

## **USE OF RESEARCHGATE BY THE RESEARCH SCHOLARS OF ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY**

**Md Kaiyum Shaikh\***

---

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of the present study is to exhibit the motives, activities and benefit of research scholars which they get by being connected in ResearchGate academic social networking site. The outcome of the study demonstrates that ResearchGate is exoteric among the research scholars at Aligarh Muslim University. For scholars, the purpose of being connected in ResearchGate are abundant but majority of the research scholars are agreed in joining ResearchGate which give them opportunity to be linked with people who are preoccupied with self-interest. Likewise, majority of the research scholars explained that primary works they embroil themselves in ResearchGate is reading articles and research papers put up by others. At the end, ResearchGate has ameliorated their strength to cope up with new and current developments in their area of the research.

---

### **Keywords:**

ResearchGate;  
Academic social network;  
Communication;  
Aligarh Muslim  
University.

---

\* Assistant Librarian, Central Library of Medical College Research Center, TMU, Moradabad, India

## 1. Introduction:

The ResearchGate is the most effective professional interactive communication platform where academicians, researchers, administrators, students can connect with each other and discuss the real development in specific subject area. The Internet, particularly World Wide Web has played a key role in all walks of life in creating and sharing information in the online environment. The research community of any discipline is familiar to us. The term academic social networking service is used as a broad term which refers to an online service, tool, or platform that can be conducive for scholars to build up their professional networks with other researchers and simplify their various activities while conducting research. Gewin<sup>1</sup> elaborated an offshoot of Facebook, an effort for scientist's eager to develop a network which emphasized on shared research interests. Some well-known examples of ASNSs include ResearchGate.net<sup>8</sup>, Academia.edu, Mendeley.com and Zotero.org. Jeng, Daqing and Jiepu<sup>2</sup> state that academic social networking sites (ASNSs) provide a platform that allows users to create a public or semi-public profile with academic properties, upload their publications, and create online groups. These sites have incorporated communication and dissemination by integrating a repository for scholastic publications within a social network site for researchers. At this juncture, there is an increasing popularity of the social web and network technology which results more and more scholars joining online research communities. Krause<sup>3</sup> is of the opinion that academic social networking services help for controlling records of current research trends and more importantly build up the relationship with the professionals. Moreover, sharing of scholastic literature by using academic extensively scale up their visibility among the peer group. Metric such as alternative metrics, article level metrics have also acknowledged the significance of social networking site including evaluate research impact. Therefore, scholars take the benefit of social networking sites to enrich their visibility, connect and share.

### 1.1 Aligarh Muslim University

Aligarh Muslim University was established by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in 1920. AMU is among the top five Universities in India and considered as a prestigious University. It is adjacent to New Delhi, the capital of India around 150 KM. AMU spread over 467.6 hectares and offers more than 300 courses in both traditional and modern branches of education. It has three off-campus centers at Murshidabad (West Bengal), Malappuram (Kerala), and Kishanganj (Bihar). Here

students come from across the world especially from Middle-east, Central Asia, and Africa .It considers students without any considering of Caste, creed, religion, region and sex. AMU is a fully residential university having 13 faculties. University main motto is ‘He taught man what he knew out’ ([www.amu.ac.in](http://www.amu.ac.in))<sup>4</sup>.

## **2. Review of Related Literature:**

Recently, there has been a growing popularity among scholars to share their research electronically by means of diverse social networking tools. Specialized academic social networking sites are one of these tools which scholars use to share their articles. Since scientists are usually put under pressure for the survival and while doing so, they are expected to act out, on the basis of literature reviews, their research project and mention the pertinent literature.

Vom .et al<sup>5</sup> opined that the importance of literature searching is such that there have been calls for the search steps to be documented in academic articles. However, Dickersin.et al<sup>6</sup> Point out that it is all but difficult to have a strong grip over the whole literature. Often, with the inundation of information and the lack of accessibility, scholars make use of several methods for the purpose of recognizing and acquiring relevant research. Conventionally, Librarian has put in all efforts to facilitate the access to all the literature in the way of institutional subscription and library consortia<sup>15</sup>. However, these scholarly subscriptions may not meet the expectations of all the literature required to finish the research. Besides all these efforts, a scholar may not arrange all the pertinent literatures requisite for the research. The researcher may decide to dismiss papers for which it is hard to obtain full-text copies of similar article which are readily available. As a result of which, social media network and academic social networking sites such as Mendeley, ResearchGate, and Academia.edu have been in demand among scholars to share and access scholarly articles.

Since that time onwards its recent set up, little-known research has examined the structure, mechanism, and practice of academic SNS among research scholars. Academic social networking sites, such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate assist the academic audience to ‘(a) build a public or semi-public profile in a bounded system, (b) postulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (c) view and steer their list of connections and those

accomplished by others in the system and include extra functions, like uploading and sharing articles, backing up colleagues, or searching literature. ResearchGate, users can create a personal profile with academic information, share publications and data sets, involve in discussions, up/down vote publications and discussion topics, write messages, search for and monitor peers as well as their own influence by the ResearchGate score (Gewin, 2010)<sup>1</sup>. Chakraborty<sup>9</sup> in North Eastern Hill University in his study marked out that the popularity of ResearchGate is confined to a few scholars, while a few scholars from the science discipline are unable to get academic social networking site scholarly. Similarly, Thelwall<sup>10</sup> in his study pointed out that the fame of ResearchGate among users from Brazil, India and Iran and countries like France, Spain, the Netherlands, Brazil, and Sweden possess high ResearchGate score<sup>16</sup>. In their opinion, developing countries are taking benefit of ResearchGate grounded solely on the membership. In a similar tone, in his study Hammook<sup>11</sup> told that the collaboration of Canadian Computer Science Scientist in ResearchGate provided proof of collaboration in ResearchGate with association tools such as questions and answers being used too much.

