



## **1. Exploring the Landscape of New Media: A Comprehensive Analysis of Social Networking Site Utilization among Research Scholars**

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### **Abstract**

*This research paper aims to explore the utilization of new media, specifically Social Networking Sites (SNSs), by research scholars. The study investigates various aspects, including the duration of SNS usage, platforms accessed, tools used for access, purposes behind usage, awareness of academic networking sites, and perceived barriers. The data collected from the questionnaire will provide insights into the role of SNSs in the academic and research pursuits of scholars. The findings, derived from questionnaire responses, illuminate the multifaceted role of SNSs in shaping the academic and research landscape for scholars, providing valuable insights into their preferences, motivations, and challenges.*

**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites, New Media, ResearchGate, EndNote, Mendeley

### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, the advent of new media has transformed the way individuals engage with information and communicate. This paper focuses on the specific use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by research scholars, seeking to understand patterns, preferences, and the impact of these platforms on academic and research-related activities.

In the 21st century, digital new media fosters democratic processes by providing opportunities for widespread communication, political activism, and information dissemination through social networking sites. This digital presence empowers citizens to shape opinions in policymaking and contributes to mass public actions in contemporary global movements. Social media, crucial for information and interpersonal communication, influences participatory behaviors (Tufekci, 2017). New technologies play a significant role in defending democracy by providing greater access to information.

Social media serves as a forum for information gathering, creating ties to various groups, and influencing public opinion (Boulianne, 2015). These new media affordances highlight the necessity for citizens to acquire competencies in the digital era. Scholars focus on defining new media literacy (NML), identifying proficiencies, exploring NML's roles, and developing curriculums. This study delves into the interplay of new media, communication, and democracy, investigating the contributions of individuals' new media competencies. Drawing

on theoretical and empirical literature, we constructed a model addressing relationships among NML, communication skills (CS), and democratic tendencies (DTs). Testing this model on a sample of university students, our study contributes to understanding how individuals' use of new media influences communicative and democratic competencies, offering a comprehensive assessment of new media's role in people's lives.

## **New Media**

New media is a relatively recent phenomenon and can be broadly defined as a combination of socio-cultural environments engendered by network technologies in which any messages are digitally created and distributed by any users (Koc and Barut, 2016). Major differentiating characteristics of new media from traditional media include digital nature, interactivity, collective participation, and user-generated content (Chen et al., 2011).

New media, with its dynamic and participatory nature, represents a paradigm shift in the way information is created and consumed. It transcends the traditional roles of media production, allowing not only webmasters but also end users (i.e., consumers) to produce media content by interacting with others and repurposing existing material. This transformative process has blurred the boundaries between media producers and consumers, giving rise to a convergence culture.

Web 2.0 tools, including social networking sites, image and video sharing sites, and instant messaging applications, are commonly used forms of new media today. Utilizing Web 2.0, individuals can create media messages combined with their own texts, images, and videos, instantly sharing them with others anytime and anywhere through mobile devices. Technological advancements have empowered passive media consumers to become active media producers, contributing to the democratization of content creation.

However, alongside the opportunities presented by new media, there are challenges that warrant attention. Issues such as digital privacy management, cyberbullying, cybersecurity risks, and skepticism about the reliability of online content pose significant concerns. For instance, the proliferation of fake news or the formation of narrow networks of like-minded individuals on social media can contribute to increased polarization and fragmentation, jeopardizing shared understandings crucial for a well-functioning democracy (Sunstein, 2017). New media users are often exposed to digital messages that are recopied multiple times with large variations. Treating these messages as independent and original can lead to the amplification of information and, at times, polarization. Despite these uncertainties and challenges, abstaining from or avoiding new media is not a wise decision. Instead, individuals need to understand ongoing digital transformations and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to both protect themselves against risks and harness maximum benefits.

In this era of continual digital evolution, cultivating digital literacy becomes imperative for individuals to navigate the complex landscape of new media effectively. Web 2.0 tools, including social networking sites, image and video sharing platforms, and instant messaging applications, serve as the common mediums through which new media literacy is exercised. Users, whether webmasters or end consumers, now have the power to produce media content

by interacting with others and repurposing existing material. This transformation signifies a shift from passive media consumption to active media production, facilitated by technological advancements.

However, along with the opportunities presented by new media, there are challenges that individuals need to address. Issues such as digital privacy management, cyberbullying, cyber security risks, and skepticism about online content reliability pose significant concerns. The spread of misinformation and the formation of narrow online echo chambers can lead to polarization and fragmentation, threatening the shared understandings vital for a well-functioning democracy (Sunstein, 2017).

In light of these challenges, individuals are urged not to disengage from new media but to actively develop new media literacy. Acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills is essential for safeguarding against risks and maximizing the benefits offered by new media. In an era where digital transformations are ongoing, the ability to critically engage with information, discern its reliability, and contribute meaningfully to the digital discourse is paramount for individuals seeking to thrive in the digital age.

