A Study to Assess the Pattern of Use and the Effect of Online Social Networking on Student Nurses in a Selected College of Nursing in Delhi

VEENA SHARMA*, AYMEN, DONA**, NAHIDA**, SABEEHA**, YONTEN**, RABIA****

*Associate Professor,
**B.Sc. Nursing IV year students,
Faculty of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard

Abstract

Social media and networking has been becoming increasingly popular among the Indian youth as well as adolescents. A non-experimental, descriptive survey was done to assess the pattern of use and the effect of online social networking on the student nurses, in a selected college of Nursing in Delhi. 50 student nurses studying in D.G.N.M, B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing and M.Sc. Nursing programmes in Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, were selected for the study through systematic random sampling technique. The tool used for the study was semi-structured questionnaire. The data analysis revealed that 50% of students had neutral effect of online social networking on them, that is, on their studies and social relationships. Almost same number, that is, 48% of student nurses had positive effects of online social networking, while only 2% showed negative effects of online social networking.

Keywords: Social media; Online social networking; Effect; Pattern of use; Student nurses.

Introduction

Social media or "social networking" has almost become part of our daily lives over the past few years. It is like any other media such as newspaper, radio and television but it is far more than about just sharing information and ideas. Social networking tools like Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and Blogs have facilitated creation and exchange of ideas so quickly and widely than the conventional media. According to Hindustan Times (7th feb,2012)[1], in September 2011 India crossed the 100 million internet users' mark. HT's survey showed that 24.1% of participants said they were online several times a day, while 35.1% said they used the net once daily.

Adults are increasingly fregmenting their social networking sites as a majority of those who use social networking sites (52%) say they have two or more different profiles. Facebook is currently the most commonly used online social network among adults profile owners; 73% have a profile on facebook, 48% have a profile on Myspace and 14% have a linkedin profile.[2] The specific sites on which young adults maintain their profiles are different from those used by the older adults.

Social media also influences people's behavior. With the prevalent use of social media, there is numerous news related to it, from the most viewed Youtube video on "Armless Pianist Wins China's Got Talent" to web-assisted suicide cases(e.g., New Jersey college student who killed himself after video

Corresponding author:Veena Sharma, Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard-110062.

Email: veena7sharma@yahoo.co.in

(Received on 06.05.2013, Accepted on 31.05.2013)

© Redflower Publication Pvt. Ltd.

of him in a sexual encounter with an another man was posted online). Thus, does social networking make us better or worse, is a question of debate.

Besides having opportunity to know a lot of people in a fast and easy way, social media also has been helping teenagers who have social or physical mobility restrictions to build and maintain relationships with their friends and families. Those who go overseas to study or work can still stay in meaningful contact with their parents, family and friends back home. To a greater extent, there is anecdotal evidence of positive outcomes from these technologies.

In 2008, Obama won the presidential election through the effective use of social media by reaching millions of audience or voters. The Obama campaign had generated and distributed huge amount of contents and messages across, through email, SMS, social media platforms and their websites and chose the right form of media to connect with individuals. It truly changed the delivery of political message.[3] In 2010, after the earthquake happened in Haiti, many of the official communication lines were down. The rest of the world was not able to grasp the full picture of the grim situation there. To facilitate the sharing of information and make up for the lack of information, social media came in very handy to report the news about the affected area: what happened and what help was needed. Tweets from many people provided an impressive overview of the ongoing events from the earthquake.[4]

While there are some positive effects of online social networking, some studies imply that social network could have negative impact on people's social health. These can cause people to stay away from the reality and immerse themselves in the virtual world of social community. Instead of meeting people in person, they spend more time in front of the computer screens, checking what the virtual friends are doing. The trend of the social networking through Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, Flickr, LinkedIn etc. has been increasing by the day among the children, young adults as well as old. Student nurses are no exception. They want to put anything and everything they do, on the Facebook and take pride in having as many Facebook friends as possible. They deem it important to update their Facebook status every few hours in a day. They have internet access even on their mobile phones, to which they seem to be glued forever. If on any given day or at any time they are not able to network through social networking website, they feel unhappy, frustrated, empty, lonely, uninformed and disconnected.

All this, sometimes comes to the extent of addiction. Without social networking a person just does not feel 'alright'. With adolescents and young adults, this addiction becomes all the more problem as social networking becomes a priority over academics, co-curricular activities, outdoor games and sports, face to face socialization with family and friends. With increasing pressure to perform well in academics, the first thing to get compromised due to social networking among adolescents and young adults is studies.

With this knowledge in the background, it was thought to conduct a study to assess the pattern of social networking among the college students, especially student nurses in a selected college of Nursing in Delhi, and also the effects of it on their academics and social relationships. Social networking can be a big distraction and diversion if not used judiciously and reasonably. This study threw light on how responsibly or irresponsibly student nurses indulge in social networking.

