Perception and Use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the Students of Mizoram University (MZU): A Survey

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Abstract

Social networking sites have become a part of life for almost everyone where people use to communicate their ideas and thoughts with one another. The present study is focused on the use of social networking sites by the students of Mizoram University (MZU), Aizawl, India. The survey method and random sampling technique has been used for the collection of data for the present study. 300 detailed questionnaires were distributed among the students of Under Graduate (UG), Post Graduate (PG), and Ph.D. Scholars of MZU where 262 duly filled-in questionnaires were received in total where 35% are UG, 38% are PG, and 27% is Ph.D. scholars. The analysis of the collected data is presented in tables and charts followed by the interpretation. The present study reveals that the majority of the students are aware of SNSs and using one or more than one social networking sites, where Facebook and YouTube are found as the most commonly used SNSs by the students of MZU.

1. Introduction

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) enables the society to create, communicate, manage and process information through multimedia in various digital formats that enable the people to access the information effectively and efficiently. Humans living in a society always tries to communicate and interact with one another. For the development of oneself or a nation sharing information and knowledge with one another is necessary. The exchange of messages with one another using different kinds of interactions is known as communication. It is in human nature to interact with people and depends on one another.

So, the creation of social networking sites is the result of the social nature of human being (Chakraborty, 2012). The social networking sites are actually the web 2.0 tools that encourage communication, collaborationand information sharing online. Web 2.0 tools deliver the functionality of the "read-write web" to large user groups, and to great effect (Khare and Deepmala, 2014).

In the present age, social networking sites have become a part of life for an individual, especially to the students, through which they can share their thoughts, ideas, information, activities, events, and can communicate within their network. Social networking sites are profile based websites that allow users to maintain social relationships by viewing, visiting and sharing their list of social

connections with other members (Kumar, N. 2012). Social networking sites offer a wide variety of resources and services such as messaging, blogging, sharing photos, audios and videos, group discussion, and distribution of applications (Papegowda and others, 2015).Web 2.0 tools add more advantages to the library users and open an opportunity to the library and information centers. The networking services enable librarians and users to collaborate and share information resources in digital age. There are numbers of social networking sites available over the web where one has to become a member of the particular site he/she wants to register. Social networking service can be defined as an online service/platform/site which only focus on building up social relations between the people of same interest or share the same activities.. Some of the popular social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Flicker, Instagram, Blogs, Friendster, Google+, Tumblr, Pinterest, Academia.edu, etc.

The SNSs facilitate libraries in the following ways for providing information services to their users: view and exchange of information, working online mode, marketing library services, connecting members at a time, instant messaging, online reference services and getting feedback from the users on a particular service or document (Verma, 2015).

2. Overview of Mizoram University

Mizoram University (MZU) was established as a Central University by an Act of Parliament of India in the year 2000 and which was started functioning from July, 2001. Officially accredited/recognized by the University Grants Commission, India, MZU is a medium-sized co-educational higher education institution. There are 8 schools and 35 departments functioning under MZU. It offers courses and programs leading to officially recognized higher education degrees such as certificate diplomas, associate degrees, bachelor degrees, master degrees, and doctorate degrees in several areas of study.

3. Literature Review

The present study is focused on the use of social networking sites by the students of Mizoram University (MZU), Aizawl, India. Many similar studies have been conducted on the use of social networking sites by the student of different colleges but very few have been concentrated on the use of SNS by the students of North-East India. Some similar studies have been brought out in the literature review and are as under:

K., Mohamed H and E, Sumitha (2011) has investigated the perception and use of social networking sites by the students of Calicut University, Kerala. It was observed from the study that majority of the students were aware of social networking sites and they use it for friendly communication. The study revealed that Orkut was the most popular social networking site compare to other sites and maximum number of respondents were using the social networking sites twice a week. The main concern of social networking sites by the students are the lack of security and privacy though the maximum number of students used their real names and photos in their profiles.

