Status and Impact of Social Media and Networking Sites on Students of College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the status and impact of social media and networking sites on College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences' students of Fiji National University, Fiji. Likert scale was used in the questionnaire. The collected data from 516 (86.00 per cent) usable questionnaires was tabulated and analysed using statistical tools and techniques. The findings showed that the majority of students participated in and satisfied with high usage of Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram accessed through laptops and PCs on daily and weekly basis. The students made their profiles visible only for the well-known people and comforted with notorious postings. The positive impacts as communication with family and friends, participation in networking activities, and involvement in social activities, as well as negative impacts as discontinuation to the sites for misusing their information, distraction from research/assignments/careers activities, continue if the account is hacked, no review of privacy settings for controlling notorious postings, and consume too much time were identified as the utmost effects of social media and SNSs. This study provides opportunity to higher management to review the social software for the benefit of Fiji National University and to carry out future related studies especially in Fiji.

Keywords: Social media; Social networking sites; Fiji higher education; Facebook; Youtube; Instagram.

1. INTRODUCTION

The recent technological advances has revolutionised new online channels of social interaction and communication which empowered populations in expanding personal, professional, social, and political connections without any boundary of time or location. These new popular online channels constitute social media and networking sites (SMNSs) such as Facebook, YouTube, Flickrs, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc. which have been vital drivers not only in the acceleration of globalisation process, but also in the transformation of excluded populations to virtual populations due to the boom in internet industry. In this internet era, the advent of astonishing SMNSs made the incredible changes to the lifestyle of developed and developing countries. This rapid spread out of internet not only launched the first true social media site known as Sixdegrees.com with an aim of sharing a common virtual platform for common interest individuals, but also started an actual flood in social media to explore the new horizons of socialisation as stated in Table 1. In last decades, most SMNSs commonly focused on friendship and individual connections, however some sites appeared for specific purposes and locations such as geographic based (e.g. MySpace and Facebook in North America; Orkut and Hi5 in Latin America; Friendster and Cyworld in Asia and the Pacific; and Facebook in Africa and the Middle East); youth focused (e.g. MySpace consists of more than 100 million accounts);

Table 1. Launch of social media and networking sites

Period	Origin
1997	SixDegrees
1999	LiveJournal
2002	Friendster
2003	Linkedin, Hi5, MySpace, Skype
2004	Facebook, Flicker, Orkut, Tagged
2005	Bebo, Qzone, Renren, YouTube, TravBuddy, Blogster, LibraryThing
2006	Twitter, Goodreads, GamerDNA
2007	Tumblr, FriendFeed, Justin.tv
2009	Sina Wiebo, Grindr
2010	Pinterest, Instagram, Path, Quora
2011	Snapchat, Google+, Keek, Twitch.tv
2012	Tinder
2014	Bumble, Happn

professional focused (e.g. LinkedIn); social good networks (e.g. MySpace, Flickr, Facebook and YouTube)[1].

Today's Facebook has more than 1.11 billion members and students between 85 and 99 per cent in college or university have become one of the most demanding user groups after its

launch[2,3]. Fiji is one of the largest of the Pacific Island countries in terms of population, with just under 912,241 living there. In Fiji, Facebook penetration statistics reached 51.5 per cent compared to the above populations, and 54.9 per cent in terms of 500,958 internet users[4]. In last few years, the major factor in the boom of internet usage (Fig.1) was because of the explosion of SMNSs and this internet intensification affected Fiji in many ways. Hence, the education system is not untouchable. Fiji government initiatives such as the launch of first National Broadband Policy[5] in 2011, announcement to provide tablets to 12 and 13 year students in place of textbooks in 2016, and the launch of 24/7 unlimited access to internet through DigitalFIJI program[6] in 2018 were also responsible for higher usage of internet. In Fiji, there are total three universities as The University of South Pacific, University of Fiji, and Fiji National University. It was also noticed that limited literature is available on the acceptance and use of SMNSs by the students in universities of Fiji.
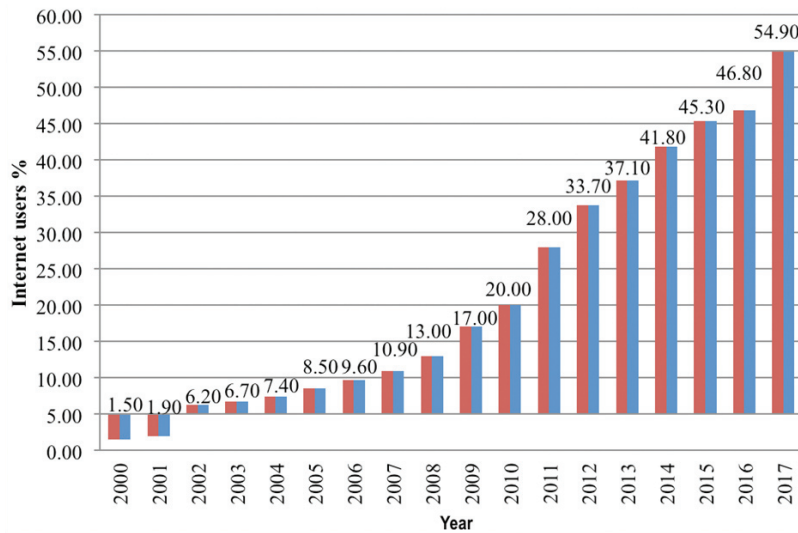
Source: Internet Live Stats, www.InternetLiveStats.com

