

Awareness and Usage of Academic Social Networking Sites: Female Research Scholars and Faculties

A. Subaveerapandiyan

Librarian, DMI-St. Eugene University, Lusaka,
Zambia. Junior Professional Assistant (Library),
Bennett University
(Times of India Group), India.
Corresponding Author:
subaveerapandiyan@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2149-9897>

K. Sripathi Sumathi

Senior Lecturer, Eugene University,
Lusaka, Zambia.
sumathiksripathi@gmail.com
ORCID iD: [https://orcid.org/my-
orcid?orcid=0009-0003-1330-6017](https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0009-0003-1330-6017)

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Abstract

The study examines the awareness and usage of Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNS) among female research scholars and faculty members in Tamil Nadu, India. A structured questionnaire was used to survey 838 female research scholars through online platforms. The results showed that most respondents use at least one ASNS, with Google Scholar being the most popular. The primary reasons for using ASNS are to disseminate scholarly work and discover research papers. However, a lack of awareness and time was the main reason for not having an account with these sites. The respondents learned about ASNS primarily through friends and colleagues and suggested increasing their use and awareness through seminars and training courses, library posters, and integration in the student courses. The study highlights the importance of ASNS in the research work of female scholars and faculties while also recognizing the need for increased awareness and access to these resources.

Keywords: Academic Social Networking Sites, Academia.edu, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Researchers, Academicians, India.

Introduction

Researchers have a variety of websites and social networking sites at their disposal to increase visibility for their published or pre-print works (Banshal, Singh, Kaderye, Muhuri & Sánchez, 2018). However, not all published manuscripts can be posted entirely due to publisher restrictions and copyright laws. Authors who want to comply with these laws are often limited to posting their titles and abstracts on academic social networking sites like ResearchGate and Academia.edu. (Ali & Richardson, 2018). These sites allow researchers to display their work while avoiding copyright infringement. A reader or researcher can also personally request an article from the author(s). Articles may be available through institutional subscriptions, but not all institutes subscribe to all articles. Academic and social networking sites allow researchers to share their work with varying degrees of restriction, depending on the terms and conditions of the service providers (Matthias, Jahn & Laakso, 2019). These sites offer a way for researchers to increase their publicity and popularity.

Academicians frequently use research publications as a source of information. Most research publications are based on primary data, with some literature review studies also relying on primary data. These research manuscripts provide factual valuable information for discovering new topics, identifying research gaps, and conducting further studies (Tijdink, Vergouwen & Smulders, 2013). Research publications are available online, on publisher websites, e-databases, and social networking sites (Sami F. A., 2018). However, not all research papers are publicly accessible, with only a limited number of articles available through open access. Open access has improved significantly compared to the last decade (Piwowar et al., 2018). Academicians can efficiently utilize academic social networking sites to increase their reach. These sites are designed to connect individuals with similar research interests or disciplines and are used for formal communication among researchers. Academic social networking sites also allow content creation, uploading, tagging, and sharing. These sites have unique features specific to academic purposes and are used exclusively for academic purposes (Meishar-Tal & Pieterse, 2017).

The use of academic and social networking sites is widespread among academicians. Some major sites include Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Twitter, Academia.edu, ResearchGate, BioMed Experts, MLA Commons, Google Scholar, Microsoft Academic, ORCID, ResearcherID, Mendeley, MyScienceWork, Purchase, Figshare, and Frontiers (Jordan, 2014). These academic social networking sites provide researchers with a platform to showcase their research papers and author profiles. It is a significant network for researchers, with Academia.edu, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate offering various features that can be beneficial for researchers to find research works and connect with peers. Colleagues can easily search for, download, and request articles, associate with other researchers, follow them for updates, gain citations, gather statistics, bookmark resources, chat, connect, and share. (Jeyapragash & Rajkumar, 2018).