Methods

The research approach used in this study was quantitative with pre-experimental descriptive survey design to assess the pattern of use and the effect of online social networking on student nurses in a selected college of Nursing in Delhi. Sample comprised of 50 student nurses studying in D.G.N.M, B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing and M.Sc. Nursing programmes in Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, selected through systematic random sampling technique. Only those students who

lived in hostel and those who used social media were included in the study.

The tool used was semi-structured questionnaire and technique for collection of data was paper and pencil method. It included three parts: Part A, B & C. Part A consisted of 3 items related to the demographic profile of the study subjects. Part B consisted of 15 questions to assess the pattern of use of online social networking among the student nurses. Part C consisted of 20 questions to assess the effect of social networking on student nurses. There were 5 positive, 10 negative items and 5 neutral items in Part C. The maximum score was 45 and minimum score was 15. The range of scores was from 15 to 45. Those who got scores between 35 to 45 were considered to have positive effect of online social networking. Those who got scores between 25 to 35 were considered as having neutral effect of online social networking. Those who got scores between 15 to 25 were considered as having negative effect of online social networking. As mentioned earlier, part C also comprised of 5 neutral questions (question number 16-20), which were neither positive nor negative. Therefore, these were not allotted any scores. They were analyzed item-wise in terms of frequency and percentage. The tool was validated by five expert faculty members of Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi.

Pilot study was conducted on 10 student nurses studying in the selected College of Nursing, Delhi. The investigators found that the tool was effective and it was feasible to conduct the study. For the collection of the data, a formal administrative approval was sought to conduct the study from the Dean, Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi. The data was collected from 11th to 15th, March, 2012. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and their consent to participate in the study was taken. The data obtained was subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics.

Results

As regards the background data of sample subjects, 96% of students belonged to the 17-27 years of age group. 84% of students belonged to urban community and 16% belonged to rural community. 48% students were from B.Sc. (H) Nursing, 30% from DGNM and 22% were from M.Sc. Nursing programme.

Pattern of use

As far as the pattern of use of social networking sites by student nurses is concerned, it was seen that 94% of subjects used their own computer or mobile for online social networking. The rest used other's phone or mobile. As for the frequency of use of social media by student nurses, 32% student nurses surfed online social networking sites everyday and once a week each on an average, 16% used it more than once a week and 20% used it once in a month. 40% of student nurses used online social networking 1-2 hours per day, where as 38% used it for less than 1 hour a day. Only 4% used it for more than 6 hours a day. 72% of student nurses used online social networking in hostel room or dormitory. Only 4% used it in internet café, college computer lab and reading room in hostel each. This just shows that the students like to do online social networking within the privacy of their hostel, rooms or dormitories and not in public or common places, or it may be because of the fact that the internet access is easily available now more than ever.

For communicating and socializing with friends, 42% of students preferred phone call as a way of communication and socialization with friends and 22% of them preferred SMS. As far as face to face or in person meeting was concerned, 18% of students used this way of socializing, while 2% each emailed and poked or posted comments. 10% communicated by online chatting and 4% by video call. 42% of

students had online contacts or friends between the ranges 4-100, 28% had between 100 -200. Only 4% had online contacts and friends between 900-1000 also. The minimum nunber of online social contacts or friends was 4 and maximum number was 1000.

76% of students did not personally meet friends that they made online. 58% of students did not get any lesson to stay safe on internet and 78% did not create fake IDs. They had used their real identification data and picture in their IDs. The data also revealed that 96% of students use facebook, followed by 54% who use Gmail. Yahoo messenger and twitter are close behind with 26% students having accounts on each of these two. Many students have accounts on more than one social networking sites.

As far as the time of social networking is concerned, 54% of students connected on social networking sites between 8 pm-mid night, 30% at 4 pm- 8 pm, 10% at 12 noon- 4 pm, 4% at 6 am- noon , where as only 2% connected after mid night.

Effects of online social networking

50% of students had neutral effect of online social networking on them, that is, on their studies and social relationships (Table 1 and Figure 1). Almost same number, that is, 48% of student nurses had positive effects of online social networking, while only 2% showed negative effects of online social networking.