Figure 1. Internet users in Fiji.

2. STATEMENT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the South Pacific, Fiji National University (FNU) is the largest university which was established in 2010 with a mandate to take tertiary education as close to the people of Fiji as is technically and financially viable. There are five colleges and one centre. Under FNU, the merger of Fiji School of Medicine (1885) and Fiji School of Nursing (1893) gave birth to the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS)[7]. The present study aimed to explore the status and impact of SMNSs on CMNHS students of FNU, Fiji. The following specific research objectives were framed to achieve the aim:

- To know the students' participation and use of social media and networking sites
- To find out the most popular social networking sites as well as the most used gadgets for accessing SMNSs
- To find out the students' perception about the risks and privacy dimensions associated with usage of SMNSs
- To assess the usage and satisfaction level of students of SMNSs
- To identify the impacts concerning with the usage of SMNSs
- To suggest ways and means for fruitful usage of SMNSs in their study and research.

The study was limited to the students of CMNHS, FNU, Fiji. Personal characteristics such as gender and age have also been considered in the scope of this study and only the users' approach to determine the status and impacts of SMNSs has been questioned and tested as per the above mentioned objectives.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey approach was applied to draw a representative sample size from the students' population studying in CMNHS of Fiji National University, Fiji. In light of set objectives, a questionnaire was designed and distributed randomly among 50 students to find out respondents' opinions, the language used, and to rule out ambiguities and doubts, if any, so as to procure accurate responses and results. After receiving the responses, several questions were revised to ensure the internal consistency and reliability of the questions. The final version of questionnaire was administered to 600 students by the investigator in CMNHS and 530 (88.33 per cent) filled in questionnaires were returned. Finally, the collected data from 516 (86.00 per cent) selected questionnaires was tabulated, analysed and interpreted using such techniques and tools as frequency distribution, percentages, summated mean weight score and ranking techniques, and MS-Excel Package to draw the results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that out of 516 respondents, female students (372) participation in SMNSs was more than the male students (144). The majority of students (51.94 per cent) were from 21-30 years age groups, followed by 35.66 per cent students from 16-20 years age group. The majority of the students spent more than two hour, followed by students spent less than two hour.

4.1 Awareness and Participation

It is indicated from Fig. 2 that the majority of students (96.90 per cent) were aware of SMNSs however 87.60 per cent students participated in to take the advantages of their attractive features. Apart from that, students (12.40 per cent) did not participate in due to their threats. The studies of Al-Daihani[8], and Haneefa and Sumitha[9] validated the above findings.

4.2 Frequency of Usage and Tools Applied

Table 2 depicted that 34.88 per cent students considered as active users opened their SMNSs accounts daily, whereas 32.56 per cent students visited their accounts weekly, 9.30 per cent monthly, 8.53 per cent rarely, and 3.88 per cent fortnightly considered as passive. The results were consistent with the
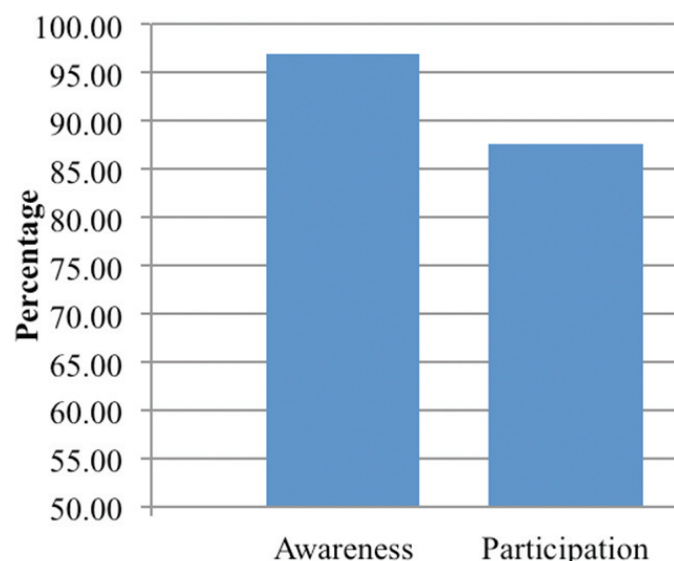
Figure 2. Awareness and participation in SMNSs.