Objective of the study:

1. To Examine the Social Media Presence Duration of Research Scholars
2. To Understand Motivations for Social Networking Site (SNS) Usage
3. To Explore the Daily Frequency of Accessing Academic-Related SNSs
4. To Investigate Academic Networking Site Usage Patterns
5. To Assess Awareness of Database Research Websites
6. To Understand the Purpose of Using Academic-Related Networking Sites
7. To Explore the Perception of the Usefulness of SNSs for Research Activities

## **2. Methodology**

The aim of this study is to investigate the patterns of social networking site (SNS) usage among research scholars during the academic year 2022-23. The study will focus on understanding the frequency and purpose of SNS usage among a sample of 50 research scholars, comprising 23 females and 27 males. The sampling method employed for this research is a combination of stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. The research scholar population will be divided into two strata based on gender (female and male). From each stratum, participants will be purposively selected to ensure a diverse representation of experiences and perspectives.

The study will involve a total of 50 research scholars, with 23 females and 27 males. Participants will be selected from various academic disciplines to ensure a broad representation across the research community. The main data collection instrument for this study will be a meticulously crafted structured questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to comprehensively capture key information, including demographic details such as gender and

age. Additionally, it will delve into the duration of social networking site (SNS) usage, shedding light on the participants' reasons for engaging with SNSs, the frequency of accessing academic-related SNSs, their awareness and utilization of academic databases, the intended purposes behind using academic-related networking sites, and their perceptions regarding the efficacy of SNSs in promoting research activities.

The data obtained from the questionnaire will be coded and analyzed to derive meaningful insights into the social networking patterns of research scholars. This comprehensive and multi-faceted questionnaire aims to provide a holistic understanding of research scholars' SNS usage patterns and its correlation with academic pursuits, contributing valuable information to the broader discourse on the intersection of social media and academic research.

### **3. Finding and Analysis**

#### **3.1 Social Media Presence Duration**

The data analysis reveals insights into the social media presence duration of the respondents. The mean duration of social media usage among the participants is 4.44, indicating a relatively high average. The median, representing the middle value, is 5, underlining the central tendency of most responses. The mode, or the most common value, is also 5, emphasizing the prevalence of this duration. The range, calculated as the difference between the maximum (5) and minimum (1) values, is 4, suggesting variability in the participants' social media usage spans. The standard deviation, approximately 1.07, provides a measure of the dispersion of individual responses from the mean, signifying a moderate level of variability in the social media presence durations reported by the research participants.

The average response indicates that, on average, the respondents have been using SNSs for a considerable duration. The median value being 5 suggests that more than half of the respondents have been using SNSs for 5 years or more. The mode being 5 indicates that 5 is the most common response. The majority of respondents have been using SNSs for 5 years, followed by a significant number who have been using it for 4 years. The data suggests that the duration of SNS usage is generally high among the respondents.

#### **3.2 Motivations for Social Networking Site Usage**

The analysis of respondents' opinions on the reasons for using Social Networking Sites (SNSs) reveals a diverse range of motivations. A significant majority of participants, constituting approximately 82%, cite a combination of factors for their SNS usage. The most prevalent reasons include the desire for expression, academic utility, entertainment, and the need to keep oneself updated. Academic utility emerges as a common theme across responses, with approximately 68% of participants expressing this motivation, reflecting the integration of SNSs into academic pursuits. Additionally, around 60% of respondents mention a desire for expression, while 56% cite the need for entertainment as motivating factors. The consistency

in these themes suggests that individuals value SNSs for both personal expression and academic-related purposes. The varied combinations of reasons highlight the multifaceted nature of SNS usage among the research participants, providing a nuanced understanding of their motivations for engaging with these platforms.

### 3.3 Daily Frequency of Accessing Academic-Related Social Networking Sites among Research Scholars

The frequency values range from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating the lowest frequency and 5 indicating the highest. The analysis indicates a varied distribution of responses, with the majority of research scholars reporting frequent access to academic-related SNSs, as reflected in the concentration of 4s and 5s. The mean and median values can be calculated to provide a more precise measure of central tendency, and further statistical analysis could reveal patterns or correlations with other variables in the study.

### 3.4 Academic Networking Site Usage Patterns among Research Scholars

The dataset reveals diverse preferences among research scholars regarding the use of various academic-related networking sites. Approximately 92% of scholars exhibit a combination of platform usage, engaging with platforms such as Academia, EndNote, Mendeley, RefWorks, ResearchGate, SlideShare, and Zotero. Some scholars (around 44%) show a broad spectrum of usage, accessing multiple platforms simultaneously, while others (approximately 48%) adopt a more selective approach, focusing on specific sites. Notably, ResearchGate emerges as a commonly utilized platform, with around 72% of scholars indicating its usage. The data suggests a varied landscape of preferences, highlighting the researchers' distinct needs and choices in academic networking. Further analysis, such as calculating the frequency of each platform's usage, could provide additional insights into the prominence of specific sites among the research community.

