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# Social Computing Behavior of the Students of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh

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**Abstract:** Social network sites (SNSs) have attracted millions of users and many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. About ten millions of internet users are engaged with social networking sites, both in their leisure time and at work. However, there has been very little research on social computing aspects of the students in Bangladesh. In this backdrop, the present study on social media was conducted at Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, Bangladesh to understand the internet use behavior of the students along with their different activities in SNSs. Moreover, the attitude of students towards different SNSs and different abusing activities performed by students through SNSs was determined. The data of this study were collected from 120 students of Agriculture faculty through distributed questionnaire. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to reveal the different aspects of social computing aspects of the students. The important findings in the study relate to the growing addiction of the social networking trait among the students and findings indicated that 27.0% students were addicted to social networking. Moreover, 87.5% of students think that university teachers should use social networking sites as a platform for communication with their students. The study also explores different abusing activities which are performed by the students. Finally, 89.2% of the students had a highly favorable attitude towards different SNSs.

**Keywords:** The Internet, Social Networking, Social Interaction, Abusing Activities

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## 1. Background Discussion

Nowadays the university students have grown up surrounded by technology and it plays a vital role in their lives. So it is no surprise that before, during and after their time in college, they depend on social networking sites for gathering content and communicating messages [1]. There are different types of platforms that the user can join and use such as social networks, blogs and discussion groups [2,3, 4]. With the increase of technology used for communicating with others and the popularity of the Internet, “Social Networking” has become an activity that is done primarily on the Internet, with sites like MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, Friendster, and Xanga [5].

The term Social Computing refers to applications and services that facilitate collective action and social interaction on the internet, such as blogs, wikis, social networks and discussion forums [6]. Social computing is the collaborative

and interactive aspect of online behavior. The term can be understood in contrast to personal computing, which describes the behavior of isolated users. Social network sites can be defined as “web-based services that allow individuals to [7] construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, [8] articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and [9] view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system [8].”

By far the most popular social network used by college students and young adults are Facebook [10]. Moreover, internet usage for college students has increased and social networking online has been growing at an accelerating pace. A recent study indicated that participants spent an average of 6.22 hours per week using Facebook and MySpace [11].

In 2009, approximately 93% of young adults’ ages 18-29

reported going online, with 72% them active on at least one social media site [10]. The most popular social media site is Facebook, where 71% of young adults online have posted a profile. Given its widespread distribution and its ability to facilitate communication, social media has been proposed as a way to increase student participation, collaboration, information sharing, and critical thinking [7, 12,13]. Much has been made of how rapid advances in technology have changed the way we learn and communicate. In terms of personal interaction, social networking tools such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Texting, and YouTube have become common methods of communication for young consumers and they are gaining interest and acceptance from consumers of all ages [14]. Developments in information and communication technologies have changed pedagogical and technological applications and processes [15].

A study assessing differences among university students and faculties in their perception and use of social networking revealed that most undergraduate students regard Social Networking Sites (SNSs) as an entertainment feature, and most faculty members were not active users of this technology. The study suggested making social networking site-based services tailored to them and the benefits emphasized to them in order to attract them to get involved in these activities [16]. Indian students spend more time on these sites than Dutch students but they were mostly passive. Dutch students, on the other hand, participate more actively than Indian students by posting to these sites [17].

Use of technology such as the internet is one of the most important factors that can influence the educational performance of students positively or adversely. Student users are affected by the internet and this impact is determined by the type of internet usage [18]. They are positively affected by the informative use of the internet while having the drastic impact of recreational use of internet on them. The internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination [19].

As part of the global village and in the age of the internet, Bangladeshi people, mostly young educated people are highly indulging Social Networking Sites (SNSs) which are regarded as popular ways of computer-mediated-communication [20]. Media and communication scholars [21, 22, 23] have agreed in a consensus that a monumental shift is occurring in the media and communication habits of young people. A contemporary review research [24] revealed that 27 percent of the Facebook related research which is the highest portion explored the issues of social interaction. Bangladesh is not that much difference compares with other countries; people of Bangladesh are using social networking sites (SNSs), especially young people as a means of continuous communication [20]. The primary focus of the study was to ascertain the social computing behavior of the students of Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh on different social networking sites (SNSs). The aim of the study was also to determine the attitude of BAU students towards SNSs as well as pinpoint the abusing activities of the

students through SNSs.

