WHY PEOPLE USE SOCIAL NETWORKS?

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ABSTRACT

Social networks are one of the most used website in the internet, the users of social networks have their own reasons to use them. Knowing why people using social networks can help IT professionals to have better understanding of the market and make better decisions for developing social networks. In this paper author answers the question that why people use social networks, by performing literature review in addition to two stage study to find out the answer of this question and evaluating the findings.

KEYWORDS: Friends and family, reason, social networks, usage.

Introduction

People from around the world use social networks. Thanks to the high speed internet connection and its availability to all places, it seems there is no limit for users to use their favorite social network website where ever they are. Behind using this social network website there are lots of reasons. Some people use social networks to fill their leisure times, some other wants to share their knowledge with other people and some might want to promote their product or just connect to the people that they know them in the real world. Knowing what are the main reasons that people use social networks, helps IT professionals to have better understanding of the social network market and provide better service to their customers. The objective of this research is to find out what is the main reasons that people use social network websites. To reach the objective of this research, researcher will first perform a literature review about past research and then using an online survey new research will be conducted and findings will be evaluated in this paper.

Past research and their findings

Finding why people uses social networks might be very interesting to researchers. Lin and Lu has conducted a survey among 302 participants in 2011 and they have found out that entertainment and usefulness are the main reasons that people use social network websites, besides they have found out that different genders has different reasons of using social network websites. Although this seems to be a good study but Lin and Lu did not specify what type of entertainment is more attractive to the social networks members. On the other hand to improve the entertainment of social networks (sledgianowski and kulviwat ,2009) suggests that increasing blog sharing, picture and news will increase the entertainment of social networks.

Additionally another research has been performed by (cheung et al. , 2011) and conducted among students to find out why they use Facebook, the results of study shows that instant communicating with their friends and group norms was the main reasons that students used social networks.

From the literature review it can understand that performing study on users of specific type of social network might have different results hence it is required to perform a study among users of different type of social networks to find out what is the main reason that people use social networks. Additionally the conducted researches were a little old and a new research might have different results. Hence author will start a new study to see if the main interest of social network users has been changed or not.

Design Study

To start a new study and find out why people use social networks, researcher has setup an online survey form which includes different questions from volunteers, this question will be answered by 50 people which are students of APU and they results will be analyzed as quantitative answers using charts and diagrams, additionally a descriptive questions will be asked from 4 volunteers and the results will be interpreted using coding technique. All the data of the participants will be gathered anonymously and they will be informed about the aim of this research.

First study

The first study wasdescriptive and participant were asked why they use social networks. This question has been asked from 4 people and answers was analyzed using coding techniques. The results has been showed as a graph which can be seen in figure 1.
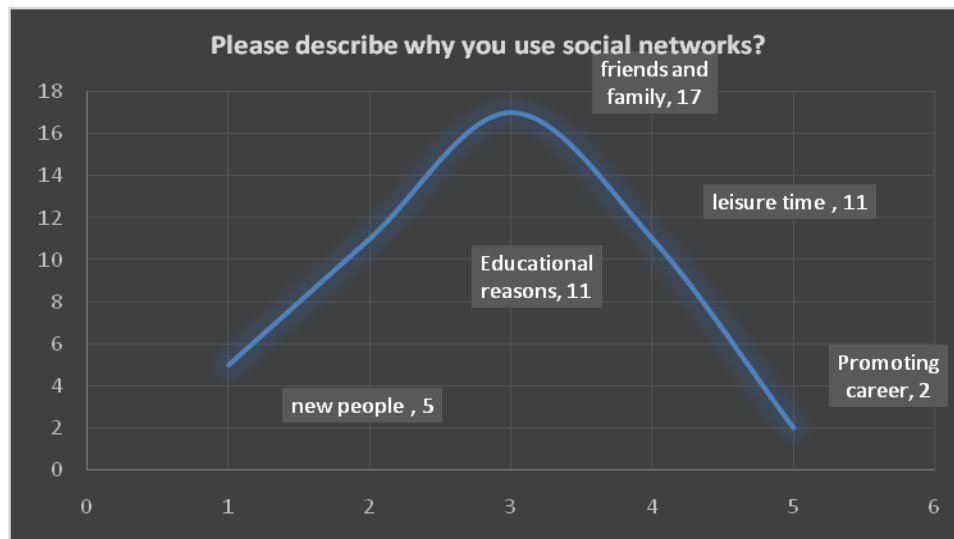