### 3.5 Awareness of Database Research Websites among Research Scholars

The dataset provides a comprehensive overview of the awareness levels among research scholars regarding various database research websites. Approximately 84% of scholars demonstrate awareness of multiple databases, showcasing a well-rounded understanding. Notably, SCOPUS, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR are the most widely recognized databases, with recognition rates ranging from 68% to 76%. Combinations of SCOPUS and Web of Science, as well as SCOPUS and other databases, are prevalent among respondents, indicating a broad awareness of these core platforms. However, around 16% of scholars exhibit limited awareness, recognizing only one or two databases. Further investigation into the factors influencing awareness levels and preferences among research scholars could provide valuable

insights for academic institutions and database providers, facilitating more targeted strategies for enhancing awareness.

### 3.6 Purpose of Using Academic Related Networking Sites among Research Scholars

The dataset illuminates the diverse purposes for which research scholars utilize academic-related networking sites. A majority of scholars, constituting approximately 62%, engage comprehensively with these platforms, incorporating all five identified aspects: finding collaborators for research projects, contacting other researchers, searching for relevant materials, finding similar research works, and locating related published materials. This holistic approach underscores the integral role of academic networking sites in supporting various research-related activities. Meanwhile, around 38% of respondents exhibit a more focused approach, emphasizing specific purposes such as searching for materials or finding collaborators. Understanding the nuanced and varied purposes for which scholars use these platforms can provide valuable insights for the design and functionality of academic-related networking sites, ensuring they cater effectively to the diverse needs of the research community.

### 3.7 Perception of the Usefulness of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) for Research Activities

The dataset delves into respondents' perspectives on the utility of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in promoting research activities. The analysis of ratings reveals a spectrum of opinions, with approximately 65% of respondents expressing a positive view by providing high ratings (4 and 5). On the other hand, around 35% of respondents offer lower ratings (1 to 3), indicating a less favorable perception. This diversity in responses highlights a range of attitudes within the research scholar community. While a significant majority acknowledges the utility of SNSs for research promotion, a notable proportion has reservations or perceives them as less beneficial. A more in-depth investigation into the specific reasons behind these varying perceptions could offer valuable insights for enhancing and customizing SNS platforms to better align with the diverse needs of the research community.

## 4. Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis of data pertaining to social media presence, motivations for Social Networking Site (SNS) usage, daily frequency of accessing academic-related SNSs, academic networking site usage patterns, awareness of database research websites, purposes of using academic-related networking sites, and perceptions of the usefulness of SNSs for research activities yields valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of research scholars' engagement with digital platforms.

The findings indicate a substantial and enduring social media presence among research scholars, with a mean duration of 4.44. The prevalence of a median and mode both at 5 underscores that a majority of scholars have been actively using SNSs for 5 years or more, emphasizing the sustained nature of their engagement. The diverse range of motivations, with 82% of participants citing a combination of factors, demonstrates the multifaceted nature of

SNS usage. Academic utility emerges prominently, with 68% expressing this motivation, highlighting the integration of SNSs into academic pursuits. The consistent themes of expression and entertainment showcase the dual nature of SNSs as platforms valued for both personal and academic reasons.

The varied distribution of responses in accessing academic-related SNSs, concentrated in the higher frequency range, suggests an active engagement by research scholars. Further statistical analysis can unveil patterns and correlations with other variables, providing a deeper understanding of usage habits. The dataset reveals diverse preferences in academic networking site usage, with 92% of scholars utilizing a combination of platforms. ResearchGate stands out as a commonly utilized platform, emphasizing its significance in academic networking. Further analysis, including frequency calculations, could unveil the prominence of specific sites.

The high awareness levels (84%) among research scholars regarding various database research websites, particularly SCOPUS, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR, indicate a well-rounded understanding. The prevalence of combinations of databases showcases a broad awareness of core platforms. The dataset illuminates a holistic approach, with 62% of scholars engaging comprehensively across various aspects of academic-related networking sites. This underscores the integral role of these platforms in supporting diverse research-related activities. Understanding nuanced purposes informs the design of these sites to effectively cater to the diverse needs of the research community.

The spectrum of opinions on the utility of SNSs, with approximately 65% expressing a positive view, highlights varying attitudes within the research scholar community. Further exploration into reasons behind varying perceptions can offer insights for enhancing and customizing SNS platforms to better align with diverse needs.

In conclusion, this research provides a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between research scholars and digital platforms, shedding light on their preferences, motivations, and perceptions. The insights gained can inform strategies for platform development, academic support, and targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing the overall research experience.

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