

Effect of Social Networking Sites on the Students' Academic Performance in Jimma University, Jimma, Ethiopia

M. Natarajan

Abstract

Social network is a platform for people share their ideas, to meet new friends and to reconnect with old friends. Social networking sites (SNSs) offer people new and varied ways to communicate via the internet, whether through their PC or their mobile phone. They include MySpace, Facebook, Skype, twitter, Hi, LinkedIn, etc. and allow people to create their own profile and to construct and display an online network of contacts, often called 'friends'. Users of these sites can communicate via their profile both with their 'friends' and with people outside their list of contacts. With SNS it is easy to communicate with classmates, discuss class assignment and even submit project to lecturer, watch videos, make comment on friend's pages etc. This study is focused on the effect of SNS on student academic performance, using Jimma University, Information Science students' as a case study. It is to study the SNS sites used by students and for the purpose of using and to find out whether they affect their studies or help them to learn easily. This research discusses the history of SNS, development and the users of SNS especially Information Science students in communicating with their friends as well. A detailed questionnaire has been designed to assess the effect of SNS on the Students' academic performance and administered to 50 students' selected using a Stratified Sampling Method. The collected data has been analyzed by tables, charts and graphical representation with description. From 50 respondents, Facebook is seen mostly used by the students. They spent more than three hours on SNSs and most of them are using more than three SNSs. 84% of the students are influenced by SNSs on their academic lifestyle so that SNSs affect their academic negatively.

Keywords: Social Networking Sites; ICT; Academic Performance; Students'; Jimma University.

Introduction

Jimma University (JU) is one of the public universities in Ethiopia established in 1999 located in Jimma, Oromia Region. It has launched undergraduate Information Science Program in 2005 GC as one of the important steps towards educational development. It has the undergraduate and postgraduate professional degree programs. The university believes that Information Science and newly emerging related fields must be taught together since the technical, humanistic, social and behavioral

aspects of Information Science are interrelated (Annual Report of JU). An understanding of users must guide information systems design, just as knowledge of technical possibilities and constraints must shape user services towards building knowledge society. Socialization via the internet has become an increasingly important part of young adult life. Social networking sites (SNSs) are very important for everybody to share ideas through text, pictures, videos etc. as they are free. They help people to meet new friends and to reconnect with old friends to communicate via the internet. But the information science students' of JU uses SNSs for entertainments rather than using for discussions in their academics, so it has impact on the students' academic performance in the campus. SNSs are online communities of Internet users benefitting them with other users about areas of mutual interest, whether from a personal, business or academic perspective (William, 2009). However the darker side within technological evolution has resulted in problems

Author's Affiliation: Associate Professor, Dept of Information Science, College of Natural Sciences, Jimma University, Jimma, Ethiopia.

Reprint's Request: M. Natarajan, Associate Professor, Dept of Information Science, College of Natural Sciences, Jimma University, Jimma, Ethiopia.

E-mail: drnatarajanm@gmail.com

Received on 17.04.2017, Accepted on 24.04.2017

such as the obstacle of real values of life especially among information science students who form the majority of users interacting through the use of SNSs. The majority of SNSs allow users to sustain profiles of themselves and lists of their friends to share their personal experience through videos, music and other media (Boyd, D and Ellison, Nicole 2008). Some of SNSs sites are MySpace, Face book, YouTube, Skype, LinkedIn etc. those have attracted millions of users. The students consume a lot of time on these sites uploading or downloading, getting information concerning entertainment or for academic work. They are always online every second, chatting with friends, watching online movies and doing research. Some students have become very smart because of the information they get from this sites, the other students' become very poor academically, because it is easy to get almost any materials for school assignment (Boyd, D and Ellison, Nicole 2008).

Statement of the Problem

The main reason to study these SNSs is that some students of Information science department in JU use SNSs for academic purposes and others are using for chatting, checking their email, use of Facebook, calling with Skype, their MySpace Web page, updating their Twitter accounts, watching YouTube and sharing photos with their friends and families, by which they are losing their time and energy. They are losing their study time to read books or do research. This paper investigates the effect of social networking sites on the academic performance of Information science students of Jimma University, Ethiopia.