Brandtzaeg, P. B (2012) has studied the usage of the social networking sites with an extensive set of

longitudinal data of online users (N = 2000; age = 15-75 years) in Norway from 2008 to 2010. It was observed from the study that SNSs users scored a highest number in comparison to that of nonusers in 3 out of 4 social capital dimension; face-to-face interactions, number of acquaintances and bridging capital. The study revealed that SNSs users particularly male reported more loneliness than nonusers.

Chakraborty, N. (2012) has studied the activities and reasons for using Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the research scholars of NEHU. The study was focused on the two SNSs, Facebook and Research Gate which revealed that scholars from social science background use SNSs for education and research purpose where the scholars from pure science felt that SNSs has no role in education and research and used it for entertainment only.

Kumar, N (2012) has investigated the user perception and use of Social Networking Sites by the students of Sikkim University. It was observed from the study that majority of the students were aware of Facebook and Orkut.. The study revealed that the majority of the students were use the social networking sites every day. Though the students indicated that lack of security and privacy were the main concerns of SNSs, majority of them used real names and photos in their profiles.

Lone, M. I. and Wani, Z. A. (2012) have studied the use and growth of social networking sites in seven continents. The study revealed that Facebook is the most commonly used social networking sites across the continents which is having 90% market share in Africa since 2010. The SNS StumbleUpon is quite popular in North America.

Kumar, A and Kumar, R (2013) have studied the activities and reasons for using social networking sites by the post-graduate students and research scholars of Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, India. It is observed from the study that majority of the students are aware of the social networking sites and they use it for their research work and revealed that Facebook is the most popular SNSs among the respondents.

Stephen, G. and Thanuskodi, S (2014) have studied the activities and reason for using the social networking sites by the students of Engineering and Educational Colleges in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India. Four colleges have been selected for the study. Further, the study revealed that 100% were aware of various social networking sites and 94.1% of the respondents are using it to interact with friends. The time spent by the students for using social networking sites is 2 – 5 hours in a day. It was also found from the study that majority of the students use smart phone for accessing the social networking sites.

Papegowda and others (2015) have studied the usage of Social Networking Technologies in higher education at University of Agriculture Sciences, GKVK, Bangalore, India by focusing on the learner. The data collected from 135 students of the concerned institute (UG, PG, and Ph.D. students) which was focused on the extent of SNSs uses, benefits and skills acquired from these technologies. The study revealed that majority of the students are aware of SNSs and use for friendly communication where Facebook is the most commonly used SNSs among all the categories of students.

4. Objective of the Study

❖ To study the use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the students of Mizoram University (MZU).

❖ To find out the purpose of using the Social Networking Sites by the students of MZU.

❖ To find out the most popular Social Networking Sites (SNSs) used by the MZU students.

❖ To know the barriers faced by the students while using Social Networking Sites.

❖ To identify the level of satisfaction in using the Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the MZU students.

5. Methodology

The present study was conducted to know the use of social networking sites (SNSs) by the students of Mizoram University (MZU). For the study, survey and random sampling technique has been used. A structured questionnaire was designed on the basis of the objective of the study for the collection of the primary data and it has been distributed to 300 randomly selected students of MZU. Equally 100 questionnaires each has been distributed to Under Graduate (UG), Post Graduate (PG) and Ph.D. students or research scholars.The study is limited to the students of Mizoram University, Aizawl, India. The data are presented in tabular form and charts and for analysis the data Microsoft Excel is used.

6. Data Analysis

On the basis of the responses received from the respondents, the collected data were analyzed and tabulated by using statistical measures as tables and figures.

6.1 Number of respondents:

For the present study, 100 questionnaires each were distributed to the students of Under Graduate (UG), Post Graduate (PG), and Ph.D.Table-1 and Figure-1 shows the distribution of the population of respondents. Out of the total 300 questionnaires, only 262 duly filled-in questionnaires were received for the study. The completed questionnaires were received 100% from the category of PG students, 92% were obtained from the UG students and 70% from the Ph.D. scholars. The total percentage of responses obtained for this study was 87.33%.