## 2. Methodology

The study was conducted during January – June 2014 at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Mymensingh. The University is also privileged to have Wi-Fi internet connectivity in the entire residential hall inside the campus. There are six faculties at the BAU; Agriculture is the largest faculty of the university. The data for this study was collected from the students of level 3, semester 1 of the faculty of agriculture. There were 286 students in level 3 semester 1, out of which 120 students were selected randomly as a sample for this study.

In order to collect valid and reliable data, a structured questionnaire was developed keeping the research purpose in mind. Data was collected using pre-tested questionnaire and on the basis of pre-test experiences necessary corrections, modifications, and alternations were made before finalized the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed among the students in their classroom situation.

The questionnaire has four major sections. The first section consisted of demographic data, including the age of the students, relationship status, semester loss of the students, the total expenditure per month and involvement with politics. The second section contains the general information of internet use by students including their internet use frequency, sources of internet use, duration of internet use in per visit and different activities performed through the internet. The third section cover the most visited SNSs of students, activities on different SNSs, addiction to SNSs and some general information regarding different aspects of computing SNSs with their attitude towards different SNSs. The final and fourth section was comprised of the dimension of SNSs and different abusing activities in SNSs by the students.

### *Data Analysis*

Data collected from the respondents were verified, compiled, tabulated and analyzed statistically according to the objectives of the study. In some cases, qualitative data were converted to quantitative data by means of suitable scoring to facilitate interpretation. Data were analyzed based on the nature of the data collected. The statistical measurement used in describing the selected explanatory and focus variables were frequency distribution, range, percentage, mean and standard deviation. To clarify the understanding tables were used in presenting data. The SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) computer program was used in analyzing data.

## 3. Results and Discussions

### *3.1. Salient Features of the Selected Characteristics of the BAU Students*

The result of the survey indicates that average age of the respondents were 21.88. While looking at the relationship

status of the students, result revealed that majority (80.8%) of the respondents had no relationship status followed by in a relationship (17.5%) and married (1.7%), respectively. It was also observed that average expenditure of a student per month was 4258.33 taka (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Salient features of the selected characteristics of the BAU students.

Socio-economic variable	BAU Students (n=120)		
	Mean(Std. deviation)	Frequency	(%)
PERSONAL DATA			
Age (years)	21.88 (0.93)	-	-
Relationship Status			
Single	-	97	80.8
In a relationship	-	21	17.5
Married	-	2	1.7
Total Expenditure (per month) in taka	4258.33 (943.76)	-	-
Semester Loss			
Yes	-	4	3.3
No	-	116	96.7
Involved in Politics			
Yes	-	9	7.5
No	-	111	92.5

Data indicates that among the total students 96.7% of them had no semester loss and only 3.3% had semester loss. Data also revealed that the highest proportion (92.5%) of the students had no involved in politics while only 7.5% students had involvement in politics.

### 3.2. General Information on Internet Use

The findings on general information on the use of the internet by the students have been formulated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** General information on the internet use by BAU students.

Variables Relating to Internet Use	BAU Students (n=120)	
	Frequency	(%)
Type of Internet Connection		
Wi-Fi	69	57.5
Modem	15	12.5
Others	36	30.0
Internet Use Frequency		
Daily	72	60.0
Weekly	21	17.5
Monthly	8	6.7
Occasionally	19	15.8
Duration of Internet Use in per visit		
Less than 1 hour	63	52.5
One to two hours	48	40.0
Two to four hours	7	5.8
Four to six hours	2	1.7
More than six hours	0	0.0
Opportunity to Use Internet for the First Time		
In Primary School Level	0	0.0
In Higher Secondary School Level	48	40.0
At University Level	72	60.0