Research Questions

The researcher carried out the research with the following research questions for this study:

1. Which SNSs is mostly used by the students?
2. How much time do students spend on the SNSs?
3. How does the use of SNSs affect students' academic performance?
4. Do students use the SNSs for their academic assignments?

Objectives

The general objective of the study is to determine the effect of social networking sites on information science students' academic performance in Jimma University.

Specific Objectives

- To determine the most preferable SNSs used by the students.
- To find out the time students spend on SNSs per day.
- To determine the effects of SNSs usage on the academic performance of the students.
- To find out the relationship between SNSs usage and academic performance of the students.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study has been conducted only in Jimma University with the Information Science (IS) Undergraduate Students and determines the effect of SNSs on IS students. The Researcher could not able to observe and interview the students who are deeply involved in using SNSs. The researcher has conducted the research only from 50 (sample) students from the total population 217 of Information Science students in Jimma University.

Literature Review

The increased use of Social Networking Websites has become a global phenomenon in the past few years, which started as a hobby. Teenagers and especially students have embraced these sites as a way to connect with their friends and share information, photos of their activities such as birthday, functions of college, etc. (Boyd, 2007). Social Networking has become an activity that is done primarily on the Internet, with sites like MySpace, Face book, YouTube, twitter, Skype, etc. (Coyle et al., 2008). Many people actively participate in content generation and value creation, and several researchers (Young et al., 2009; Vasalou et al., 2010) have examined their profiles to determine why and to what extent they are keen on posting their entire identity, sharing pictures and videos, and indicating their religious affiliations, marital status, and political orientations on the internet. According to Tuckman (1975), the academic performance of students must be effectively managed and therefore, factors that can affect their performance should be carefully analyzed to reveal whether these factors influence them negatively or positively. Accordingly, if students' involvement in SNSs comes with disadvantages it must be kept away from their academic life but if used as an instrument in knowledge building and spreading it should be considered in constructing knowledge.

Academic Performance and SNS Usage of Students

Tuckman (1975) defined performance as the apparent demonstration of understanding, concepts, skills, ideas and knowledge of a person and proposed that grades clearly depict the performance of a student. Hence, academic performance must be managed efficiently keeping in view all the factors that can positively or negatively affect their educational performance. Kirschner (2010) revealed that students who multi-task between SNSs and homework are likely to have 20% lower grades than a student who does not have a social networking site in visual range. He believed that even running a SNS on the background on a student's PC while studying or doing homework could lower a student's grade. He believed that "the problem is that most people have Facebook or other social networking sites, their e-mails and maybe instant messaging constantly running in the background while they are carrying out their tasks" (Enriquez, 2010). American Educational Research Association conducted a research and it has declared on its annual conference in San Diego, California (2009) that SNSs users study less and generated lower grades eventually. Student's use of social networking continues to create challenges and issues for higher education professionals and keeping abreast of these challenges has proved difficult because of the speed at which new technologies are being introduced.

Social Networking Sites and the Users

The issue of whether social networking helps or hurts a student's academic performance is often depend on the larger issues identified with the overall use of SNS (e.g., its psychological effects; individual self-discipline and self-regulation concerns; human adaptability concerns). The benefit of using SNS includes: room for creativity among individuals, encouraging greater social interaction, greater access to information and information sources; it give individuals a sense of belonging among users of the same SNS; reduces barriers to group interaction and communications such as distance and social/economic status; and increasing the technological competency levels (Zwart, Lindsay, Henderson & Phillips, 2011). The use of SNSs has been repeatedly found to be the highest among those between the ages of 18-29 (Rainie, 2011); while the fastest growing segment utilizing SNSs since 2008 has been among those ages 35 and older. Approximately 61% of teens age (12-17) utilize SNSs to send messages to their friends on a regular basis (Lenhart, 2009). Overall, it has been found that women use SNS more than men to communicate and exchange information

(Hampton, Rainie, & Purcell, 2011). Hence, this study is to find out the effect or impact of social network on students.