Figure 1-First study findings

Findings of the first question illustrates that staying in touch with friends and family is the main reason that participants stated that they use social networks for. Educational reasons and leisure

time activities are the other important reasons of using social networks, meeting new people and promoting careers are least important reasons people stated they use social networks for.

Second study

Second study has been place among 50 participants and the results was in quantitative data format. The online survey form contained 5 questions. These questions and answers to them is showed in figure 2 to 6.
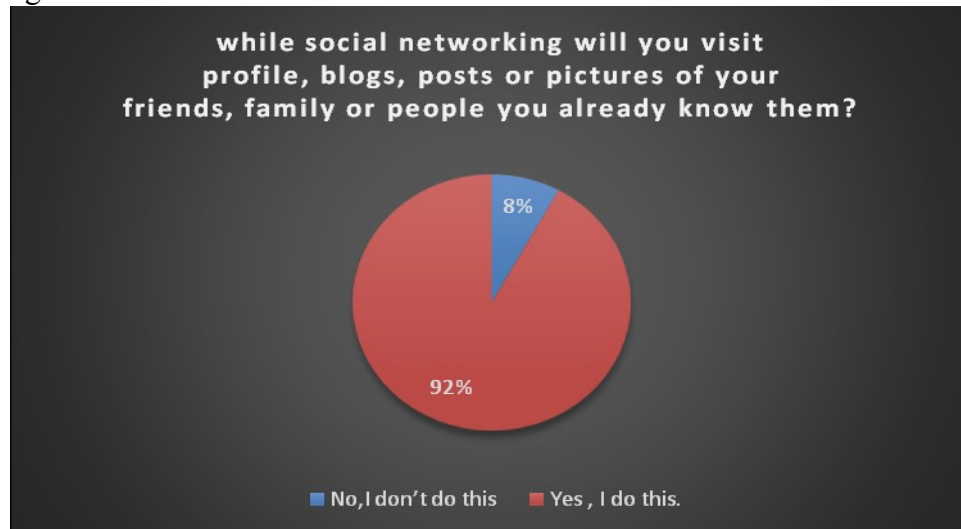

Figure 2- second study -first question

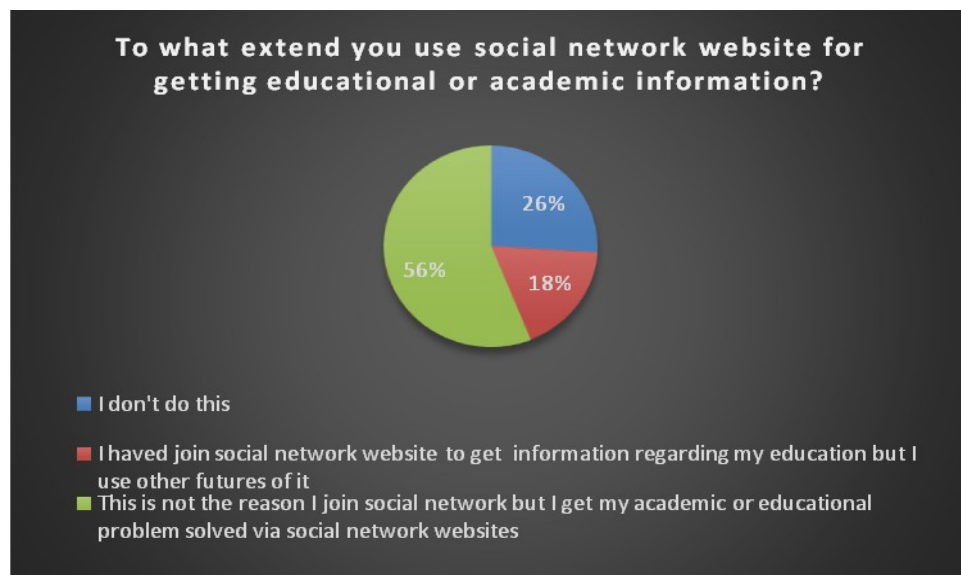Figure 2 illustrates 92% of social network users visit posts of their friends and family.

