

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, an attempt was made to understand the perceptions of agricultural graduates on social media and their utility for improving the agricultural extension services to farmers and in turn how farmers may be benefitted by utilizing the social media like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp etc. Accordingly, a well-structured interview schedule was administrated to find out the uses of social media, and their usefulness to improve Farming community in general and extension services in particular the extension system in particular and farming community in general on a five point Likert's scale (5-strongly agree to 1-Strongly disagree). Rank Based Quotient (RBQ) technique was employed for ranking various statements related to social media. The results of the study indicated that a majority of the students were familiar with the usage of social media and opined that it is used effectively for sharing knowledge among the groups. About 94 per cent (strongly agree to agree) of the students opined that "social media can be used effectively for learning" and at the same time 92 per cent (strongly agree to agree) of the students felt that social media may be misused to spread rumours. RBQ analysis revealed that information seeking was the first and foremost activity of the students in using social media and hence, the activity got first rank with 92.30 RBQ value, seeking solutions for regular problems faced by farming community stands last with an RBQ value of 78.46. Moreover, the students also opined that social networking sites play a very critical role in dissemination of information on prices, supply demand dynamics and market information of agri-commodities.

Keywords: social media, social networking, extension system, rank based quotient (rbq), likert's scale

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media platforms at the beginning of 21st century has an immense impact on global communications systems and as stated by Bakare *et al.*,

(2015), social media tools has paved way for millions of people across the world to locate, connect, make friends, share ideas, solicit support, and mobilize people with similar interest.

Table 1: Social media users around the world (as in July, 2021)

Sr. No.	Details	Statistics
1	Total number of social media users	4.48 billion
2	Social media users as a percentage of the global population	56.80 %
3	Annual change in the number of global social media users	+13.1% (+520 million)
4	Percentage of social media users accessing via mobile phones	99.00 %
5	Average amount of time per day using social media	2 hours 24 minutes

Source: www.dataportal.com

It is evident, From the Table-1 that, by the month of July, 2021, Social media users were is recorded as 4.48 billion, equating to almost 57 Per cent of the global population. The main reasons for this may be attributed to its ready to and easy to use web interfaces, interest on global, political, economic, social, educational and other sector developments among the different age groups. Moreover, around 13.1 per cent increase in the number of social media users all over the world could also be observed. Furthermore, on an average, the time spent per day on social media is around 2 hours 24 minutes.

Furthermore, there are different social media plat forms used by the global population and among them Facebook, You Tube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, WeChat, Tik Tok, Douyin, QQ, Telegram, Snap Chat, Sina Weibo etc. are the major players The detailed statistics regarding users of different social media platforms at global level. Presented in table no.2 reveals that, on the whole, majority of the population are using Facebook (2797M), Followed by You Tube (2291M) and WhatsApp (2000 M).

Table 2: Total users in various social media platforms at global level (April, 2021)

Sr. No.	Social media platform	Number (In millions)
1	Facebook	2797
2	You Tube	2291
3	WhatsApp	2000
4	Facebook Messenger	1300
5	Instagram	1287
6	Weixin/ WeChat	1225
7	Tik Tok	732
8	Douyin	600
9	QQ	595
10	Telegram	550
11	Snap Chat	528
12	Sina Wiebo	521
13	Kuaishou	481
14	Pinterest	459
15	Reddit	430
16	Twitter	396
17	Quora	300

Source: www.statista.com

The ultimate goal of the social media tools is to create an active and knowledge network community that individuals can exchange and share their valuable information known as knowledge sharing. Various studies have showed

that knowledge can be better and effectively shared with the aid of the social media tools which have gone a long way in influencing all aspects of human life.

The usage of social media is constantly increasing as they serve the purpose of larger sections of the community right from children to elderly people and ease in usage is also a prime reason for increase in membership of one or more social networking sites. Social media assists to connect with peers through maintaining a continuous connection with technology (Jagadeeswari et al., 2019; Jaclyn Carbal, 2011). With increased popularity and the ease of its use, social media has played an important role as a new medium for communication all around the world and its craze has reached to the peak with more than 4.20 billion users involved in social networking platforms (Parmar and Vinaya, 2020a & 2020b; Statista. 2021). Nalwa & Anand (2003) opined that addicted users of social media set back their personal and professional responsibilities in which the final outcome is poor academic performance. Amidst various research studies, the present study was taken up specifically to understand the awareness and use of social media by agriculture graduates and their perceptions on its utility for the improvement of agriculture community with the following specific objectives:

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To analyse the level of awareness among the agriculture graduates on social media
- (2) To study the perception of students on the usefulness of social media for agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

Data source : For the present study, primary information on awareness on social media was collected from the agricultural graduates by administering a well-structured questionnaire related to the awareness on usage of social media, and the extent of its usage in agricultural extension systems.