Academic and social networking sites (ASNS) have emerged as powerful tools for researchers, scholars, and faculty members to disseminate their work and connect with their peers. The usage of ASNS has been widely reported in the global academic community (ibid). However, there is a lack of research exploring the awareness and use of these sites among female research scholars and faculty members in India (Jordan, 2014). The author(s) conducted this study to address this gap and investigate the knowledge and utilization of ASNS among female research scholars and faculty members in Tamil Nadu, India. The study aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. Do female research scholars and faculty members know about academic and social networking sites?
2. What are the reasons for using academic and social networking sites for scholars and faculties?

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the awareness and usage of ASNS among female researchers (Tijdink et al., 2013; Piwowar et al., 2018). They can inform strategies to enhance their use and accessibility in the future (Meishar-Tal & Pieterse, 2017; Matthias et al., 2019).

Literature Review

Social networking sites among academicians have been a topic of interest among researchers. In 2012, Chakraborty surveyed North-Eastern Hill University research scholars to

understand their usage of social networking sites such as Facebook and ResearchGate. Out of 100 respondents, 66 had a ResearchGate account, which they primarily used for reading and sending messages and, to a lesser extent, participating in discussions and sharing information.

In 2014, Thelwall and Kousha hypothesized who among students and academicians would have more views and downloads on academic networking sites like Academia.edu. For their study, they took a sample of the academia.edu site and used the keyword "philosophy." The results showed that academicians received more views and downloads than students because of their extensive papers and experience. However, there were no significant differences between genders regarding views and citations.

Jordan (2014) investigated academicians' familiarity, usage, and awareness concerning social networking sites. She divided social networking sites into five categories: mainstream social networking sites (such as Facebook and LinkedIn), academic social networking sites (such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate), impact tracking sites (such as Google Scholar and ORCID), bibliometric sites (such as Mendeley), and publishing sites (such as Figshare). The research study showed that less than 50% of the respondents were aware of Academia.edu and ResearchGate, and around 50% were aware of Google Scholar. Most respondents used these academic social networking sites to connect with their peers, follow discussions, share links, and track metrics. This academic community's most widely used social networking sites were LinkedIn, Academia.edu, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, ORCID, ResearcherID, and Frontiers. Twitter, however, was the most commonly used site for multiple purposes. ResearchGate and Google Scholar were the most widely used and recognized academic networking sites.

El-Berry (2015) conducted a survey study with South Valley University in Egypt with the academic teaching faculties. Most of them are aware of ResearchGate and have a profile on the website. The respondents used academic networking sites primarily to discover research papers, share their publications, and communicate with other researchers. Muscanell and Sonja (2017) surveyed American and European scholars and found that the frequency of usage by the respondents is based on notifications received when they are logged into the website. Most respondents used the platform to share their research works and citations and participate in questions and answers. Out of the 1009 total respondents, only 417 had a ResearchGate account, with the majority mentioning a lack of awareness as the reason for not having an account.

Borrego (2017) conducted a research survey about ResearchGate and Institutional Repositories among Spanish researchers and found that they preferred uploading their research papers to ResearchGate instead of repositories. The surprising result was a lack of awareness about the availability of institutional repositories and the perception that ResearchGate had more features, such as giving more visibility, reaching international researchers, and having statistical and citation reports. Researchers also believed that ResearchGate was easier to disseminate and promoted articles and profiles better than institutional repositories.

Singson and Mohammad (2017) surveyed Pondicherry University's Indian research scholars about their usage of ResearchGate and found that 21 respondents used the platform regularly. The main reasons for joining were being introduced by colleagues and friends and the ability to connect with various research fields and expand their social network. The researchers believed that using ResearchGate would improve their research performance and increase the visibility and citations of their research papers. Anand, Hadagali and Ranadev (2017) conducted a study with two state universities in Karnataka, India, and found that most

users were male. They preferred using ResearchGate, followed by Google Scholar and academia.edu. However, access denial by the university where the researchers worked was observed while accessing other network sites, negatively impacting female researchers.