Table 2. Frequency of usage and tools applied in accessing SMNSs

Frequency of usage			*Tools applied		
Variables	**Numbers**	**Percentage**	**Variables**	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Daily	180	34.88	Personal Computer	324	62.79
Weekly	168	32.56	Laptop	328	63.57
Fortnightly	20	3.88	Notebook	48	9.30
Monthly	48	9.30	Smartphone	184	35.66
Rarely	44	8.53	Others	24	4.65

(*Multiple answers were permitted)

Table 3. Use and satisfaction with various SMNSs

	*Use		**Satisfaction	
Account in	**Numbers**	**Percentage**	**Mean**	**Rank**
Facebook	432	83.72	2.30	1
MySpace	12	2.33	0.16	7-8
Twitter	32	6.20	0.36	4-5
Blog	12	2.33	0.09	10
LinkedIn	28	5.43	0.26	6
Flicker	12	2.33	0.12	9
YouTube	296	57.36	1.54	2
TeacherTube	28	5.43	0.16	7-8
Instagram	192	37.21	1.08	3
SlideShare	44	8.53	0.36	4-5

(*Multiple answers were permitted, **Summated mean and ranking score).

studies of Pempek[10], *et al.* Similarly, the majority of students (63.57 per cent) accessed their accounts through their laptops, while 62.79 per cent students used PCs. In addition, 35.66 per cent used their smartphones/mobiles for opening SMNSs. To add on, only 9.30 per cent students used their notebooks in using SMNSs. It was also found that students, representing 4.65 per cent used other tools such as tablet. The results were confirmed as obtained by the studies of Wang[11], *et al.*, and Lamanauskas[12], *et al.*.

4.3 Use and Satisfaction

The results from Table 3 revealed Facebook as the most popular SMNS among the students with 83.72 per cent, followed by 57.36 per cent and 37.21 per cent of students who indicated YouTube and Instagram respectively. Other less popular SMNSs indicated by the students were SlideShare, Twitter, LinkedIn, TeacherTube, MySpace, Blog, and Flicker. Moreover, it was also noticed from the mean score and ranking that majority of the students were satisfied with Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram. In addition, it was also followed by Twitter, SlideShare and LinkedIn. Very less number of students were satisfied with the other SMNSs. The results were somewhat consistent with the studies of Hall[13], *et al.*, and Iordache and Lamanauskas[14].

4.4 Profile Visibility and Comfortable with Unethical Posting

Figure 3 depicted the results that the majority of 61.24 per cent students preferred to make their profile visible only for people whom they knew well. The results also indicated that 14.73 per cent students did not know who viewed their profile information, followed by 10.08 per cent students who shared different information with different groups and 9.30 per cent students opened their profile information to everyone. Similarly, 30.23 per cent students felt uncomfortable with unethical advertisements/photos/information posting to their webpage. On the other hand, 29.46 per cent students felt somewhat comfortable, followed by 19.38 per cent comfortable, 11.63 per cent neutral, and 4.65 per cent very comfortable with unethical information posting. The findings were not similar as found by the study of Al-Badi[15], *et al.*

4.5 Impacts of SMNSs

The various impacts of SMNSs categorised as positive and negative have been illustrated in Table 4.