6.2 Basic Information of the respondents:

Table 1 shows the basic information of the respondents according to the category-wise. It was observed from the present study that the male respondentsare large in numbers to that of the female respondents.Among the UG students, 80 (86.96%) are male and 12 (13.04%) are female. From the PG students, 54% are male and 46% are female. And from the PhD. Sstudents 42 (60%) are male and 28 (40%) are female.Out of 262 respondents the total percentage of male respondent is 67.18% and 32.82 percent are the female respondent.

Table-1: Basic Information of the respondent

Gender	Male Respondent	Female Respondent	Total
UG	80(86.96)	12(13.04)	92(35.11)
PG	54(54)	46(46)	100(38.17)
Ph.D.	42(60)	28(40)	70(26.72)
Total	176(67.18)	86(32.82)	262

Numbers in parenthesis indicate percentage.

6.3 Age-wise distribution

It is observed from the present study that the majority of the respondents of the study population

are from the 18-25 age groupswhere UG (88), PG (94), and Ph.D. (14) with 196 (75%) respondents in total and the rest 66 (25%) respondents where UG (4), PG (6) and Ph.D. (56) are from the 26-35 age groups.

6.4   Awareness of Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Social networking sites in the present age are the communication tools for the people on the internet. At present, it is very rare that people who are educated are unaware of SNSs.The present study reveals that all the 262 students (from all the categories, i.e., UG, PG, and Ph.D. scholar) of MZU taken for the study are aware of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) who use it for communication and education purpose and have the personal account in at least one or more than one Social Networking Sites.

6.5   Types of Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

There are different types of SNSs available on the internet. The present study brings out the different types of SNSs used by the students of MZU. It is to be noted here that most of the respondents from the entire category (UG, PG, and PhD. Scholars) are using more than one SNSs. Table-2 shows the different types of SNSs used by the students of MZU. It is observed from the study that 97.7 percent in total are using Facebook which is further said as the most commonly used SNSs among all the categories of the students taken for the study. It is further followed by YouTube with the total percentage of response of 80.1 percent.The present study reveals that all the 100 PG students taken for the study are using Facebook. There are also in total 32 numbers of students including UG, PG, and Ph.D. scholars

with 12.2 percent are using other SNSs like Google+, Bebo, Tumblr, Wikis, etc. which are listed under the heading "Others" in the Table 2.

Table 2: Types of SNSs

Social Networking Sites(SNSs)	UG (N=92)	PG (N=100)	Ph.D. (N=70)	Total (N=262)
Facebook	88(95.6)	100(100)	68(97.1)	256(97.7)
MySpace	4(4.3)	4(4)	4(5.7)	12(4.6)
Twitter	46(50)	20(20)	26(37.1)	92(35.1)
LinkedIn	18(19.5)	4(4)	24(34.3)	46(17.5)
YouTube 210(80.1)	82(89.1)	74(74)	5477.1)	
Blog	2(2.1)	8(8)	10(14.3)	20(7.6)
Friendster	4(4.3)	0	2(2.8)	6(2.3)
Flicker	4(4.3)	2(2)	2(2.8)	8(3)
Instagram	3841.3)	60(60)	32(45.7)	130(49.6)
ResearchGate	8(8.7)	4(4)	44(62.8)	56(21.4)
Others	12(13)	8(8)	12(17.1)	32(12.2)

(N is Number of Response)

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate percentage

6.6   Source of Information about SNSs

There are different sources for getting the information about the SNSs. The sources of information taken for the present study are internet, teachers, friends, and newspaper/magazines. Table-3 shows about the source of information about the SNSs. It is observed from the present study that most of the students from MZU learn about the SNSs by themselves alone with the help of internet.