Figure 3- second study -second question

Figure 3 illustrates that 18% of people join social networks only for educational reasons while for 56% of members it was not the main reason but they had used social networks for that.

Figure 4- second study -3th question

The aim of the question in figure 4 was simply to find out does people use social networks for their leisure time, and it can be understand 24% of social network members do not like use social networks for leisure.
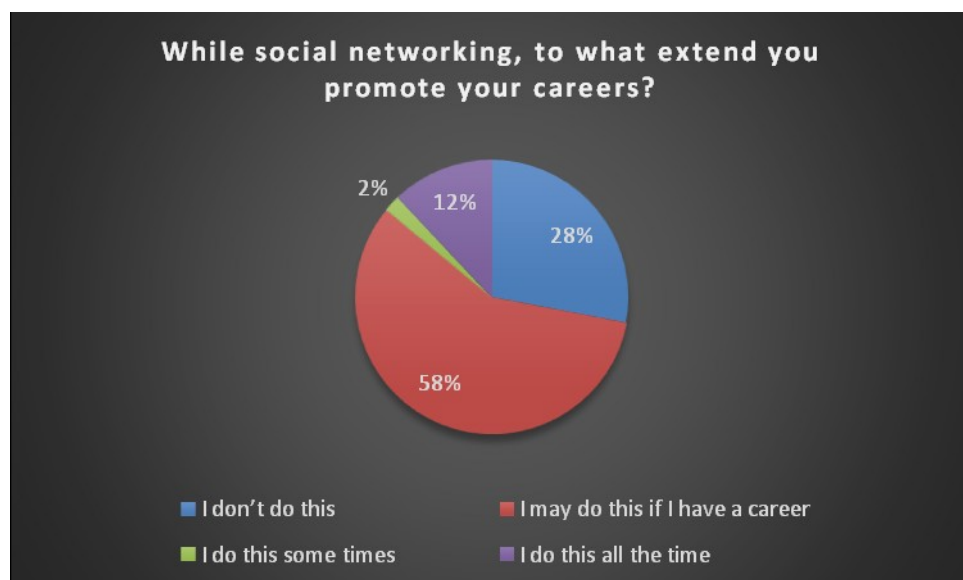

Figure 5- second study -4th question

Figure 5 illustrate the 4thquestion, the reason to ask this question was to find out if people like to use social networks for business reasons and 58% of participants stated that they might use it if they have career.
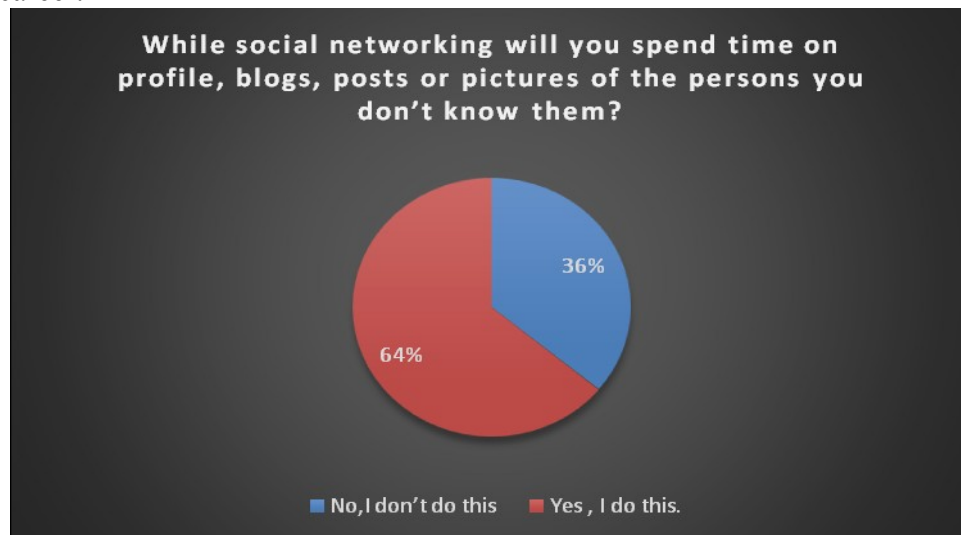