Asmi and Margam (2018) conducted a study with M.Phil. and Ph.D. research scholars at Central Universities around Delhi. Most respondents were male, and 14.4% were unaware of academic social networking sites. ResearchGate was the most popular platform, followed by academia.edu, with 75% of research scholars using academic social networks to connect with other researchers. Over 50% of the respondents used the networks to share and use their academic publications and to discover answers to their research questions. The researchers also faced challenges such as time-consuming usage, addiction, data security issues, and lack of substantiation. Jeyapragash and Rajkumar (2018) examined Indian researcher enrollments on ResearchGate sites among state universities in India. They found that out of the total number of state universities, 370, only 272 had an account, with 98 universities being inactive. Their study found that Indian state universities contributed more papers and publications than universities in the east, west, north, and south zones.

Kumaren and Sivakumaren (2019) conducted research with state university research scholars in Tamil Nadu. Their study result shows a lack of awareness of academic and social networking sites. Their study did not find a significant difference between male and female usage of the ASNS. The perception about the ASNS was that it helps to find and share information, is more helpful to collaborate with other researchers, and supports uploading digital content and published works. The purpose of using the ASNS is specified. Most of them are used to investigate the literature reviews and are useful for discussing and raising questions and answers. The advantages are that it enlightens the research knowledge and makes it easy to share and post the research content. Understanding the motivations behind researchers' decisions to self-archive their work on academic social networking sites was the goal of Lee's (2019) study. Based on earlier incentive models for academic self-archiving and social media information sharing, a model considered 18 elements from internal, external, social, and professional domains. The results showed that self-archiving was driven most by accessibility, then by charity, reciprocity, and trust. External variables had relatively low scores compared to personal, social, and professional aspects, which all garnered high ratings. The study emphasizes that various factors influence self-archiving motivations and that altruism, reciprocity, and trust are closely related.

Yan and Zhang's (2019) study examines the use of the academic, social networking site ResearchGate (RG) by researchers from top Chinese universities. The findings suggest noticeable differences in RG use across different disciplines, with Technology, Life Sciences & Biomedicine having the most users. Physical Sciences users tend to have a higher reputation score and more publications on the site, while Social Sciences users receive more reads and citations. The study highlights the importance of considering disciplinary context when promoting academic and social networking sites and stimulating digital scholarship.

The purpose of academic researchers in Malaysia to use academic social networking platforms was studied by Salahshour Rad, Nilashi, Mohamed Dahlan and Ibrahim (2019). To examine the effects of numerous aspects, including perceived security, privacy, trust, attitude towards technology, and communication benefits, on the intention to use ASNSs, the researchers used the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). According to the results, nine assumptions were supported, with performance expectations,

social impact, enabling circumstances, and attitude toward technology significantly influencing the intention to utilize ASNSs. Communication benefits were shown to be most strongly correlated with performance expectations ASNS providers are guided by the adoption model when developing productive platforms for academic researchers.

In 2020, Corvello, Chimenti, Giglio and Verteramo conducted a study examining the connection between researchers' attitudes toward scientific and social networks and knowledge utilization in their scientific work. The study gathered data from users of the scientific, social network site ResearchGate and discovered that researchers utilize the knowledge acquired from the platform in their work. The research also found that researchers who view the platform as a scientific community with a common language and vision have a positive impact on their use of knowledge. The results indicate that scientific and social networks can impact researchers' productivity and scientific practices. Kim and Grofman (2020), used data from Google Scholar to investigate which scholars have decided to establish a profile on the platform. The results demonstrate that younger and early-career faculty members are more likely to have a profile than those in more senior positions. However, the differences were not significant based on rank. The article concludes by emphasizing the growing importance of an online presence in academia and encourages scholars, especially younger ones, to create a Google Scholar profile for increased visibility. However, the authors caution against relying too heavily on citation counts, especially for junior scholars whose work may not have had enough time to impact the scholarly community.

Janavi (2020) investigated the effect of ResearchGate indicators on the increase of citations and usage counts for popular papers in clinical medicine indexed in the Web of Science database. The study utilized scientometric methods and analyzed the data with descriptive and analytical statistics. The results indicated a significant correlation between the number of citations received and usage counts in WoS and ResearchGate indicators. The study concluded that utilizing ResearchGate can effectively boost the visibility and citations of articles. It recommends that researchers use ResearchGate to raise the number of citations for their articles, and policymakers should consider the significance of social networks in the scientific evaluation of scholars.