The majority of 74.03 per cent students indicated that SMNSs facilitated them in maintaining better and easy communication with family and friends, followed by 35.27 per cent students representing their participation in networking activities as finding new friends/ mentors/subjects' specialists. About 28.68 per
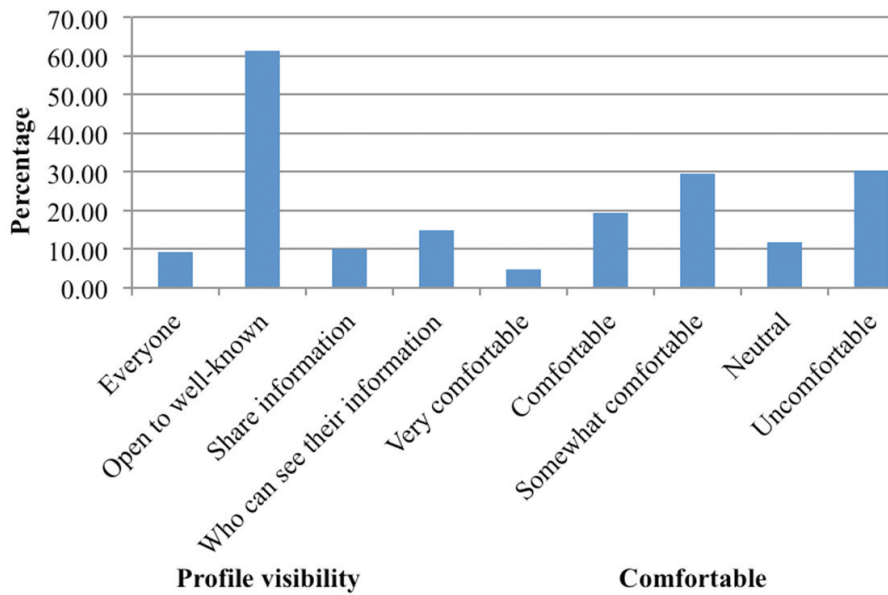
Figure 3. Profile visibility and comfortable with unethical posting.

Table 4. Impacts of various SMNSs

Variable	Numbers	Percentage
Positive impacts		
Communication with family/friends	382	74.03
Cultural events/activities	88	17.05
Networking activities	182	35.27
Entertaining/sports events/activities	84	16.28
Social events/activities	148	28.68
Other advantages	42	8.14
Negative impacts		
Divert concentration from core business	364	70.54
Consume too much time	344	66.67
Spoils communication	176	34.11
No review of privacy settings	300	58.14
Discontinue due to misuse of personal information by SMNSs	452	87.60
Continue if the account is hacked	368	71.32
Others issues	16	3.10

(Multiple answers were permitted).

cent students participated in social activities (weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, etc.) through posting/sharing their wishes/comments/photos/videos. It was followed by 17.05 per cent and 16.28 per cent students representing participation in cultural events, and entertaining/sports events respectively. Moreover, only 8.14 per cent students responded that SMNSs helped them to participate in other works. Similarly, the negative impacts identified the majority of students (87.60 %) reflected that they were willing to discontinue if SMNSs will use their personal information in any other way, followed by 71.32 per cent students depicted that they would continue using sites if their accounts were hacked, 70.54 per cent students felt that their concentration diverted from their core business (research/assignments/careers), 66.67 per cent said that too much time was consumed accessing SMNSs, and 58.14 per cent students stated that they did not review the privacy features under privacy settings for controlling unethical advertisements/photos/information posting as these were the utmost negative impact of SMNSs. In addition, 34.11 per cent students felt that their communication spoiled as slangs and inappropriate words used, grammatical errors occurred, etc. A few (3.10 per cent) students indicated the other issues including health related. The above results were similar to the results found in the studies of Hamade[16], Kumar[17], Al-Badi[15], *et al.*, Iordache and Lamanauskas[14], and Al kindi and Alhashmi[18], Osman[19], *et al.*, and Cain[20], *et al*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Over the past years, the SMNSs have become a significant part of web 2.0 environment and student's daily lives for communicating, distributing, and organising their knowledge as well as played a noteworthy role in turning web society into knowledge society[21]. The outcomes of present research work demonstrated that the majority of students were aware of and participated in SMNSs through their laptops and PCs on daily and weekly basis. It was also evident that the majority of participants as active and passive were involved in more than one social sites well as satisfied with the highly use of Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

Moreover, SMNSs positively affected students' life as they communicated with family and friends in better and easy way, participated in networking activities as finding new friends/mentors/subjects' specialists, and involved in social activities as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, etc. through posting/sharing/comments/photos/ videos respectively. Similarly, discontinuation to the sites for misusing their information, distraction from research/ assignments/careers activities, continue if the account is hacked, no review of privacy settings for controlling unethical

posting, and consume too much time were identified as the utmost negative effects of SMNSs.

Furthermore this research confirmed that the students participated in SMNSs for various interests but not for their academic purpose. The safe and sound use of SMNSs at academic institutions will bring better understanding to produce great outcomes. This research work not only provides information on the students' use of SMNSs to university management to deploy it across FNU but also aid as a pioneer data upon which future related studies will be anchored especially in Fiji.

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