The Effect of Social Networks on the Academic Performance

Shah et al. (2001) studied that student users are affected by the internet and this impact is determined by the type of usage. The effect of SNS usage depends on the type of SNS the student is using. Current college students use SNSs for social connections and entertainment, but are also using it for education and professional purposes. Students who uses multi-task between SNSs and homework are likely to have 20% lower grades than a student who does not have a social networking site in visual range. However, many researchers also found a positive association between use of internet and SNS and academic performance of the student users. Students, using internet frequently, scored higher on reading skills test and had higher grades as well (Enriquez, 2010). From the above literature it is found that, there are no previous studies conducted on SNS usage in Jimma university information science students and their effect on the academic performance. Hence, this study has been focused on the effect of SNS on the academic performance of information science students in the Jimma University.

Methodology

The data has been collected by using a detailed questionnaire, which was administered on Fifty (50) undergraduate Information Science students' in Jimma University (JU) during the 2014/2015 academic session. From the total population (217), of all undergraduate information science students comprising from three batches $N_{1(\text{year } 1)} = 77$, $N_{2(\text{year } 2)} = 62$ and $N_{3(\text{year } 3)} = 78$ of Information Science students, the researcher selected 50 students based on stratified random sampling method. An appropriate sample size is means of gaining high precision, accuracy and confidence with minimum cost. The study used Sample Size Calculator software Raosoft, Inc. to calculate the sample size by giving the margin of error 12.2%, the confidence level 95%, and response distribution 50% with the total populations of 217. From this, the researcher has used the recommended sample size of 50 students. In this study, the following variables were selected viz. 1) Social Networking Sites as Independent Variable and 2) Students academic performance as Dependent Variable.

Data Collection Method and Analysis

Data has been collected by distributing self-administered questionnaire to 50 students randomly along with description about filling the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics has been employed and analyzed the collected data. It involves summarizing, tabulating, organizing and graphical representation or pie chart data for the purpose of describing a sample of individuals that have been measured.

Results and Discussions

The research has been carried out on "The effect of social networking sites on information science students' academic performance in Jimma University". From the data collected through

questionnaire the analysis, interpretation, results and discussion of data has been carried out below:

Gender and Age Analysis

Questions like age, gender and year of entrance for the students into campus were included. From the data received for a sample of 50 respondents in the JU, Information science department students, Gender and Age are shown below:

From the Table 1, out of 50(100%) respondents, 39 (78%) of the respondents were male while 11(22%) were female. Therefore, the number of respondents are enough to represents the total population.

From Table 2, 29(58%) of the respondents were between the age of 22 and 27 years old, and 21(42%) were between the age of 16 to 21 years old while no one is 28 years and above. This implies that most of the respondents are between the ages of 22-27.

Table 1: Gender distribution

Sex	No. of respondents
Male	39 (78%)
Female	11(22%)
Total	50 (100%)

Table 2: Age distribution

Age (years)	No. of respondents
16-21	21 (42%)
22-27	29 (58%)
28 and above	0 (0%)
Total	50

Mostly Used SNSs by Students

From the collected data related to the use of different

SNSs and the number of SNSs used by the students are given below as Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Mostly used SNSs

SNSs	No. of Respondents
Facebook	27 (54%)
YouTube	18(36%)
Twitter	0(0%)
Skype	0(0%)
Others	0(0%)
Both Facebook & YouTube	5(10%)
Total	50(100%)

Table 4: The number of SNSs

Number of SNSs	No. of Respondents
1	2(4%)
2	12(24%)
3	9(18%)
>3	27(54%)

From the above Table 3, it is found that 27 (54%) students, mostly use Facebook on a typical day, followed by YouTube with 18(36%), both Facebook and YouTube usage were 5(10%) and no one is using

Twitter and Skype. This shows that Facebook is mostly used by information science students in JU, Ethiopia. Table 4 shows that 2(4%) of the respondents use one SNS, 12(24%) of the respondents use 2 (two)

SNSs, 9(18%) of the respondents use three SNSs and 27(54%) of the respondents use more than three SNSs daily. Therefore, it is concluded that most of information science students, in JU, use more than three SNSs in their activity.

