

A Systematic Review of Scientific Articles about Social Networks: Case Study of Isfahan

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Introduction

The increasing impact of cyberspace and social networks in different areas necessitates the need for more and more accurate attention by the scientific institutions. Focus on 'the impact of social networks on a specific cultural context' is one area of study. Isfahan, as one of the civilizational areas with a long history in the cultural and social fields, is one of the cultural contexts that has a special role in the social and cultural changes for our country. Nearly two decades after the advent of the Internet and mobile phones in Iran, it may be a good opportunity to examine the works produced by academics and researchers in the context of scientific articles in this field. Certainly, one of the appropriate methods for this purpose is the systematic review method in which the statistical population is the existing research in the field under study. In this article, we seek to answer the following questions: What are the strengths and weaknesses of scientific articles written on the subject of social networks and cyberspace in Isfahan's field problematically, theoretically, and methodologically? And, on the other hand, what is the position of Isfahan's cultural context in this research area? Finally, on the way forward, what are some suggestions for better policy making in this field of study?

Material & Methods

The method used in this research is systematic review. The systematic review of the texts is a scientific method to systematically identify some research results and to synthesize them in a standardized and systematic way to answer a related question. A systematic review of the texts has four essential steps: 1) deciding on the type of texts to review, 2) studying and understanding what the authors have brought to their work, 3) evaluating the ideas, research methods and results of each texts, and 4) summarizing the content of the texts or documents or evidence reviewed. The population of this study is scientific articles indexed in internal scientific databases. This research has carried out on 30 scientific articles on the subject of cyberspace whose field of study was Isfahan. The articles have been evaluated by an inverse questionnaire and its results are presented in descriptive and analytical formats.

Discussion of Results & Conclusions

Based on the results of the research, it seems that the most important factor in selecting the research field was its availability. Most studies are in the field of sociology and political science. The year of publication of articles indicates an increasing trend in the publication of articles on the subject of cyberspace. In most of the papers, the researchers have not pay attention to the context and field of study, since 86% of the articles were survey, but few with qualitative and mix methods. Statistical population in most of the articles were students. Almost one-third of the papers had a clear theoretical framework, among which a few had used media and communication theories in their theoretical model. In summing up the articles, very few articles have focused on providing a strategy based on research results in our systematic review. After reviewing the descriptive dimensions of the articles, the following critiques have presented: cognitive (lack

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of attention to study context), methodological (lack of methodological diversity, overcoming positivist approach, disregard for interpretive and critical approaches, and generalization). The uncertainty of these studies (theoretical underpinnings, lack of theories related to the subject of research) has also been expressed. Then, appropriate suggestions have been made in three levels of approach (changing attitudes towards 'cultural and social context', 'social networks' in Humanities research), methodology (making more use of qualitative and synthetic methods, as well as using diverse statistical population) and appropriate structure for future research policy and planning.

Keywords: Isfahan, Social Networks, Cyberspace, Systematic Review.

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