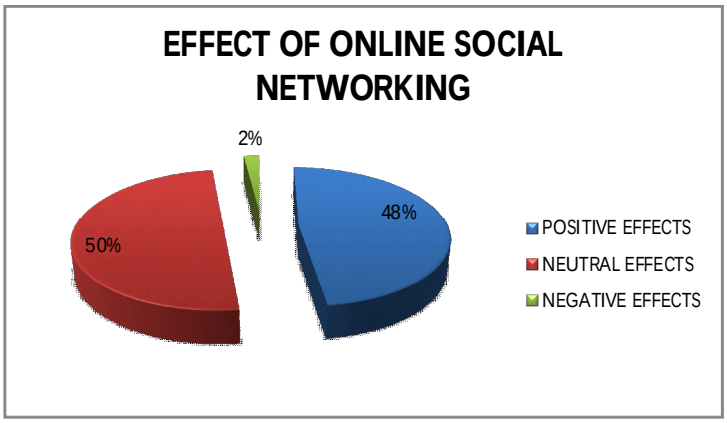
Table 1: Frequency and percentage of sample subjects by the effects of online social networking on them

Effect Of Online Social Networking	Frequency	Percentage
Positive effects	24	48%
Neutral effects	25	50%
Negative effects	1	2%

The questionnaire to assess the effects of online social networking on student nurses also contained four neutral questions which could not be categorized as either positive or negative statements. Hence, for these four questions the students were not scored or evaluated. However, these four questions were analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage. 70% of students reported that they did not perceive any change in their study habits due to online social networking. 50% of students felt guilty sometimes for spending much time on social networking. Only 6% felt guilty very often for spending much time on social networking. 74% of students did not share personal problems with unknown virtual friends. 48% of students did not feel relieved when they shared their personal problems with unknown virtual friends on social networking sites. 32% of students reported that they can stay away from online social networking for maximum one month. After one month, they feel the urgent need to do online social networking. Only 6% of students expressed that they can stay away from online social networking for maximum one day. After one day, they feel the inner urge to get connected and network virtually.

Discussion

The overall analysis of the data revealed that out of 50 sample subjects, half of the student



nurses, that is 50% had neutral effect of online social networking on them and almost half (48%) had positive effect while only 2% had negative effect of social media. Face book was the most popular and used social networking site among the student nurses and that more and more student nurses are getting hooked to the virtual world. Although, virtual world has not yet completely overtaken the real life of student nurses. According to reports (Hindustan times,7th Feb' 12)[1] in sept. 2011, India crossed the hundred million internet user mark. HT, survey showed that 24.1% of participants said they were online several times a day. While 35.1% said they used the net once daily. The present study showed that 40% of student nurses used online social networking 1-2 hours per day, where as 38% used it for less than 1 hour a day. Only 4% used it for more than 6 hours a day.

According to study done by professor Chuck Martin(2010)[5], whose marketing research class conducted the study, "college students have grown up with social networks, and the study shows they are now simply part of how students interact with each other with no apparent impact on grades''. Same results were revealed in the present study that 48% student nurses had positive changes in their study habits due to online social networking. 50% of student nurses had neutral effect of online social networking on them, whereas, only 2% showed negative effect of online social networking on their studies and social relationships.

According to Hindustan Times (7th feb,2012)[1] survey done in September 2011 last year showed that, popular social networking websites Facebook and Twitter turned out to be both tools of social interaction as well as demonstration. The number of respondents who used Facebook to make announcements to their friends jumped from 10.1% in the previous survey to 20.65% this time around.[1] Our present study shows that 96% of students used Facebook, which shows that Facebook is the most popular social networking site amongst the youth.

The study implies that as more and more students are networking and socializing via social media, it is time that they were made aware of the advantages and disadvantages of social media. Once they are aware, they can make informed choices and use social media more responsibly, so that their academic and social life is not negatively affected. Teachers encourage students to be technology savvy, especially computer and internet savvy. Computer education is a subject taught in nursing curriculum. Computers have made foray into the world of medical science. While on one hand students make meaningful use of social media in teaching-learning, education and even at work place, on the other hand they may also overuse, abuse the social media and develop dependence and addiction to it. Adolescents and youth often tend to use social media irresponsibly. It starts affecting their academic performance adversely. Therefore, teachers should become pro-active to ensure that they inculcate the right values in students so that students use social media to their advantage.

References

1. Hindustan Times, 7th February, 2012, Metro Special, page no: 7.
2. Lenhart A, Purcell K, Smith A, Zickuhr K. Report Social Media in Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults. 2010 Source: http://www.pewinternet.org/~/Media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP-Social_Media_and_Young_Adults_Reports
3. How Obama Won with Social Media- Case Studies. Source: www.dragonfly.com/blog/dragonfly-in-action/case-studies/the obama-campaign/
4. Tay R, Impact of Social Media on Society.2010 Source: www.ezinearticles.com/?Impact-of-Social-Media-on Society & id=5378885
5. Martin C. Social Networking Usage and Grades among College Students. 2010, Whittlemore School of Business and Economics, University of New Hampshire. Source: www.edudemic.com/wp-content/upload/2010/UNH social media.pdf.