Time Spent Time on the SNSs Daily

It has been requested for the time spent on the SNSs daily through the questionnaire. The collected data is given below as Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows that 2(4%) of the respondents use SNSs approximately 30 minutes per day, 7(14%) of the respondents use it for 1 hour per day, 2(4%) use it for 2 hours per a day, 8(16%) use SNSs for three hours per a day and 31(62%) use SNSs for more than three hours. Therefore, it is concluded that most of information science students (i.e. 31(62%) of the respondents), in JU use the SNSs more than 3 hours in a day.

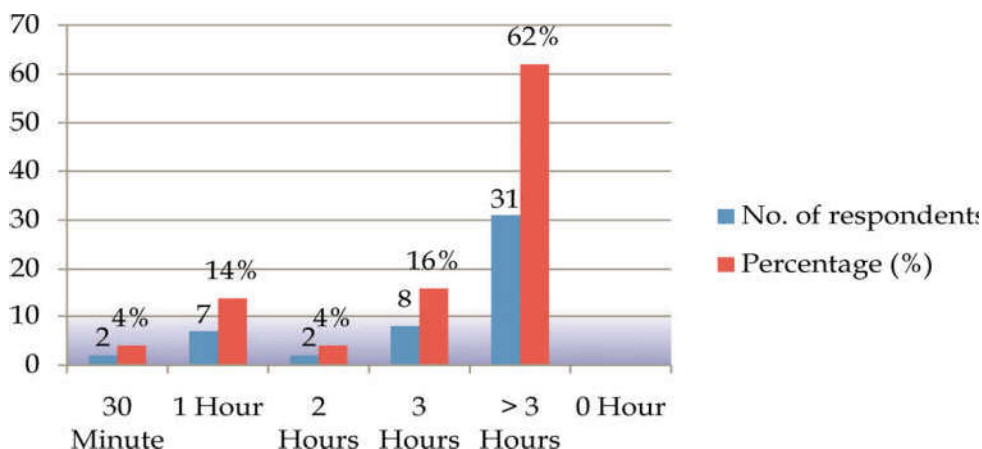


Fig. 1: Time spent by students on the SNSs daily

The Primary Use of Social Networking Sites

It has been requested for the primary use of SNSs and the resources consulted by them. The response received is below in Table 6 and Table 7.

The Table 6 shows that, 7(14%) of the respondents were primarily use SNSs for downloading music/ videos, 7(14%) use for posting photos, 28(56%) use for chatting with their friends while none use SNSs for communicating with teachers and playing games.

Influence of SNSs

It has been requested about the influence of SNSs in their lifestyle. The answers given are in below Table 5.

From Table 5, it is found that, 84% of the respondents (that most of information science students) were influenced by SNSs in their academic lifestyle while 16% were not influenced by SNSs in their academic lifestyles.

It has been requested in the questionnaire, that the nature of use of SNSs for academic or for entertainment. The response is shown below as bar chat in Figure 2.

The Figure 2 shows that, 37(74%) of the respondents have used SNSs for entertainments while 13(26%) used for academic purposes through lifestyles. It concludes that most of information science students in JU, use SNSs for entertainment and this affect their academics.

It shows that most of information science students (28), in JU primarily use SNSs for chatting with their friends.

Table 7 shows that, 27(54%) of the respondents consult all types of resources, 7(14%) consult academic resources, 15(30%) consult social resources and 1(2%) consult philosophic resources.

Improvement of academic performance by using SNSs.