The study by Alotaibi and Johnson (2020) explored the utilization of Google Scholar from the viewpoint of international graduate students in the UK. The study employed a questionnaire with 11 factors to gather data from 200 international graduate students, and the data were analyzed with confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. The findings confirmed the impact of task-based factors on performance and effort expectancy. Ebrahimzadeh, Rezaei Sharifabadi, Karbala Aghaie Kamran and Dalkir (2020) examined how researchers on ResearchGate use the site for collaborative information-seeking. The study used qualitative interviews with Ph.D. students, assistant library and information science professors. The findings showed that decisions to seek information on the site were driven by informal communication and complex information needs, and easy access to information was a big positive factor. The study provides an understanding of researchers' information-seeking behavior on ResearchGate and can help design better information retrieval systems and improve library services.

Zhang and Li (2020) studied the usage of academic profile websites (APWs) by science researchers at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. They found that 78% of the faculty had at least one academic profile, with ResearchGate being the most popular platform. ORCID

came in second, followed by Google Scholar Citations and Academia.edu. The study also showed that 35% of ORCID profiles lacked publications. The study suggests that researchers should be encouraged to use ORCID fully, and librarians should provide guidance on adding publications to ORCID profiles. The study also found that the social interaction features of ResearchGate were not widely used, and further research is needed to determine researchers' needs for knowledge sharing and collaboration and to improve APWs.

Kim and Oh (2021) studied why researchers share articles on institutional repositories and ResearchGate. They found that sharing on institutional repositories is driven by the belief in community benefit, career advancement, and risk reduction. However, sharing on ResearchGate is motivated by social norms, expectations of reciprocation, career benefits, career risk reduction, and ease of use. The study recommends that academic libraries focus on reducing career risks and promoting community and career benefits to encourage sharing on institutional repositories. Schmied's study (2021) compares the credibility of Wikipedia, Academia.edu, and ResearchGate as digital knowledge dissemination platforms. It found that Wikipedia has high credibility due to its quality control mechanisms, while the credibility of Academia.edu and ResearchGate depends on commercial and sharing factors. The study also found that Wikipedia addresses its readers collectively, while Academia.edu and ResearchGate address users individually.

Mondal and Hadagali (2022) conducted a research survey with those with an ResearchGate account. To them, they questioned the perspective and purpose of using the ResearchGate. Most of the study respondents are male (79.1%). The study's findings are that most of them are used weekly once. 89.1% of respondents used it to find new research trends, and 80.9% used it to send article requests and access free articles that the university does not subscribe to retrieve from ResearchGate. Alotaibi, Johnson and Rowley (2022) found that international postgraduate students in the UK have different preferences and intentions in using Google Scholar and University Digital Libraries for scholarly information. They found that self-efficacy affects the intention to use Google Scholar, while perceived facilitating conditions affect the intention to use university digital libraries. The results highlight the importance of usability, system relevance, and accessibility for promoting digital libraries. The findings can guide support from university libraries for international postgraduate students. Jain and Makwana (2022) surveyed the usage of academic social networking sites (ASNS) among faculty and researchers at the National Institute of Fashion Technology Centers in India. They found that most respondents were familiar with and used ASNS, with Google Scholar being the most popular platform. The study suggests that these sites have great potential for communication, collaboration, and access to research papers. Academic institutions should encourage their use and raise awareness among junior faculty and female scholars. The study highlights the potential benefits of ASNS in enhancing teaching, learning, and research.

Raffaghelli and Manca (2022) studied the social activity of open research data (ORD) on ResearchGate and its impact on researchers' data literacy. They analyzed 752 ORDs and found low levels of social activity around self-archived ORDs on ResearchGate, regardless of their quality. The results suggest that promoting data literacy is crucial in increasing social activity around ORDs and that training is essential to this transformation. However, the authors indicate that formal training may not be the only solution and that professional learning communities and self-directed pathways can also effectively promote data literacy. Ali, Zehra, Vaidya and Mohsin (2022) investigated the utilization of academic social networking sites (ASNSs) by

science and social science researchers at Aligarh Muslim University in India.