**Table 3: Source of Information about SNSs**

Source of Information	UG (N=92)	PG (N=100)	Ph.D. (N=70)	Total (N=262)
Internet	60(65.2)	61(61)	40(57.1)	161(61.4)
Teachers	5(5.4)	5(5)	5(7.1)	15(5.7)
Friends	20(21.7)	23(23)	17(24.3)	60(22.9)
Newspaper/ Magazines	7(7.6)	11(11)	8(11.4)	26(9.9)

(N is Number of response)

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate percentage

6.7 Frequency of using SNSs

There are variations in the frequency where the students visit the SNSs. Some students use the SNSs every day, some occasionally depending on their priorities. Figure1 describes about the frequency of using the SNSs by the students of MZU. It is observed from the study that more than half of the students (73.3%)including the entire category use the SNSs every day. 13.7 percent of the students in total use the SNS occasionally. Only 6.9 percent student (UG and PG) in total is using the SNSs once a week. It is observed from the study that none of the Ph.D. scholars are using the SNSs once a week. Further few students (6.1 percent) in total are using the SNSs twice a week.
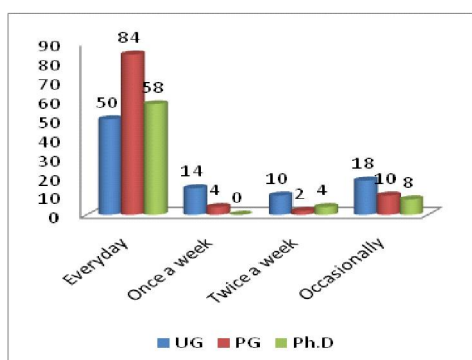
Figure 1: Frequency of using SNSs

6.8 Time Spent in SNSs

The time spent on SNSs by the students varies from one another. Table-4 gives a brief detail about the time spent on SNSs by the students of MZU. The time spent in SNSs is calculated per day.It is observed from the study that majority of the students from the entire category (55.7 percent) spent less than two hours of time on SNSs whereas 28.2 percent of students in total spent 2-4 hours of time on SNSs, followed by 10 percent of students spent 4-6 hours of time on SNSs and very few (6.1%) students spent more than 6 hours of their time on SNSs.

Table-4: Time Spent in SNSs

Time	UG	PG	Ph.D.	Total
Less than 2 hour	62(67.4)	36(36)	48(68.5)	146(55.7)
2-4 hour	20(21.7)	44(44)	10(14.3)	74(28.2)
4-6 hour	8(8.7)	12(12)	6(8.6)	26(10)
More than 6 hours	2(2.1)	8(8)	6(8.6)	16(6.1)
Total	92	100	70	262

Number in parenthesis indicates percentage

6.9 Tools used for accessing SNSs

The present study brings out the different type of tools (like PCs, Laptop and Smart Phones) used by the students of MZU for accessing SNSs.. It is to be noted here that most of the respondents from the entire category (UG, PG, and PhD. Scholars) are using more than one type of tools for accessing the SNSs.It is observed from the present study that the total majority of thestudents of MZU are using Smart Phones (83.2%) for accessing the SNSs and then followed by laptop with 59.9 percent and then by

PCs with 24.4 percent. It is observed from the study that Smart Phones have become the most comfortable tool for the students for accessing the SNSs.

6.10 Purpose for Using SNSs

Social networking sites have a wide variety of uses and students use these sites for various purposes like friendly communication, publishing, messaging, group discussion, etc. (K, Mohamed and E, Sumitha, 2011). Table-5 brings out the different purpose for using SNSs by the students of MZU. It is observed from the present study that most of the students use the SNSs for different and more than one purposes. It is observed from the study that the total maximum numbers of students (76%) are using the SNSs for friendly communication (chatting), academic purpose (65%), entertainment (62%), finding old friends (58%), and sharing photos (57.2%). A very few students (35.1%) express new ideas in the SNSs, and very few (21.3%) share information regarding conferences/seminars in the SNSs.