Table 5: The influence of SNSs in academic lifestyle

Effect	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	42	84
No	8	16
Total	50	100

It has been requested regarding the academic performance of them by the use of SNSs. The response is shown below as Table 8.

Table 8 shows that, 37(74%) of the respondents have improved their academic performance by using

SNSs. Out of those, 4 respondents were excellently improved their academic performance, 22 respondents improved their academics in a very good way and 11 respondents were improved their

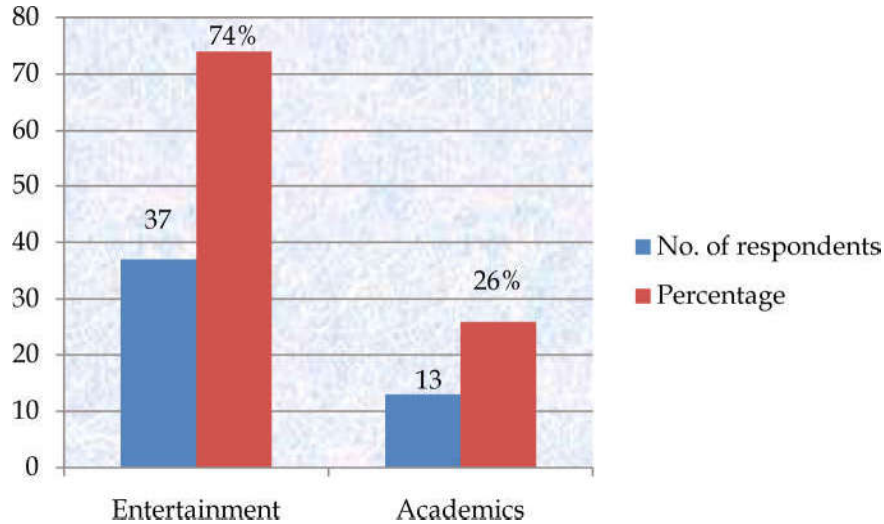


Fig. 2: Nature of SNSs use

academic performance in Good way. 13(26%) of the respondents were not improved their academic performance in SNSs.

It has been requested for their study time affected, due to the use of SNSs. The data given by them is

given below as pie chart in Figure 3.

From the above pie chart, it shows that 42(84%) of the respondents agreed to the use of SNSs which affects their study time, while 8(16%) of the

Table 6: Primary use of SNSs

SNSs Activities	No. of Respondents
Download music/video	7(14%)
Posting photos	7(14%)
Chatting with friends	28(56%)
Sharing files	8(16%)
Communicating with teachers	0(0%)
Playing games	0(0%)
Others...	0(0%)

Table 7: Resources consulted by SNSs

Resources	No. of Respondents
All type of resources	27(54%)
Academic	7(14%)
Social	15(30%)
Philosophic	1(2%)
I don't know	0(0%)
Total	50(100%)

respondents said the use of SNSs doesn't affect their study time. Therefore, it is concluded that the study time of information science students in JU, is affected due to the use of SNSs.

It has also been requested to the students that, if they were not using SNSs, how they should have

spent their time; and the effect of use of SNSs also been questioned for which the response given by them is given below in Table 9 and Table 10.

From Table 9, it is found that 88% of respondents were studying their academics, 6% were socializing with their classmate and other friends, 4% were

reading novels in their time, 2% of the respondents do other thing to fulfill their daily activities and none of them do more constructive work in their free time. From this, it is concluded that most of information science students, in JU were studying their academics.

From Table 10, it is found that 22(44%) respondents agreed that the use SNSs affect their academics positively, 25(50%) respondents said that it affects

negatively while 3(6%) said that they are not affected by the use of SNSs. Thus, this shows that though students devote their times on the SNS, their studies and academics are affected by it as seen by the percentage of affect negatively by 50%. From this, the researcher concludes that most of information science students, in JU were directly affected negatively.