Sample size : A total of 78 students pursuing under graduate in agriculture from Acharya N. G. Ranga Agriculture University (ANGRAU), Andhra Pradesh have participated in the survey.

Analytical tools : The data collected on general profile of the students was analysed with the help of simple percentages. In order to analyse the students awareness on social media, Likert's scale (five point continuum) was used, where in a set of statements were given to the respondents to rank them on a five point continuum i.e. from strongly agree to strongly disagree. To study the perception levels of the students on the

social media, Rank based Quotients (RBQ's) were worked out with the below mentioned formula.

$$RBQ = \frac{\sum Fi (n+1-i)*100}{Nn}$$

Where,

i = Ranks given to concerned statements

N = Number of students

n = Number of ranks

Fi = frequency of students for the ith rank

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

From the information presented in Table 3, it is evident that a highest proportion of the students i.e. 47 per cent belong to age group of '22' years followed by 21, 23 and 20 years of age group with a per cent share of 30.80 per

cent, 11.50 per cent and 10.30 per cent respectively. It is also noticed that about 62.8 per cent of the respondents are female category while 37.20 per cent of the respondents are male.

Table 3 : General profile of the sample respondents

(n=78)

Sr. No.	Particulars	No.	Per cent
A	Age		
i	20 years	8	10.30
ii	21 years	24	30.80
iii	22 years	37	47.40
iv	23 years	9	11.50
	Total	78	100
B	Gender		
i	Male	29	37.20
ii	Female	49	62.80

Awareness of the respondents about social media

Table 4 : students awareness on social media

(n = 78)

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	total
1	I am aware that social media exists	63 (80.77)	13 (16.67)	02 (2.56)	0 (0)	0 (0)	78 (100)
2	Social media can be used effectively for learning	42 (53.85)	31 (39.74)	02 (2.56)	03 (3.85)	0 (0)	78 (100)
3	I have social media account	51 (66)	25 (32)	01 (1)	0	01 (1)	78 (100)
4	I have more than two social media accounts	42 (53.85)	19 (24.36)	05 (6.41)	07 (8.97)	05 (6.41)	78 (100)
5	Social media is a weapon for citizens to convey their feelings/emotions on different subjects	34 (43.59)	32 (41.03)	10 (12.82)	02 (2.56)	0 (0.00)	78 (100)
6	Social media is a waste of time	02 (2.56)	11 (14.10)	40 (51.28)	20 (25.64)	05 (6.41)	78 (100)
7	Social media is misused by anti-social elements to spread rumours	28 (35.90)	44 (56.41)	04 (5.13)	01 (1.28)	01 (1.28)	78 (100)
8	Effective learning cannot take place by using social media	04 (5.13)	17 (21.79)	18 (23.08)	33 (42.31)	06 (7.69)	78
9	User interface on social media site is clear and understandable	07 (8.97)	35 (44.87)	30 (38.46)	06 (7.69)	0 (0.00)	78 (100)
10	It is necessary to be skillful while using social media for learning	13 (16.67)	37 (47.44)	13 (16.67)	14 (17.95)	01 (1.28)	78 (100)

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	total
11	Most of the social media sites are solely for entertainment and pleasure only	07 (8.97)	29 (37.18)	26 (33.33)	11 (14.10)	05 (6.41)	78 (100)
12	I use social media sites for the purpose of learning	10 (12.82)	31 (39.74)	30 (38.46)	05 (6.41)	02 (2.56)	78 (100)
13	I always visit social media sites in order to get the academic materials for learning purpose	05 (6.41)	15 (19.23)	32 (41.03)	22 (28.21)	04 (5.13)	78 (100)
14	I get distracted when I use social media for learning	06 (7.69)	23 (29.49)	22 (28.21)	20 (25.64)	07 (8.97)	78 (100)
15	There must be some censor for social media content too	21 (26.92)	36 (46.15)	15 (19.23)	05 (6.41)	01 (1.28)	78 (100)

Note : Primary data, Numbers in the parenthesis indicates the percentage

The awareness of the students about the social media was analysed and presented in Table 4. From the results, it can be observed that 97.44 per cent of the respondents were well aware of the existence of social media (Strongly agree to agree). About subscription for social media accounts, it was observed that 78.21 per cent (strongly agree to agree) of the students had more than two social media accounts and 93.59 percent of the respondents felt that social media can be effectively used for learning purpose. About 84.62 per cent of the students opined that citizens use social media as a tool to convey their feelings and emotions on different subjects. About 51.28 per cent of the students stood neutral and 32 per cent disagreed (disagree to strongly disagree) with the statement on social media is waste of time whereas only 16.67 per cent (agree to strongly agree) felt that social media is a waste of time. With respect to the statement that social media is misused for spreading rumours, 92.31 per cent of the students agreed to it whereas only 2.56 percent of students disagreed with the statement while 5.13 per cent remained neutral.