Table-5: Purpose for using SNSs

Purpose	UG (N=92)	PG (N=100)	Ph.D. (N=70)	Total (N=262)
Instant Message (Chatting)	66(72)	82(82)	50(71.4)	198(76)
To Meet New People	34(37)	38(38)	22(31.4)	94(36)
Finding Old Friends	54(59)	50(50)	48(69)	152(58)
Academic Communication	46(50)	66(66)	58(83)	170(65)
To Express New Ideas	34(37)	28(28)	30(43)	92(35.1)
To discuss social issues &events	28(30.4)	42(42)	30(43)	100(38.1)

Sharing photos	50(54.3)	64(64)	36(51.4)	150(57.2)
Sharing public/ personal videos	22(24)	20(20)	16(23)	58(22.1)
Entertainment	54(59)	56(56)	52(74.2)	162(62)
Comment on other's post	46(50)	42(42)	18(26)	106(40.4)
Searching Jobs	36(39.1)	36(36)	32(46)	104(40)
Sharing information regarding conferences/seminars	18(19.5)	10(10)	28(40)	56(21.3)

(N is Number of Response)

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate percentage

6.11 Flexibility with SNSs

Figure 2 , derived from the analysis give glimpse about the flexibility of the students of MZU with SNSs. It is observed from the study that only two students from PG are facing very difficulty while using the SNSs and 4.5 percent of students in total find difficulty in using the SNSs. The study reveals that the maximum number of students (52%) feels average in using the SNSs and the remaining (18.3%) and (24.4%) find very easy and easy respectively in using the SNSs.
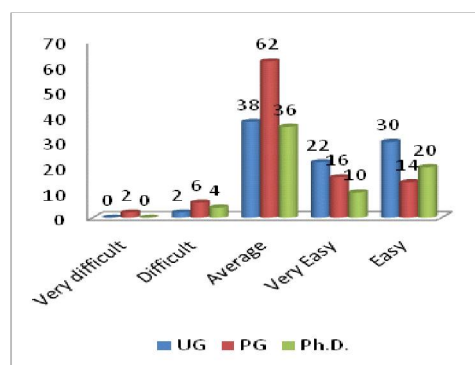
Figure 2: Flexibility with SNSs

6.12 Opinions about SNSs

The students use SNSs for various purposes. Table-6 depicts the opinions from the students of MZU about SNSs. Under this heading four criteria have been listed for the present study. It was observed from the study that majority of the students of MZU has an opinion 'helpful for easy communication' (46.5%) about the SNSs followed by 23.2 percent of students in entire category having an opinion about useful for academic communication. Very few student (17%) and (13.3) have an opinion about the SNSs as easy to get in touch with old and new friends and easy for communicating with many respectively.

Table 6: Opinions about SNSs

Opinions	UG	PG	Ph.D.	Total
Helpful for easy communication	34(37)	52(52)	36(51.4)	122(46.5)
Easy for communicating with many	14(15.2)	15(15)	6(8.5)	35(13.3)
Easy to get in touch with old and new friends	28(30.4)	8(8)	8(11.4)	44(17)
Useful for academic communication	16(17.3)	25(25)	20(28.5)	61(23.2)
Total	92	100	70	262

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate percentage

6.13 Problems using SNSs

Table 7 brings out the different problems faced by the students of MZU while using the social networking sites. Under this heading five criteria have been listed. It is observed from the study that majority of the students (56.1 percent) of MZU have

an opinion about the non-availability of full-fledged internet connectivity as the main problem while using the SNSs. 25.5 percent of students are facing lack of time and 10 percent of students feel lack of security/ privacy as the main problem for using SNSs. Very few (6.1%) and (2.3%) of the total number of students are facing lack of technical knowledge and not user friendly as the main cause for using SNSs.

