, Tamil Nadu. By applying appropriate statistical techniques, the study seeks to generate empirical evidence on how SNS influences students' academic and social lives.

2. Review of Literature

- Previous studies have extensively examined the role of SNS in shaping students' social and academic lives. Livingstone (2006) highlighted that SNS redefine interpersonal relationships by enabling identity exploration and social interaction. Reid and Reid (2007) observed that SNS users tend to express their 'real self' more openly compared to traditional communication channels.
- Subrahmanyam (2008) found that college students primarily use SNS to maintain and re-establish social ties. Coyle and Vaughn (2009) reported that SNS usage among students is largely oriented towards maintaining

friendships rather than academic engagement. Brandtzaeg and Heim (2010) identified multiple motivational factors influencing SNS adoption, including socialization, entertainment, and information seeking.

- Studies by Bicen and Cavus (2012), Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2013), and Roblyer (2014) indicate that SNSs have both positive and negative effects on students' academic performance, depending on usage intensity and purpose. While moderate use supports collaborative learning, excessive engagement may result in distraction and reduced academic focus. These findings underscore the need for context-specific empirical investigations, such as the present study.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study is conducted with the following three specific objectives:

- To examine the attitude and usage pattern of Social Networking Sites among college students.
- To assess the level of satisfaction and perceived benefits derived from Social Networking Sites.
- To identify the major problems experienced by students due to the use of Social Networking Sites.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design: A descriptive research design based on the survey method was adopted for the study.

4.2 Data Sources: Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to college students. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, books, and published research works.

4.3 Sampling Design: The study population comprised students from six higher educational institutions in Sattur Taluk. Using proportionate random sampling, 191 respondents representing 2.6 per cent of the population were selected.

5. Results and Discussion

The analysis is organised according to the three objectives of the study to ensure systematic interpretation and clarity.

Objective 1: Attitude and Usage Pattern of SNS

Table 1: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

| Gender | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------|-----------------------|------------|
| Male | 124 | 64.92 |
| Female | 67 | 35.08 |
| Total | 191 | 100.00 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 1 shows that male students constitute a higher proportion of SNS users (64.92%) compared to female students (35.08%), indicating relatively greater engagement among male respondents.

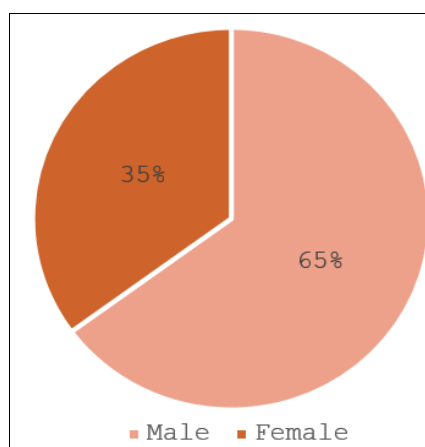


Fig 1: Gender-wise distribution of respondents

Table 2: Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

| Age Group (Years) | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 18–20 | 126 | 65.96 |
| 21–23 | 52 | 27.23 |
| 24–26 | 13 | 6.81 |
| Total | 191 | 100.00 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 2 reveals that students aged between 18 and 20 years form the largest group of SNS users (65.96%), suggesting early adoption and intensive usage among younger college students.

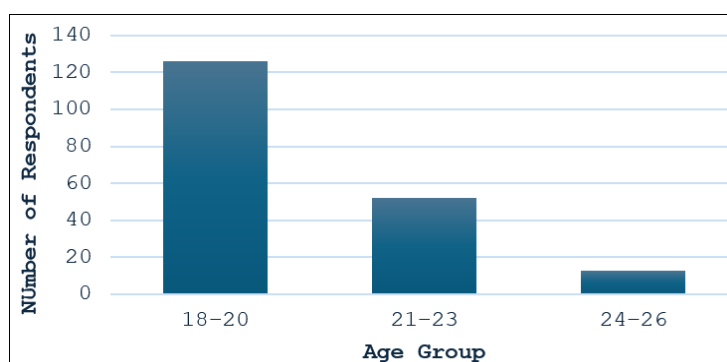


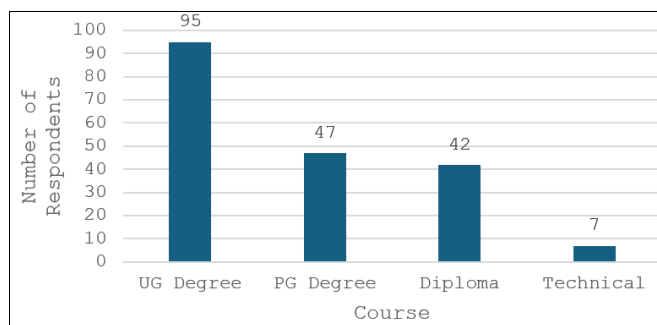
Fig 2: Age-wise distribution of respondents

Table 3: Course-wise Distribution of Respondents

| Course | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| UG Degree | 95 | 49.74 |
| PG Degree | 47 | 24.61 |
| Diploma | 42 | 21.99 |
| Technical | 7 | 3.66 |
| Total | 191 | 100.00 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data