About 50 per cent (disagree to strongly disagree) of the students disagreed that effective learning cannot take place using social media. About 46 per cent of the students agreed that social media is solely for entertainment and play and 33.33 per cent maintained neutral opinion whereas 20.51 percent of students disagreed. The analysis also revealed that 52.56 per cent of the respondents (agree to strongly agree) opined that they use social media sites for the purpose of learning while 38.46 per cent maintained neutral opinion. About 25 per cent of the students (agree to strongly agree) agreed that they use the social media for gathering materials for academic purposes While 41 per cent of the students were neutral this statement.

Further, few questions were asked to elicit the psychological aspects in using social media. About 37 per cent of the students disagreed for the statement on "I get distracted when I use social media for learning", while 28.21 per cent remained neutral. About 64.11 per cent of the students opined that it is necessary to be skilful while using social media for learning and About 73 per cent of the students opined that there must be some censor for social media too.

Perception of the respondents on the uses of social media in agriculture

Table 5 : Perceptions of the respondents on the uses of social media in agriculture

(n=78)

Sr. No.	Statements	RBQ value	Rank
1	Information seeking	92.30	I
2	Sharing of information on different kind of agricultural activities	92.05	II
3	To know about technological innovations	90.70	III
4	To know the successful examples, case studies of farmers etc.	86.41	IV
5	To know about the different govt schemes, loan waiver, bank loans etc	85.38	V
6	To know about the climatic and weather conditions	83.33	VI
7	Selling/buying of agricultural commodity	80.76	VII
8	To know about the market prices	80.00	VIII
9	Branding of agricultural commodity	78.71	IX
10	Seeking solutions for regular problems faced by farming community	78.46	X

As it is evident from the Table-5, the statements considered for the study were ranked by the respondents and accordingly RBQ values ranged from 78.46 to 92.30. Among the different statements, "Information seeking" was ranked first with an RBQ value of 92.30 followed by sharing of information on different kind of agricultural activities bearing second rank (92.05). From this, it can be inferred that most of the respondents utilized the social media very effectively in developing their knowledge levels by seeking and sharing the information. Different perception levels of the respondents on the use of social media in agriculture was analysed and presented in Table-5.

When it comes to field operations, the farmers became innovative and are trying new technological methods with more ease. The respondents perceived social media as a tool which can easily disseminate different technological innovations happening in the farming sector with in less time. Hence the statement on "To know about technological innovations" got third place with an RBQ value of 90.07. In order to motivate and encourage the farmers, various state governments took new initiatives in documenting the success stories of innovative farmers and getting the same replicated in similar agro-climatic regions for better productivity. Thus, the respondents placed "To know the successful examples and case studies" at fourth place with an RBQ value of 86.41.

In recent days, social media has become a good source of information and communication as it disseminates updated information from various sources like Government institutions, banks etc., on various aspects related to agriculture and allied sectors. Hence, information related to government schemes, loan waiver and bank loans are placed at fifth rank by the respondents with an RBQ value of 85.38. In addition to that, central and various state governments provide agricultural advisories with respect to climatic changes to the farmers well before the commencement of agricultural season. In most areas, farmers get weather related information through social media. In line to this, the respondents placed "To know about the climatic and weather conditions" at sixth place with a RBQ value of 83.33.

Most crucial information on prices, supply and demand dynamics of the agri-commodities has become the need of the hour to various stakeholders like producers, middlemen, traders etc. in agri-supply chain management. Keeping in view the importance of this information, the students have placed "buying /selling agricultural commodities" at seventh place with an RBQ value of 80.76 and also placed information related "To know about the market prices" at eighth place with RBQ value of 80.00.

Finally, branding of agricultural commodities and seeking solutions related to regular agricultural problems faced by farming community are placed at ninth and tenth places with RBQ value of 78.71 and 78.46 respectively.

CONCLUSION

From the present study, it is evident that social media have a very positive and satisfactory influence on agriculture. Majority of the students opined and agreed that they are familiar with the usage of social media and used it effectively for sharing knowledge among the groups related to the academics. In addition to that, majority of the students opined that social networking sites are playing very critical role in dissemination of information on agricultural activities, different govt schemes, loan waivers, bank loans, climatic and weather conditions and marketing information of agri-commodities and success stories.

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