Figure 6- second study -5th question

Figure 6 illustrates the last question , the aim of this question was to find out if people use social networks to meet new friends and results shows 64% of participants might use it for this propose.

Evaluation

All the gathered data in second study that was shown separately before has been gathered in one graph to show what reasons are more important and what reasons are least important for people to use social networks.
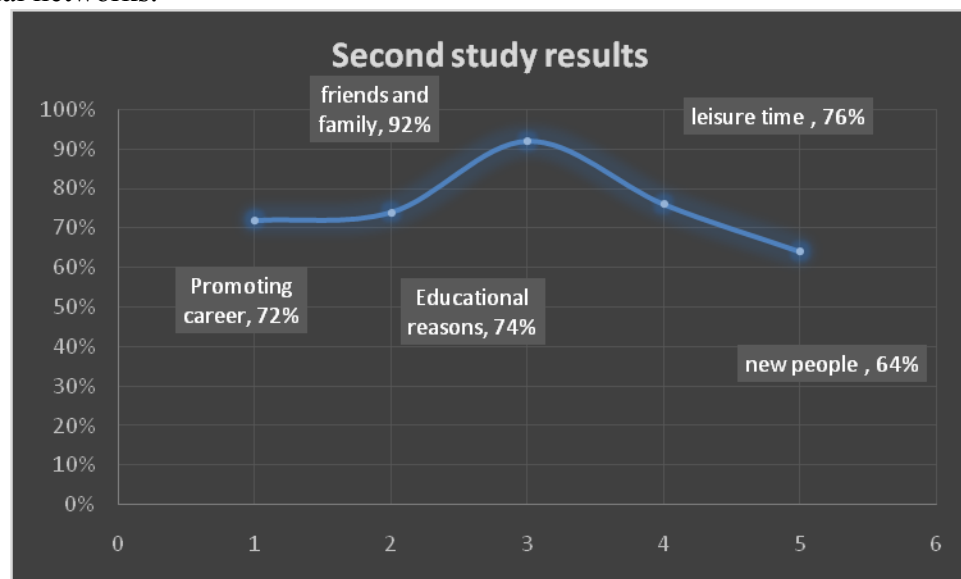

Figure 7- Second study results

Figure 7 illustrates all the gathered data in one scatter graph and the reasons that people use social networks.

Based on the findings of two study which was illustrated in figure 1 and figure 7 it can be understand thatthe main reason that people use social network websites are to connecting their friends and family and this supports the findings of (Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009). Additionally based on this study another important reason that people use social networks is leisure time and it is in support of study of (Lin and Lu, 2011).

The outcome of this study suggests that the main reasons that people use social networks has not significantly changed during these years and connecting with friends and family is still the most important reason that people use social networks.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be understand that the main reason that people use social networks is connecting with friends and family following by filling leisure time and educational reasons. This study outcomes are in support of other study results which was reviewed before. Additionally this study shows that promoting career and meeting news people are other important reasons that people use social networks but not as important as other reasons and most of the social network users prefer using social networks to connected with their friends and families rather that promoting their career or meeting new people.

Moreover in this paper critics which author has made to the past studies was addressed andby performing two studies, the objective of this study which was to answer the question of "why people use social networks?"Has been met. Future researchers are encouraged to study the other possible leisure time activities that users might be interested in, to be added in social networks bout they are not available today.

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