The sample was selected using simple random sampling, and a structured questionnaire was utilized. The study found that ResearchGate was the most popular ASNS among the university's research scholars. Most participants actively used social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The correlation between "Collaborative Research" and "Information Sharing and Consumption" was positive but weak, with no significant differences in ASNS usage across gender and discipline. The study by Hidayati (2023) examines students' level of awareness and perception in using Google Scholar to complete their Bachelor of Arts theses. The research found that students were moderately aware of using Google Scholar, most accessing it to find academic articles and literature for their theses. The study also found that students were satisfied with using Google Scholar for its ease of use, broad coverage of topics, and relevance to their search for references. However, the study has limitations as it only focuses on students and is limited to the level of awareness and perception of using Google Scholar. Overall, the study highlights the importance of students using Google Scholar in their research and suggests further research to increase awareness among academics and researchers on how to use it effectively.

Materials and Methods

The methodology of this study was a survey research design using a structured questionnaire. Snowball sampling was used to identify the female research scholars and faculty members in Tamil Nadu, India, as the respondents. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents via email, WhatsApp Groups, Telegram Groups, Facebook, and LinkedIn and collected using Google Forms. The online survey was conducted from January 2022 to March 2022. The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to agree strongly) to gauge the respondents' awareness and usage of ASNS. The data collected from the survey were analyzed using SPSS software and presented in frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. A total of 838 respondents participated in the study, the majority of whom were assistant professors and lecturers, with a smaller number of respondents being professors. The respondents represented various colleges in the Tamil Nadu state, including private, aided, and government colleges.

This study aimed to comprehensively understand the awareness and usage of ASNS among female research scholars and faculty members in Tamil Nadu, India. The survey design allowed for data collection from many participants, providing a representative sample of the target population. A structured questionnaire ensured that the data collected was consistent and reliable, providing a solid basis for analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1 shows the respondents' current professional/educational status in a survey. The most significant percentage of respondents (37.5%) are Assistant Professors/Lecturers, followed by Ph.D. Research Scholars (28.1%). M.Phil Research Scholars comprise 11.1% of respondents, Associate Professors 12.3%, and Professors 11%.

Table 1

What is your current professional/educational status?

Academic status (present)	Respondents	Percentage
M.Phil Research Scholars	93	11.1
Ph.D. Research Scholars	236	28.1
Assistant Professors/Lecturers	314	37.5
Associate Professors	103	12.3
Professors	92	11

Table 2 shows the results of a survey question about the publication of research papers by the respondents. Of the 838 respondents, 645 (77%) reported having published research papers, and 193 (23%) reported not having published any research papers.

Table 2

Did you publish any research papers?

Published any research papers	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	645	77
No	193	23

Table 3 shows the survey results about the respondents' use of academic networking sites. Of the 838 respondents, the highest percentage (55.4%) have a profile on Google Scholar, followed by ResearchGate (31.6%) and Academia.edu (23.7%). Most respondents (68.4%) do not have an account on ResearchGate, 76.3% do not have an account on Academia.edu, and 44.6% do not have an account on Google Scholar.

Table 3

Do you have an account on an academic networking site?

Account in Academic Networking Sites	Yes (%)	No (%)
ResearchGate	265 (31.6%)	573 (68.4%)
Academia.edu	199 (23.7%)	639 (76.3%)
Google Scholar	464 (55.4%)	374 (44.6%)

Table 4 shows why some survey respondents did not create an account on any of the academic networking sites listed. The most significant percentage of respondents (60.9%) cited "Lack of awareness" as the reason, followed by "Lack of time" (27.1%) and "Not useful for research/educational purpose" (16.6%). Other reasons include lack of security and privacy (17.1%), lack of digital literacy (13.1%), lack of adequate training (29.7%), lack of interest (12.1%), not user-friendly (24.1%), "I do not need them" (12.4%), and complex processes to open an account (35.4%).