The result in Table 2 shows that a majority of the students (57.5%) had Wi-Fi connection followed by modem (12.5%) and other (30.0%) types of internet connectivity. It was

observed that internet use frequency of the students was high, about 60.0% of the students use the internet daily, where 17.5% use weekly, 15.8% occasionally and only 6.7% used the internet monthly. Results also indicate that 52.5% student used the internet less than 1 hour, while there were no students who stayed more than six hours on the internet in per visit. Data also indicates that 40.0% students stayed one to two hours, 5.8% students stayed two to four hours and only 1.7% students stayed four to six hours on the internet per visit. Finally, the findings indicate that about 60.0% of the students of Bangladesh Agricultural University got the opportunity to use the internet for the first time at University level and 40.0% students at higher secondary school level.

The students were assessed to identify the sources of internet use. The result in Table 3 indicated the different sources if internet use by the students.

**Table 3.** Source of internet use.

Sources	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Personal Computer/Laptop	76	63.3	44	36.7
Mobile Phone/Smart Phone	98	81.7	22	18.3
Cybercafés	08	6.7	112	93.3
University Central Library	06	5.0	114	95.0
Hall Library	15	12.5	105	87.5
Computer or Laptop of friends	13	10.8	107	89.2
Tablet	02	1.7	118	98.3

Majority of the students were seen to be surfing the internet over the mobile phone (81.7%) followed by personal computer or laptop (63.3%), hall library (12.5%), Computer of laptop of friends (10.8%), cybercafés (6.7%), University central library (5.0%) and tablet (1.7 that with the easy availability and low cost of the handsets containing advanced features, the utilization of internet%). It was observed from mobile phones has become very common. It is followed by use of personal computers since the university provides WI-FI connectivity in the hostels.

### 3.3. Use of Internet

What are the activities performed by the students through the internet was determined? The following bar diagram in Figure 1 shows the different activities performed by the students through the internet.

It is revealed that majority (93.3%) of the students used internet for downloading educational support materials, where 83.3% of the students used internet to stay connected with social network sites i.e. twitter, Facebook etc. 54.2% for downloading movies, songs and videos, 40.8% for downloading games and software, 35.0% for watching videos in online, 20.0% for playing online games and only 9.2% used internet for shopping purpose. Moreover, the majority of the students are interested in downloading educational support materials and using different social networking sites like Facebook and twitter.