It has also been requested to the students, the kind

Table 8: Academic improvement of the students in using SNSs

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes		
Excellent	4	-
Very good	22	-
Good	11	-
Total	37	74
No	13	26
Total	50	100

Effect of SNS on the Study time of students

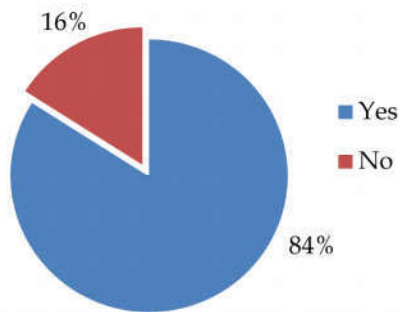


Fig. 3: The effects of the use of SNSs for their study time

of communities they subscribed in SNSs, the response is given below in Table 11.

From Table 11, it is found that 10(20%) of the students subscribe to educational communities and manage their academic status, 18(36%) students subscribe to entertainment, 20(40%) students subscribe to informational communities to get the right information at the right time and 2(4%) students subscribe to other than educational, entertainment and informational communities. Therefore, it is concluded that many of the students subscribe to entertainment and informational communities rather than educational communities.

Table 9: Students activity far apart from SNSs

Activities	No. of Respondents
Studying	44(88%)
Socializing	3(6%)
Doing more constructive work	0(0%)
Reading novels	2(4%)
Others	1(2%)
Total	50(100%)

Major Findings

From the above study, it is found that social networking sites affect students' academic performance negatively. It directly causes the gradual drop of grades of students and affects a student's

academic performance and influenced students to consider entertainment over learning/studying. It is also found that majority of students agreed that the SNSs have negative influence on their academic performance of information science department in Jimma University and they are spending too much

Table 10: The effect of the use of SNSs on students' Academics

Effects	No. of respondents
Positively	22(44%)
Negatively	25(50%)
No effect	3(6%)
Total	50(100%)

time on SNSs.

Facebook is the most popular SNSs used by information science students in Jimma University. The study also found that they mostly use SNSs for keeping in touch with friends for / by updating their

status regularly, posting their photos, writing on their friends' walls or chatting with their friends and uploading pictures.

The study also noted that the students spend more than three hours daily on the SNSs, those definitely

Table 11: Subscribed communities on SNSs

Community	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Educational	10	20
Entertainment	18	36
Informational	20	40
Others ...	2	4
Total	50	100

decrease the students' academic performance. These findings described here will help to build a foundation for future investigations of these and other important issues surrounding social network sites.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this research is to find out the effects of Social Networking Sites on the academic performance of Information Science Students of Jimma University, Ethiopia. There are so many effects of using SNSs in academics: From 50 respondents, Facebook is seen to be mostly used by students. 54% of the respondents used more than 3 SNSs at a time in their activity. 62% of the respondents were spent more than 3 hours on SNSs in a day, so that it affects their academic performance. 84% of the respondents were influenced by SNSs in their academic lifestyle while 16% of them are not influenced by SNSs in their academic lifestyles. This implies that most of the students are influenced by SNSs on their academic lifestyle. 74% of the respondents were used SNSs for entertainments and so it might affect their academics. 56% of the respondents were primarily used SNSs for chatting with their friends while no one from the respondents primarily use SNSs for communicating with teachers. In the academic perspective, 54% of the respondents were consulting all types of resources. 84% of the respondents agreed on the effect of SNSs on their study time. 50% of the information Science students are affected by SNSs negatively while 6% were not affected in any way by their use of the SNSs. From this, it is concluded that, SNSs affect the students' academics negatively. 40% of the respondents subscribe informational communities to get the right information at the right time. 70% of the students have agreed that SNSs affects their academics negatively on the other and in general, SNSs affect

the students' academics negatively.