Table 4

The above Academic Networking Sites if you do not have any of the accounts, give the reasons (multiple answers were permitted)

Reasons for Academic Networking Sites Not Created	Respondents	Percentage (n=838)
Lack of awareness	510	60.9
Lack of time	227	27.1
Not useful for research/educational purposes	139	16.6
Lack of security and privacy	143	17.1
Lack of digital literacy	110	13.1
Lack of adequate training	249	29.7
Lack of interest	101	12.1
Not user-friendly	202	24.1
I do not need them	104	12.4
Complex processes to open an account	297	35.4

Table 5 shows how the respondents in a survey learned about academic social networking websites. The most significant percentage of respondents (31.5%) learned about these websites from friends and colleagues, followed by "Through surfing on the Internet" (17.8%) and "Conference/workshop" (15.9%). 25% of the respondents learned about these websites from library professionals, and 9.8% reported not knowing how they learned about them.

Table 5

How did you learn about the "Academic Social Networking Websites"?

Academic Social Networking Websites	Respondents	Percentage
Friends and colleagues	264	31.5
Through surfing on the Internet	149	17.8
Conference/workshop	133	15.9
From the library professionals	210	25
I do not know	82	9.8

Table 6 shows the reasons why respondents in a survey use academic social networking sites. The most popular reasons include actively discussing research (44.2%), discovering research papers (49.2%), disseminating scholarly work (60.9%), increasing visibility/popularity in their discipline (41.3%), and increasing citations for publications (53.5%). Other reasons include answering questions (17.7%), asking questions (9.2%), discovering peers in their field of research (28.6%), friends using the same site (15.9%), posting content related to their work (31.5%), receiving article requests (11.1%), and requesting articles (12.5%). Some respondents

used these sites out of curiosity (9.8%), to collaborate with research experts and enrich their expertise (25.3%), to connect with people with similar interests (22%), to gain professional visibility (36.3%), to get help in resolving their research problems (15%), and to get ideas about the latest research trends in their field (32.3%).

Table 6

Reasons for using Academic Social Networking Sites (multiple answers were permitted)

Reasons for using ASNS	Respondents	Percentage (n=838)
Actively discussing my research	370	44.2
Answer Questions	148	17.7
Ask questions	77	9.2
Discover research papers	412	49.2
Discovering peers in my field of research	240	28.6
Disseminate my scholarly work	507	60.9
Friends use the same site	133	15.9
Increase my visibility/popularity in my discipline	346	41.3
Post content related to my work	264	31.5
Receive article requests	93	11.1
Request articles	105	12.5
Signed up out of curiosity	82	9.8
To collaborate with research experts and enrich expertise	212	25.3
To connect with people with similar interests	184	22
To gain professional visibility	304	36.3
To get help in resolving my research problems	126	15
To get ideas about the latest research trends in my field	271	32.3
To increase more citations for publications	448	53.5

Table 7 provides the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' perception of the usefulness of Academic Social Networking Sites. On average, the respondents perceive academic, and social networking sites positively, with a mean score ranging from 3.12 to 3.94. The highest mean score was for "Helps to share my research work" (3.93) and "Helps to increase my citations" (3.94), while the lowest mean score was for "It provides too much information" (3.12). The standard deviation ranges from 0.94 to 1.16, which shows that the responses are spread out and indicate some variability in the respondents' opinions.

Table 7
Perceptions of Academic Social Networking Sites

Perceptions about ASNS	Mean	SD
Helps to share my research work	3.93	1.04
Helps to increase my citations	3.94	0.94
Helps to find articles more quickly	3.67	1.04
Makes collaboration with others easier	3.25	1.12
Helps to get answers to research-related questions	3.45	1.08
It provides too much information	3.12	1.16
To increase my productivity	3.57	1.05
Helps to come up with new ideas	3.28	1.08

(Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, 4-Strongly Agree)

Table 8 reflects the suggestions provided by the respondents on how to increase the use and awareness of Academic Social Networking Sites (ASNS). Most respondents, 765 (91.3%), suggested that seminars and training courses would effectively increase the use of ASNS. Additionally, 741 (88.4%) respondents indicated that library posters could help raise awareness of ASNS. Another suggestion from 694 (82.8%) respondents was to integrate ASNS into student courses. Finally, 589 (70.3%) respondents suggested sending e-mails to staff members to increase the use and awareness of ASNS.

