DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND ITS USES

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Abstract

Individuals cannot survive in a vacuum, but are embedded into a social environment. Social networking site (SNS) is a social space created on internet for the people for their connection and communication, where people can create or share their contents with people on the same site Face book, MySpace and LinkedIn are examples of such sites..Social network sites are used extensively by the students in fulfil their basic needs and communication. It is becoming a well-known means for socializing online and tools to facilitate friendship. University students are using social network sites for dissimilar sort of motives from social relations to communication. Regular use of social network sites bring an addiction towards the concurrently influent students' daily life at outsized. This paper recommends that motives for social networks sites are the factors contributing to social network sites addiction among individuals.

Key words: Social network sites, Addiction, individuals

INTRODUCTION

Social network sites are a type of virtual communication that allows people to connect with each other. This concept arises from basic need of human beings to stay together in groups forming a community. Social networking sites, email, instant messaging, video- and photo- sharing sites and comment posting are all tools that help people to communicate and socialize with each other (Mooney, 2009).Social network sites like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace etc. are the most popular websites which becomes the large-scale experience for the past few years (Foregger, 2008). Initially it was introduced at Harvard University in 2004 as a network to access college students' information by Mark Zuckerbeg. At the launch, it was become a virtual medium for

students of Harvard in identifying each other and making new social relationship (Markoff, 2007). Later, the use of it was spread to other university students and becoming a public domain in 2006 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In nearly mid of 2007, Facebook was reported to have more than 21 million active users generating 1.6 billion page views each day. The website currently has more than 300 million users worldwide (comScore, 2010).A thoroughly report on social networks in Asia-Pacific revealed that these sites were the most engaging Sites. This shows that worldwide are experiencing new wave of communication technology. Limyh (2009) found that the Malaysian love to use social networking site. The use of social network sites was dramatically increased especially university young students. Social network sites are famous with the females also, female students and social site is synonym. According to Joiner (2008) female students like to socialize online and they use social network sites more as a tool for social connection. Overall, female students primarily used social network sites as a way to keep in touch with friends. According to the small local survey female students basically use social network sites for more social purposes, to communicate and socialize with colleagues, friends and family through the interactive features offered by this social site (Laurie and Paula, 2007). These web sites are seems to bea strong attraction for students to go online because the web support the motivations like self-discovery, social enhancement, and interpersonal connectivity for them to join the site. Considering the rising of global networking phenomenon in Saudi Arabia, this research is aimed to examine the motives that persuade students male and female, to fulfil their needs and desires through social networks and identifying which motive that contribute more to the addiction of the social websites.

INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

Social networking sites (SNSs) are available to the individuals for the past few years. Popular examples of social networking sites are Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, Tagged, and Twitter. The rise of Social networking sites (SNSs) shows a shift in the organization of online communities. These are among the recent virtual spaces that allow people to establish connections between people throughout the world (Milani, 2010). Boyd & Elisson (2007) found that social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook were changing the nature of social relationship. Nowadays individuals getting busy with these sites in order to fulfil their needs and desires as a result time spend on such site increase dramatically. According to Jalalian (2010) the online world has already proven to impact on numerous aspects of human life including commerce, education, and health. The addictions of these sites are growing concern among society and mass media. This is the ultimate isolating technology that further reduces young males and females participations in many activities in the real world. Using these sites is like a norm for today's males and females regardless of age. Many of them use Facebook for various reasons such as communicating with friends through e-mail or instant messaging (Ridings &