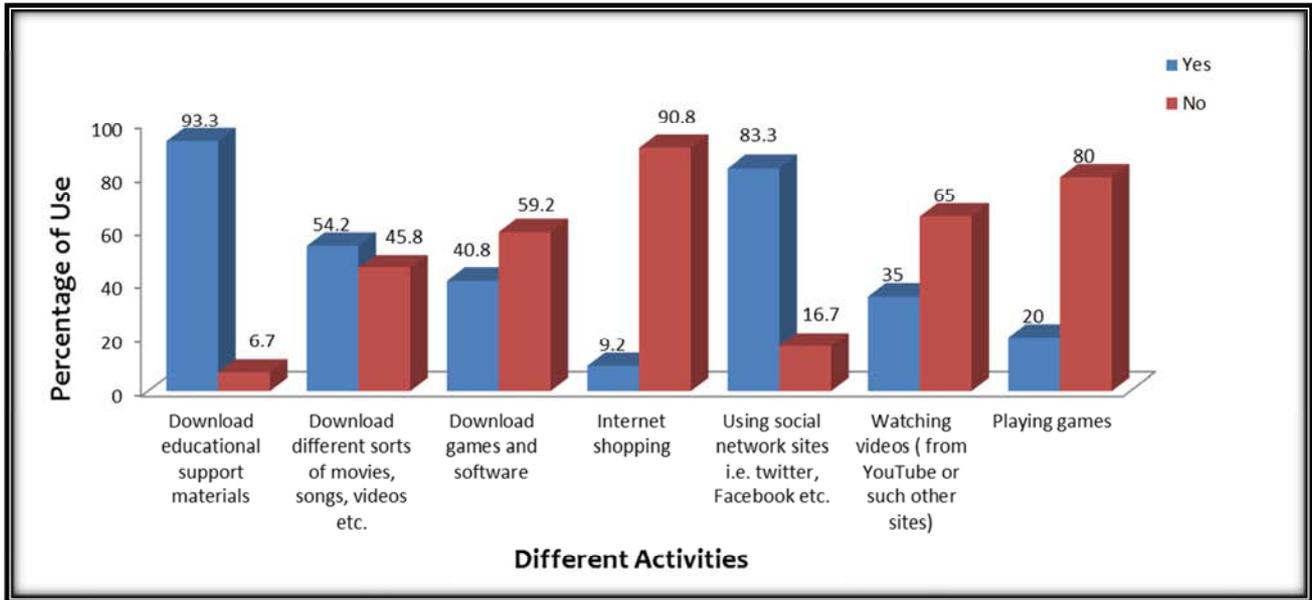


Figure 1. Use of internet of BAU students.

### 3.4. Social Networking

The respondents were asked about their most visited social networking sites (SNSs). Table 4 shows the frequency of visits to SNSs and it was measured on the basis of their visits either regularly, occasionally and not at all with weights of 2, 1 and 0, respectively.

Table 4. Most visited social networking sites.

Social Networking Sites	Frequency of visit			Mean	Rank Order
	Regularly	Occasionally	Not at all		
Facebook	82	27	11	1.59	1
Google+	37	47	36	1.01	2
Gmail	20	51	49	0.76	3
You tube	09	47	64	0.54	4
Wikipedia	13	38	69	0.53	5
Yahoo	08	40	72	0.47	6
Skype	04	28	88	0.30	7
Twitter	05	15	100	0.21	8
Amazon	00	09	111	0.08	9
Personal blogs	03	02	115	0.07	10
MySpace	01	06	113	0.07	11
LinkedIn	01	06	113	0.07	12
Flicker	01	05	114	0.06	13
Instagram	00	05	115	0.04	14
Hi5	00	03	117	0.03	15

Note: Regularly = 3, Occasionally = 2 and Not at all = 1

The mean value of each social networking site was computed and according to the highest mean value of all social networking sites are arranged in rank order. The Table 4 shows that Facebook is the most visited social networking site and since the mean score values shows highest i.e. 1.59 and this social networking site ranked first place followed by Google+ (1.01), Gmail (0.76), YouTube (0.54), Wikipedia (0.53), Yahoo (0.47), Skype (0.30), Twitter (0.21), Amazon (0.08), Personal blogs (0.07),

MySpace (0.07), LinkedIn (0.07), Flicker (0.06), Instagram (0.04) and Hi5 (0.03). Moreover, still in BAU, the majority of the respondents were seen to be using Facebook (one of the popular brands in social networking) followed by Google+ and Gmail. After it, YouTube occupied a considerable position.

The major activities of the students through different social networking were identified. Table 5 shows the different activities of students in social networking sites.