Table 7: Problems using SNSs

Problems	UG	PG	Ph.D.	Total
Non-availability of full-fledged internet connectivity	48 (52.1)	60 (60)	39 (56)	147 (56.1)
Lack of time	24 (26)	24 (24)	19 (27.1)	67 (25.5)
Lack of security/privacy	12 (13)	6 (6)	8 (11.4)	26 (10)
Not user friendly	4 (4.3)	2 (2)	0	6 (2.3)
Lack of technical knowledge	4 (4.3)	8 (8)	4 (6)	16 (6.1)
Total	92	100	70	262

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate percentage

6.14 Satisfaction level from SNSs

Figure 3 represents the satisfaction level of the students of MZU using the SNSs. It is observed from the present study that majority of the students (59.5%) are satisfied using the SNSs, where 23 percent of the students are partially satisfied with SNSs. Few number of students (13%) are highly satisfied with SNS and only 4.5 percent of the total number of students are not satisfied at all with SNSs. The satisfaction level from SNSs depends on the students' individual perception.
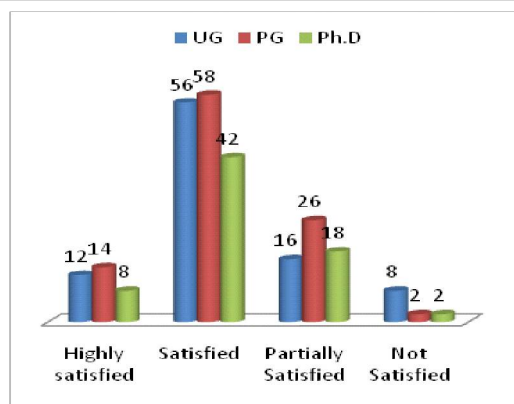
Figure 3: Satisfaction level from SNSs

6.15   Reliability of SNSs

Table 8 presents the reliability of SNSs by the students of MZU. The students have been asked about their perception of the reliability of information available in SNSs. It is observed from the present study that majority of the students feel that the information uploaded on SNSs are partially reliable (58%) and reliable (39%) where only 3 percent of the total number of students from the entire category feel that the information available on SNSs are not reliable.

Table 8: Reliability of SNSs

Reliability Level	UG	PG	Ph.D.	Total
Reliable	40 (43.4)	38 (38)	24 (34.2)	102 (39)
Partially Reliable	48 (52.1)	60 (60)	44 (63)	152 (58)
Not Reliable	4 (4.3)	2 (2)	2 (3)	8 (3)
Total	92	100	70	262

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate percentage

7.   Findings of the Study

The major findings of the present study are as follows:

❖ It is observed from the present study that the population taken for the study is all aware of the social networking sites and have their account on one or more than one SNSs.

❖ Majority of the students from the entire category are aware of Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram and 61.4% students learn about the SNSs by themselves alone with the help of internet.

❖ It is also observed from the present study that majority of the students are using the SNSs everyday (73.3%) and more than half of the students (55.7%) from the three categoriesspend less than 2 hours of time per day.

❖ It is observed that the students use the SNS for different purposes. The majority of the students use the SNSs for friendly communication (76%), academic communication and entertainment.

❖ It is observed that the majority of the students feel average while using the SNSs and also feel helpful for easy communication. More than half of the students mentioned non-availability of full-fledged internet connectivity as their problems for using SNSs and majority are satisfied with SNSs.

8.   Conclusion

It is revealed from the study that the students of MZU are aware of SNSs and majority of them are using for different purpose where friendly communication is common. The students of MZU are familiar with most of the SNSs though Facebook and YouTube are the most commonly used SNSs.

Aslo It is also noted here that there are also few students among all the categories are using SNSs for academic communication. The SNSs are very helpful and useful tools in disseminating the academic information among the groups. Students must take the advantage of the SNSs for their studies. A social networking program provides a way for librarians to develop relationship with users, extend general awareness of the digital collection and establish the librarians as knowledgeable, helpful, and easily accessible source of authoritative information about a particular subject area (Verma, 2015). The training programmes must be arranged for the students to educate the students of MZU about the applications and risks associated with SNSs. The present study indicates that the balance relationship must be maintained with SNSs and academic works.

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