Gefen, 2004). The one main concern over the use of Facebook is that students has already busy with their class assignments and the time spent on Facebook only to contribute to the addiction of the site. Caplan (2008) found that the overuses of these sites are the potential to bring negative effect on individual's study, work, health, and personal relationship as well. Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G) was developed by Katz (1959) to explain peoples' motivations for media usage, access and attitude toward a particular medium. The theory is concerned with the way people use the media (Hanjun, 2000). Severin and Taknard (2007) states that the uses and gratifications theory is a psychological communication perspective that focuses on how different people use the same media messages for different purposes to satisfy their psychological and social needs and achieve their goals. Discussions about adolescents today differ considerably from the past through the central role that technology plays in youth lives. Ito et al. (2009) observe that: Although today's questions about "kids these days" have a familiar ring to them, the contemporary version is somewhat unusual in how strongly it equates generational identity with technology identity (p. 2). The technologies that youth utilize today are most definitely new and how teenagers use them to communicate with each other is clearly novel. Nevertheless, the technologically mediated activities that youth participate in are similar to past generations: Just as they have done in parking lots and shopping malls, teens gather in networked public spaces for a variety of purposes, including to negotiate identity, gossip, support one another, jockey for status, collaborate, share information, flirt, joke, and goof off. They go there to hang out (Ito et al., 2009, p. 79). Not surprisingly, the apprehensions of parents and educators about SNS are also comparable to past questions about how youth spend their time. SNS represent a new environment through which to examine adolescent development and learning. Within this context, I focus on several areas of concern that are particularly salient for adolescent populations: youth characteristics and digital divide, privacy and safety, psychological well-being, and learning. People spent hours chatting with their friends and browsing profiles on social networking sites. It becomes a compulsive habit to visit own profile several times in a day for checking friends" updates, changing status, and commenting on others photos and videos. Finally it diverts employees" attention from the office work. A study conducted by Nucleus Research with 237 corporate employees shows 77 percent of them use Facebook during work hours. And it results in 1.5% drop in employee productivity for those companies allowing full access to Facebook (Gaudin, 2009).

SOCIALNETWORK SITES ADDICTION

Human being needs special attention every time, satisfaction comes when dream comes true. Are social networking sites addictive? And some answers believe they might be. Internet addiction can take many forms, with social networking ranking high on the list. One of the

problems when defining Internet addition is deciding how much time spent on social network sites and normal when have crossed the line into dangerous territory. According to "Addiction Treatment Magazine," people who are more isolated in the real world are more likely to become addicted to social networking sites. They rely on online friends as substitutes for the relationships they don't have in real life (Addiction Treatment Magazine). Once you've gotten involved in networking sites, things can escalate quickly. One reason these sites are so addictive is that there's a nonstop stream of messages, photos, updates and information coming from those in network. If there are 10 friends, it shouldn't be a problem keeping up with them. If the network is 100 friends or more, it might end up online for hours every day, trying to check all of the updates. If it is some trading messages back and forth with other members, then might find self even more caught up in the exchange, just as in a normal conversation. Social networking sites are meant to be casual, relaxed ways to connect with other individuals. If there is start losing sleep or are unable to concentrate because these are always thinking about going online to check list added in contact list statuses, then that's a sign of trouble. Another reason these sites can become addictive is that they provide outlets for when there are some feelings down. People post fewer negative than positive updates on networking sites. They might mention trips they take or new cars, but they will rarely mention when they got poor reviews at work or they gained some extra money. If their own "real" life is not going so great. Individuals can simply lose their self in what experts call "happy land" and forget about the hurdles of everyday life. Part of what makes us human is the desire to connect with other people and belong to a community, whether in a real world (physical) or online.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES

Negative impact of social network sites

Using SNS and its various impacts have been a topic of great discussion among various researchers throughout the world. Numerous studies have been conducted to see the positive and negative impact of these sites on its users. These findings strengthen both the positive as well as negative views about these sites. Many researchers have identified various costs associated with the usage of SNSs. For instance, Cassidy(2006) found that social networking sites were used for competition to know the number of friends one can acquire and how quickly he can accumulate them, and ultimately how many friends they share. The number of users is multiplying each day considerably, so a number of these students spend their valuable time on this activity rather than on their study activities. These studying habits are associated with the academic performance or grades a student gets. As Thomas et al. (1987) clearly depicted that the grade-related differences among students are correlated with the study activities of a student, Suhail and Bargees (2006) proclaimed that many problems of educational, interpersonal, physical and psychological nature can occur due to excessive internet usage.