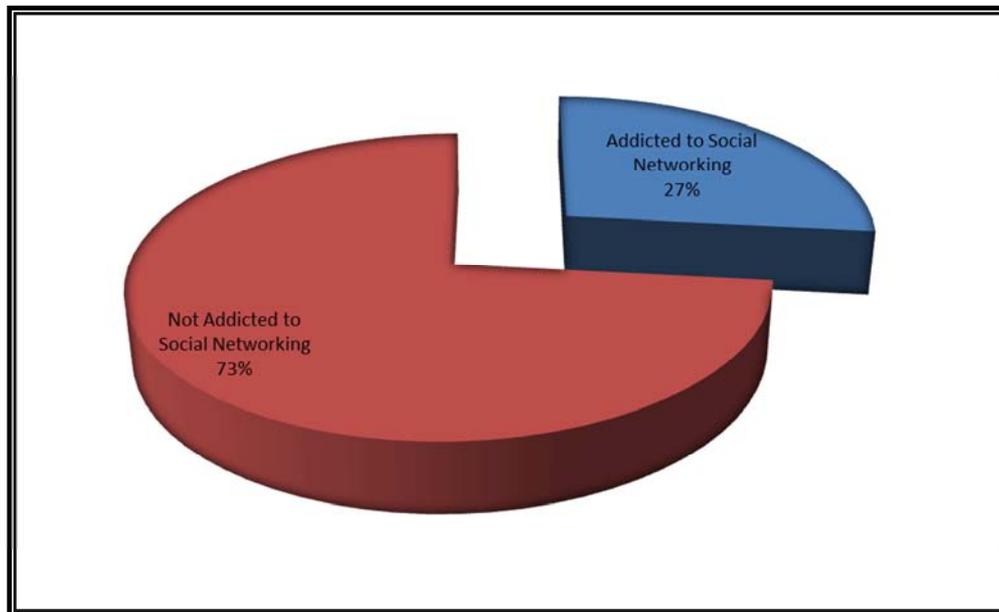
**Table 5.** Activities in social networking.

Statement	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Searching for new friends	60	60.0	60	60.0
Updating own status	69	57.5	51	42.5
Upload photos of different events	62	51.7	58	48.3
Only read other status	66	55.0	54	45.0
Using Facebook as a recreational site	77	64.2	43	35.8
Using Facebook as a media of reveal	31	25.8	89	74.2

From Table 5, it was seen that majority of the respondents (64.2%) were using Facebook as a recreational media followed by searching new friends (60.0%), updating own status (57.5%), only read other status (55.0%), upload photos of different events (51.7%) and used Facebook as a media of taking revenge (25.8%). The students had a great interest on social networking sites as a media of recreation and also as a media to explore old and new friends.

### 3.5. Addiction to Social Networking Sites

The excessive use of new technologies (and especially online social networking) may be particularly addictive to young people [25]. Addiction in this study is conceptualized as overuse of SNSs other than academic purposes. Addiction of the students on social networking sites was measured on the basis of their engagement and overuse of SNSs in activities hampering their academics. Figure 2 represent the result of addiction towards SNSs.

**Figure 2.** Pie Chart showing the percentage of addiction of BAU students towards social networking.

The majority of the respondents (73.0%) from the faculty of Agriculture felt that they were not addicted to social networking. On the other hand, 27.0% of the students felt that they are addicted to social networking. Moreover, a considerable portion of the respondents (73.0%) was seen not addicted to social networking. Addicted users prefer using the internet setting back their personal and professional responsibilities and this ultimately leads to poor academic performance [26].

### 3.6. General Information Regarding Different Aspects of Computing SNSs

The major focus of the study was to explore different aspects

of computing SNSs of BAU students. Several questions were listed in the questionnaire and Table 6 shows the findings.

Maximum percentage of the students (90.0%) felt that social media let them communicate quickly. Besides this majority of the students (87.5%) thought that the BAU teachers should also use social networking sites to post information as a method of communication with students. Moreover, a good proportion of the students (81.7%) joined in a group on the social networking sites as a member. An interesting finding of this study was that about 80.8% of the students have a friend with at least one of their teacher and only 19.2% of them became worried that their teacher would see their private posting in different social networking sites.

**Table 6.** General Information regarding different aspects of computing SNSs.

Statement	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Do you use social networking sites in your theory classroom?	44	36.7	76	63.3
Do you use social networking sites in your practical classroom?	16	13.3	104	86.7
Have you faced any personal problem (s) because of social networking?	45	37.5	75	62.5
Do you think social networking could be introduced as an essential part of your classes?	52	43.3	68	56.7
Do you think social media lets you communicate quickly?	108	90.0	12	10.0
Do you monitor your privacy setting on social sites?	88	73.3	32	26.7
Do you have any teacher in your Facebook friend list?	97	80.8	23	19.2
Do you worried that your teacher would see your private posting on your social sites?	23	19.2	97	80.8
Do you think you can spend your daily life without social media?	53	44.2	67	55.8
Do you think social media is relevant to your life?	84	70.0	36	30.0
Do you think University teachers should use social networking sites to post information as a method of communication with students?	105	87.5	15	12.5
Are you a member of a group on the social networking sites?	98	81.7	22	18.3
Are you an admin of a social networking site group?	26	21.7	94	78.3
Do you have more than one ID on social networking sites (Facebook ID)?	32	26.7	88	73.3
Do you ever visit your university website?	95	79.2	25	20.8