Recommendations

Based on the results, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The Jimma University might take the disadvantage of the popularity and negative impacts of the SNSs use to formally incorporate the use of SNSs in the teaching and learning processes.
- Government regulatory agencies may arrange to monitor internet activities and improve any existing guidelines on internet usage in general focusing on SNSs use for information science students' in Jimma University.
- Guardian/protectors provide appropriate advice to students when using the SNSs.
- School administrations should create a technology policy that forbid students from using social networking sites.
- Universities should cut the time that students spend on these SNSs by blocking the sites, that could help students become more focused on their studies.
- The university should create awareness for students about what SNSs are and the possible consequences of incorrect usage. Attention should also be paid to ethical vs. unethical behaviors and arrange to protect with security and privacy information.
- Technology teachers could give information sessions to students at the beginning of the year for the use of technology like SNSs.

Suggestions for Further Study

It has been suggested, based on this study that, further research should be done on:

- The Impact of SNSs and social media research with a large population size and it should cover all the students in Jimma University.
- Effort should be focused on how SNSs influence on the academic achievement of information science students in Jimma University.
- Effort should be made by researchers to focus on how SNSs retard the teaching and learning processes.

References

1. Banquil, K. & Chua, N. A. *Social Networking Sites affects one's academic performance adversely*, available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/28919575> (Retrieved on 2 March 2015). 2009.
2. Boyd, D. *Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Learning-Youth, Identity and Digital Media Volume*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA. 2007.
3. Boyd, D & Ellison, Nicole. "Social Network Sites, Definition, History and Scholarship", *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 2007;13(1):210-230.
4. Coyle, C. L. & Vaughn, H. "Social networking: Communication revolution or evolution?", *Bell Labs Technical Journal*, 2008;13(2):13-18.
5. Enriquez, J. *Facebook and Other Online Social Networking Sites Can Lower Grades, Study Says*, available at <http://seerpress.com/facebook-and-other-online-social-networking-sites-can-lower-gradesstudy-says/6935/> (Retrieved on 2 March 2015). 2010.
6. Hampton, K. N., Sessions-Goulet, L., Rainie, L., & Purcell, K. *Social networking sites and our lives*. Pew Research Center, Washington, DC. 2011.
7. Jimma University, Department of Information Science, available at <http://www.ju.edu.et/cns/?q=node/99> (Retrieved on 11 March 2015).
8. Kirschner, P. *Facebook and academic performance. Computer in human behavior*, available at <http://personal.denison.edu/~matthewsn/facebook20and%20academic%20performance.pdf> (Retrieved on 2 March 2015). 2010.
9. Kobal, D. & Musek, J. "Self-concept and academic achievement: Slovenia and France. Personality and Individual Differences. Slovenia and France", *Personality and Individual Differences*, 2001;30: 887-899.
10. Lenhart, A. *Teens and Social Media: An Overview*, 22. New York: Pew Internet & American Life Project. 2009 April.
11. Lewis, S. "Where young adults intend to get news in five years", *Newspaper Research Journal*, 2008;29(4):36-52.
12. Rainie, L. "The new education ecology", *Powerpoint presentation*. Orlando, Florida. 2011 Nov.
13. Shah DV, Kwak N, Holbert RL. "'Connecting' and 'disconnecting' with civic life: Patterns of Internet use and the production of social capital", *Political Communication*, 2011;18:141-162.
14. Tuckman, H. "Teacher Effectiveness and Student Performance", *J. Econ. Education*, 1975.p.34-39.
15. Vasalou, A. Joinson A.N. & Courvoisier, D. "Cultural differences, experience with social networks and the nature of "true commitment" in Facebook", *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 2010;68(10):719-728.
16. William, F. P., *Social networking sites: How to Stay Safe Sites: Multi-State Information Sharing & Analysis Center (MSISAC)*, available at msisac.cisecurity.org (Retrieved on 27 April 2015).
17. Young, S. Dutta, D & Dommety, G. "Extrapolating Psychological Insights from Facebook Profiles: A Study of Religion and Relationship Status", *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 2009;12(3):347-350.
18. Zwart, M. D., Lindsay, D., Henderson, M., & Phillips, M. (2011), *Teenageers, Legal Risks and Social Networking Sites*. Victoria Law Foundation: Victoria, Australia.