Wilson (2009) discussed that academic research has validated the nagging suspicions of many such students that Facebook is having a detrimental effect on their university results. Another related coverage was made by Khan (2009) that students using Facebook show poor performance in exams. Internet usage has a negative and momentous impact on academic performance, andthe destructive usage of the internet outweighs the productive dimensions (Englander et al., 2010). The striking and pathological boost in internet usage has produced internet addiction in its users. Nalwa and Anand (2003)found that addicted users setback their jobs to use internet, experienced with sleep loss. Hence, they waste their precious time ignoring the important jobs including academic responsibilities. Karpinski (2009)found that Facebook users had lower GPAs and they spent lesser hours per week for their studies than the non users. Karpinski (2009) said that every generation has its own distraction, but the study thinks Facebook is a unique phenomenon, in that Facebook affects the grade point average (GPA) of the students adversely. In annual conference of the American Educational Research Association (21stcenturyscholar.org) in San Diego, California (2009), a research declared that students who are users of internet social networking sites had lower grades because they study less. Baroness Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution, said, "Internet-obsessed children are losing the ability to concentrate and communicate away from the screen". Boogart and Robert (2006) proposed that usage of social networking sites, for instance Facebook, has brought negative implications on students' academic performance, such as lowered GPA. Similar findings were given by Grabmeier (2009) that the students who sign up for the SNSs had lower GPA as compared to non-users. Along with the academic effects of usage of SNSs, there has been a debate over incidences of abuse on the internet and it takes more serious form when it is about teenagers. Even the alarming rate of such incidences is prompting regulations for internet use among teenagers. Mattingly et al. (2010) proposed that the issues of privacy, identity protection, and e-professionalism are also to be considered while using these sites; but Senguptaand Chaudhuri (2010) found that there is no association between SNSs memberships and online abuse of teenagers.

Positive impact of social network sites

There are also some arguments in favor of using more internet as they proposed that greater use of internet has a positive impact on students' academic performance. Ellisonet al. (2007) suggested that Facebook usage may help people cure some psychological problems such as low self-esteem and low life-satisfaction. Roblyer et al. (2010) explained that SNSs are a brilliant source of interaction between students and faculty members. Shah et al. (2001) emphasize on types of internet use. They proposed that informational use of internet has a positive association with the indicators of social capital while social-recreational use of internet has a negative

association with the civic indicators (civic engagement, interpersonal trust, and life contentment) of social capital. Pasek et al. (2006) suggested that a site specific culture is induced by a particular website that can either positively affect the building of social capital or negatively hinder the social capital building. They further found no positive correlation between the use of Facebook and lower grades of the students, rather they found Facebook to be more commonly used among students having higher grades. They concluded that there was no difference in the academic performance among users and non-users of Facebook. Kolek and Saunders (2008) concluded that there is no association between Facebook usage and GPA of students. Kubey et al. (2001) found that the greater use of synchronous communication applications, such as chatrooms and SNSs are correlated with internet dependency and impairment of academic performance. Becoming a part of a particular community is the core functionality that a user draws from a social network sites.

CONCLUSION

As conclusion, social network sites are used to have become the main influences to the addiction of social network sites. It is largely used for these following motives; social interaction, passing time, entertainment, companionship, and communication. However, passing time, entertainment, and communication were among the motivational factors that contribute more toward students' to its addiction. It is a source of communication and the place for socialized with friends and family. The existence of social network sites seemed to satisfy the basic human needs for connectedness and community. The results of the study will be applicable to service providers in giving the best services and opportunity to the current users and potential users of social network sites in identifying the negative and positive impacts of social networking site as well. Therefore, the greater use of social network sites would tend to create a problem of addiction to the sites and it is recommended that these young generations should be educated on any danger that this new trend may lead to.

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