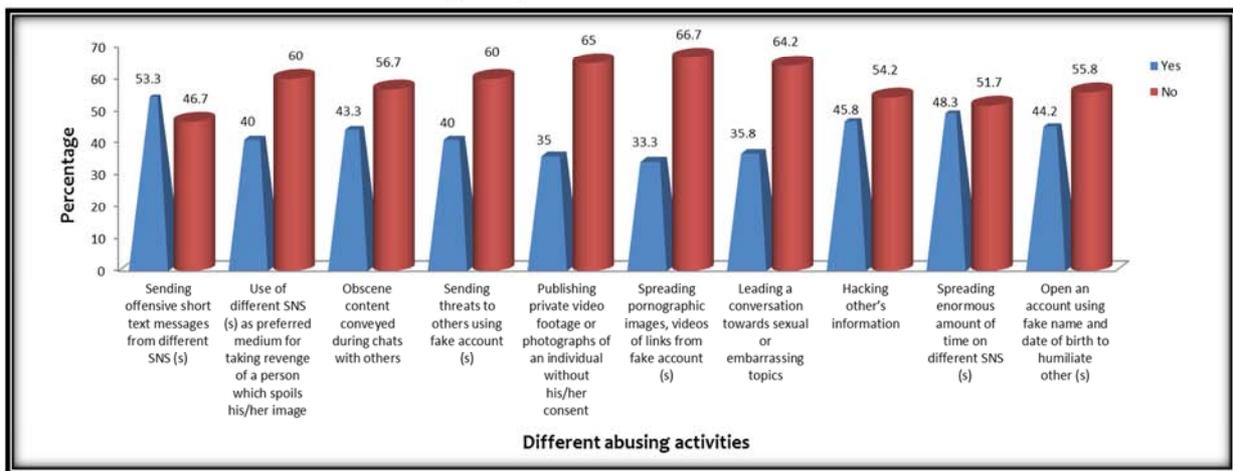
Results also indicated that 36.7% students used social networking sites in their theory classroom where only 13.3% of them used social networking sites in their practical classroom. Moreover, 43.3% of the students thought that social networking could be introduced as an essential part of their classes. From the Table 6, it can also be observed that about 70.0% of the students thought that social media is relevant to their life and 55.8% of the students cannot spend their daily life without social media. Again, in spite of 73.3% of the students monitor their privacy setting on social sites but till after their monitoring, 37.5% faced any personal problem (s) because of social networking. Finally, data from the table indicate that 21.7% of the respondents acted as an admin in a group of a social networking site and 26.7% of the students have more than one ID on social networking sites. Students were asked that do they ever visited to their university website and from Table 6; it can be observed that 20.8% of them did not ever visit their university website.

**3.7. Abusing Activities through Social Networking Sites**

Different abusing activities through social networking sites may lead to the very antagonistic effects on the life of the peoples. It is known to us that social networking is a product

of technology and technology brings new kinds of crime. While many people’s are using it for wholesome, ethical, and healthy reasons, there are also many who utilize it to abuse and exploit others [27]. However, through this study, some abusing activities of BAU students were trying to identify. The abusing activities of the students through social networking sites were determined by asking them about their engagement in different abusing activities like sending most offensive messages through SNSs to their friends and others. Figure 3 shows the findings diagrammatically.