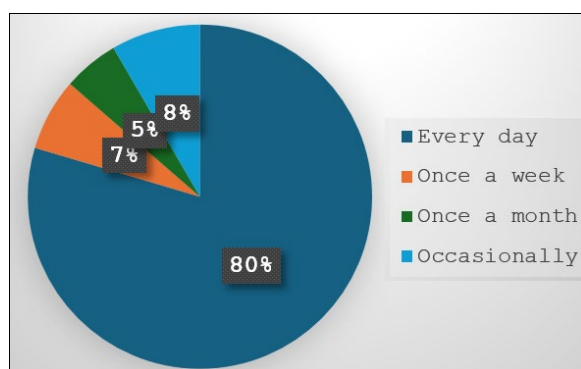
Table 3 indicates that undergraduate students account for the majority of SNS users (49.74%), followed by postgraduate (24.61%) and diploma students (21.99%).

**Fig 3:** Course-wise distribution of respondents**Table 4:** Frequency of SNS Usage

| Frequency | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Every day | 152 | 79.58 |
| Once a week | 13 | 6.81 |
| Once a month | 10 | 5.24 |
| Occasionally | 16 | 8.38 |
| Total | 191 | 100.00 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data

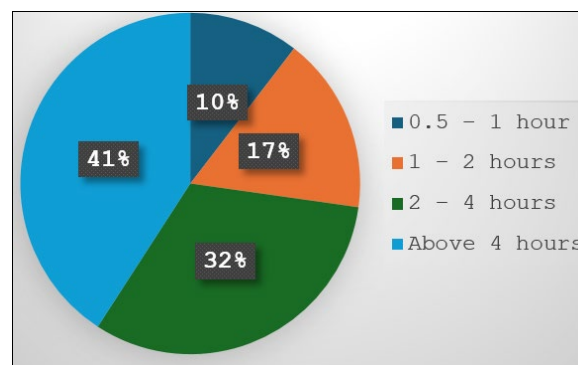
Table 4 demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents (79.58%) access SNS daily, confirming habitual usage.

**Fig 4:** Frequency of SNS usage**Table 5:** Time Spent per Day on SNS

| Time Spent | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 0.5 – 1 hour | 20 | 10.47 |
| 1 – 2 hours | 32 | 16.75 |
| 2 – 4 hours | 61 | 31.94 |
| Above 4 hours | 78 | 40.84 |
| Total | 191 | 100.00 |

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 5 highlights that a considerable proportion of students (40.84%) spend more than four hours per day on SNS, signalling the possibility of excessive engagement.

**Fig 5:** Time spent per day on SNS (Pie Chart)

A significant proportion of students spend more than four hours daily on SNS, indicating a risk of excessive usage. Students primarily use SNS for communication, information sharing, entertainment, and academic support. The high frequency of usage reflects a positive attitude towards SNS, confirming their integral role in students' academic and social ecosystems.

Objective 2: Satisfaction Level and Perceived Benefits

Weighted mean analysis indicates that most respondents fall under the medium level of satisfaction, followed by high satisfaction. Students perceive SNS as beneficial for knowledge sharing, exposure to new ideas, extracurricular participation, and access to career-related information such as job opportunities and professional networking.

The Chi-square test shows no significant association between demographic variables and satisfaction levels, implying that students across different categories share similar perceptions towards SNS.

Objective 3: Problems Associated with SNS USAGE

Despite the benefits, students encounter several challenges due to SNS usage. Time wastage ranks as the most prominent problem, followed by internet addiction, cybercrime exposure, and privacy concerns. A smaller proportion of respondents also reported issues related to cyberbullying and psychological stress.

These results indicate that uncontrolled SNS usage may adversely affect students' academic focus and personal well-being.

6. Findings

The major findings of the study are summarised as follows:

1. SNSs are widely used by college students, with daily usage being predominant.
2. Male students exhibit higher SNS usage compared to female students.
3. Students aged 18–20 years show the highest level of SNS engagement.
4. Smartphones and laptops are the most commonly used devices for accessing SNS.
5. A majority of students spend more than two hours per day on SNS.
6. The overall satisfaction level towards SNS is moderate.
7. SNSs are valued for communication, academic support, and career-related information.
8. Time wastage and internet addiction are the major problems associated with SNS usage.
9. No significant association exists between demographic variables and satisfaction level.

7. Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. Educational institutions should conduct awareness programmes on responsible SNS usage.
2. Digital literacy and time management skills may be integrated into the curriculum.
3. Students should be encouraged to use SNS primarily for academic and professional purposes.
4. Parents and teachers should guide students to prevent excessive and addictive usage.
5. Institutions may promote professional networking platforms to enhance employability.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Social Networking Sites play a significant role in shaping the academic and social experiences of college students. While SNS offer substantial benefits in terms of communication efficiency, learning support, and career awareness, excessive usage poses challenges such as time mismanagement and addiction.

The absence of a significant relationship between demographic factors and satisfaction levels suggests uniform perceptions among students. Therefore, higher educational institutions should emphasise digital responsibility and balanced SNS usage. Future research may extend this study through comparative or longitudinal approaches across different regions.

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