Table 8
Suggestions to increase the use and awareness of Academic Social Networking Sites

Suggestions to increase the use of ASNS	Respondents	Percentage (n=838)
Seminars and training courses	765	91.3
E-mails to the staff members	589	70.3
Posters in libraries	741	88.4
Integration in the student courses	694	82.8

Discussion

The discussion of the eight tables provides insight into the respondents' usage of academic social networking sites (ASNS). Most of the respondents (838) use at least one of the academic social networking sites. Table 2 reveals that the most used ASNS by the respondents is Google Scholar, followed by ResearchGate and Academia.edu. Table 3 displays that among the respondents, more than half have a Google Scholar profile, followed by a ResearchGate account, and at least one-fourth have an Academia.edu account. On the other hand, most respondents do not have an account with these academic networking sites (Jordan, 2014). Table 4 explains why some respondents do not have an account with these academic social networking sites. The most common reason for not having an account is a lack of awareness, followed by a lack of time. Other reasons include a lack of security and privacy, digital literacy, and interest

(Singson & Mohammad, 2017).

Table 5 highlights how the respondents learned about academic and social networking sites. Most respondents learned about these sites from friends and colleagues, followed by one-quarter of respondents from library professionals and the least from surfing the Internet. Table 6 gives the reasons why the respondents use ASNS. The most common reason for using these sites is to disseminate their scholarly work, followed by discovering research papers used by less than half of the respondents and increasing their professional visibility (El-Berry, 2015; Singson & Mohammad, 2017; Asmi & Margam, 2018; Mondal & Hadagali, 2022). Table 7 reflects the respondents' perceptions of ASNS. Most respondents believe these sites help share their research work and increase their citations. However, they also believe these sites provide too much information and make it challenging to develop new ideas. Finally, Table 8 lists the suggestions given by the respondents to increase the use and awareness of ASNS. Most respondents suggest seminars and training courses, library posters, and student course integration.

In conclusion, the data from these tables show that most respondents use ASNS and find them helpful for their research. However, some respondents do not have an account with these sites for various reasons, including a lack of awareness, time, and digital literacy. The respondents suggest several ways to increase the use and awareness of ASNS, including seminars and training courses, library posters, and integration into the student courses.

Researchers and information seekers might benefit greatly from academic, social networking platforms. According to the study report, few female researchers are registered on Academia.edu, Google Scholar, or ResearchGate. According to this study, there has to be more education about these sites among instructors, libraries, and educational institutions (colleges and universities). The study focuses on researchers and faculty members, most unaware of self-archiving websites and their advantages. Authors know these restrictions because most open-access journals allow authors to provide a self-archiving and Creative Commons license.

Conclusion

Academic social networking sites (ASNS) are used by most respondents, with Google Scholar being the most popular among them. The respondents primarily use these sites to disseminate their scholarly work and discover research papers. However, many do not have an account with these sites due to insufficient awareness and time. The respondents learned about these sites primarily through friends and colleagues. Also, they suggested increasing their use and awareness through seminars and training courses, library posters, and student course integration. Despite their usefulness, the respondents believe that ASNS provide too much information, making it difficult to develop new ideas.

The study recommends that, for their staff and students, academic institutions and libraries should display posters in libraries, integrate these sites into student courses, and conduct seminars and training courses on how to use ASNS effectively and increase their awareness of its benefits. Furthermore, creating awareness campaigns and informational e-mails to the staff members can also be helpful. Some additional suggestions to increase the use and awareness of ASNS include Partnering with universities and research institutes to create educational programs on how to use ASNS effectively—developing easy-to-use guides and tutorials for creating and using profiles on ASNS and offering incentives for using ASNS, such as rewards for sharing research or networking with peers and creating a mentorship program

where experienced researchers can guide and assist younger researchers in using ASNS—collaborating with professional organizations to promote the use of ASNS at conferences and other events and utilizing social media platforms to reach a wider audience and promote the benefits of using ASNS and offering online workshops and webinars to demonstrate the use of ASNS and provide hands-on training. Integrating ASNS into research methodology courses and programs so that students can learn how to use these tools in their research effectively.

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