The findings showed that the maximum percentage of students (53.3%) were sending offensive short text messages through different social networking sites followed by spreading enormous amount of time on different SNS (48.3%), hacking other information (45.8%), fake account to humiliate other (44.2%), Obscene content conveyed during chats with others (43.3%), using SNSs for taking revenge on a person which spoils his/her image (40.0%), Sending threats to others using fake account (40.0%), Leading a conversation towards sexual or embarrassing topics (35.8%), Publishing private video footage or photographs of an individual without his/her consent (33.3%) and Spreading pornographic images, videos of links from fake account (33.3%) (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Abusing activities of BAU students through social networking sites (SNSs).

From the above figure, it can be inferred that there was a good percentage of students who had a fake account and they were using it to humiliate other, spreading pornographic images and videos or publishing private video footage or photographs and sending threats. Moreover, their main abusing activity was sending offensive short text messages through different SNSs.

### 3.8. Attitude of BAU Students towards Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

The attitude of the students towards SNSs was determined

*Table 7. Classification of BAU students according to their attitude towards using SNSs.*

Possible Score	Observe Score	Categories of Farmers	Number	Percentage	Mean	Std.
10-30	15-29	Slightly favourable (up to 10)	-	-	24.32	2.93
		Moderately favourable (11-20)	13	10.8		
		Highly favourable (above 20)	107	89.2		
		Total	120	100		

Based on the obtained scores, the respondents were classified into three categories as presented in Table 7. Data indicated that 89.2 percent of the respondents had highly favorable attitude, 10.8 percent had moderately favorable attitude and there were no students in the University that had a slightly favorable attitude towards ICTs. This finding indicates that students of BAU were enthusiastic to use different social networking sites to get their required information as well as use as recreational sites.

## 4. Conclusion

Recent trend shows that social networks have revolutionized the way in which many people relate to each other and share their daily life information and feelings. Besides this, social networks have gradually become powerful spaces of interaction among students community. Students are linked by diverse motives in different social networking sites. Social networks can be used to the full advantage of the benefit of the learning method and be a great tool for collaborative working. However, the impact of social computing in the diverse domain and the complexity of features pose new challenges for social researchers in terms of social value system. It was observed from the study that majority of respondents accessed the internet over the mobile phone followed by the personal computer. Same findings were found by [28] in his study. The majority of the students used internet on daily basis and their duration of internet use in per visit was less than one hour. A considerable proportion of respondents downloaded educational support materials from the internet followed by using social networking sites. It was observed that among the different social networking sites Facebook was the most accessed social networking site by the students followed by Google+ and Gmail. The students were taking social networking as recreational activities and they were usually searching for new friends and update their own status on different social sites. Though they were taking social networking as recreational activities but it was observed that

by using a three-point rating scale. The scale comprised of strongly agrees, moderately agree and slightly agree with the corresponding weights of 3, 2 and 1.

The possible attitude score of farmers towards ICT could range from 10-30, 10 indicating highly unfavorable attitude and 30 indicating highly favorable attitude. The computed attitude scores of the pond owners range from 10-30, the mean being 24.32 with a standard deviation of 2.93.

majority of the respondents were not addicted to social networking.

Furthermore, a maximum number of the respondents has friends with at least one of their teacher and majority of the respondents did not worry about their private posting that might be seen by their teacher. A major fraction of the respondents opined that university teachers should use social networking sites to post information as a method of communication with students. It was observed that a good proportion of the students have more than one ID on social networking sites, especially on Facebook and majority of them sending offensive short text messages through social networking sites. Furthermore, they were spreading an enormous amount of time on different SNSs. However, efforts should be made to use the social media as a powerful tool for the overall betterment of the student community. Though the majority of the students do abuse activities like hacking other information, using a fake account to humiliate and sending threats to other, publishing private video footage and spreading pornographic images but they showed the highly favorable attitude towards social networking sites. A major portion of respondents thinks that different social networking sites could be introduced as an essential part of their educational activities. The future social media initiatives should make use of ICTs as both information gathering and information sharing tools both for their theory and practical classes. Moreover, as a maximum number of respondents think that social media is relevant to their life and therefore, it is important to introduce some target specific information modules for them. Finally, emphasis should be laid to keep the students away from different abusing activities.

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