Yu.et.al<sup>12</sup> explored the usefulness of ResearchGate score at the researcher level by contrasting the correlation between ResearchGate score and FWCI of SciVal. The outcome of their finding suggests that RG score is a significant pointer at the individual level. Various studies have been done to certify the trustworthiness of ResearchGate metric as an alternative metric away from download counts. Hoffmann<sup>13</sup> conducted a case study among a sample of Swiss management scholars who analyses how centrality measures are derived from the participant's interactions regarding the academic SNS. The study designates that seniority, platform engagement and publication effect provide members in degree and eigenvector centrality on the platform, but less so to closeness or betweenness. Applying a mixed methods approach collected and grouped 413 posts through three distinct interfaces of Research Gate's communication platform and appeared that scholars were well-mannered in the initial group discussion line but user interface design did not alter the main communication designs of sharing information and feelings among scholars. Related studies were also carried out on Arab students by Elsayed<sup>14</sup> and the study explores that three-quarters of the respondents apply ASNs to share their publications, and majority of the research scholars contributed to more than one ASN. However ResearchGate was the most commonly used one. The result of the study exhibits that academic discipline seems to play a

pivotal role in describing Arab researchers in ResearchGate, as the bulk of them were from the pure and applied sciences.

### **3. Objectives of the study:**

The objectives of the ResearchGate are as follows:

- To identify the level of awareness about ResearchGate among the research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University.
- To find out the time spent for using ResearchGate.
- To find out the membership performed by the research scholars of Aligarh Muslim University in joining ResearchGate.
- To investigate the purposes of using ResearchGate among the researchers.

### **4. Methodology:**

The present study used descriptive survey method with questionnaires as tools for gathering the relevant data. For this study, investigator constructed a well-structured questionnaire with the help of previous studies conducted throughout the world. A simple random sampling has been used to collect the data among the research scholars in the central library of Aligarh Muslim University. The first section consists of questions regarding personal information whereas the second section includes of multiple choice questions. A total number of 100 questionnaires are circulated randomly among the research scholars at the reading rooms in the central library and also various departments of university such as Department of Geography, Department of Education, Department of History, Department of English, Department of Chemistry, Department of Library and Information Science, Department of Arabic, Department of Physics, Department of Commerce and so on. Out of 100 questionnaires, 92 questionnaires are returned back. Out of 92 questionnaires, the investigator finds out only 3 questionnaires which are unanswered. Therefore, 89 filled questionnaires are applied for this study. The responses are given in Table 1.

**Table-1. Response Rate**

Category	Item	No of Respondents	Percentage
Questionnaires distributed	Distributed questionnaires	100	100
Questionnaires received	Received questionnaires from participants	92	92
Questionnaires selected for study	Selected participants	89	96.73
Gender	Male	64	71.91
	Female	25	28.08
Faculty wise respondents	Faculty of science	34	38.20
	Faculty of social science	30	33.70
	Faculty of arts	25	28.08

As shows in table 1 majority 64 (71.91%) of the respondents belong to the males category followed by 25(28.08%) females. 34(38.20%) respondents are from faculty of science discipline followed by 30(33.70%) of faculty of social science and 25(28.08%) of faculty of arts. The data collected from the research scholars are analysed by the using statistics, percentage, graphic, tabulation, and other statistical measurements.

## 5. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

### Level of Awareness

During the survey, the investigator observed that almost all the research scholars have ‘sound knowledge’ regarding the effectiveness of ResearchGate.

**Table 2: Level of awareness of ResearchGate by the respondents**

Category	Awareness	No of Respondents	Percentage
Aware of mutual sharing full text research	yes	85	95.50
	No	4	4.49
Posting question in ResearchGate	Yes	52	58.42
	No	37	41.57
Question answered	yes	50	96.15

	No	2	3.84
Rating of answer posted in ResearchGate(Total 50 respondents)	Extremely dissatisfied	Nil	Nil
	Very Dissatisfied	Nil	Nil
	Satisfied	40	76.92
	Very Satisfied	7	13.46
	Extremely Satisfied	3	5.769

Table 2 shows that 85(95.50%) respondents are aware of full-test share of research articles through the medium of ResearchGate platform and only 4(4.49%) of the users are unaware of its service. It is also found that majority of the respondents which means 52(58.42%) users post questions on the ResearchGate, while 37(41.57%) users do not post questions at all on the ResearchGate. Out of 52 who are used to posing questions, 50(56.17%) respondents get response to the questions when only 2(3.84%) respondents do not receive any answer to their questions. Out of 50 respondents, 40 respondents are satisfied, 7 respondents are very satisfied and 2 are extremely satisfied. Finally, none of the research scholars are found to be dissatisfied for the answers posted on ResearchGate.

### Frequency of use of the ResearchGate

As it is shown in table 3, a large number of participants 20 (22.47%) use the ResearchGate daily followed by 18(20.22%) alternate days, 31 (34.83%) respondents use their account weekly, 9(10.11%) respondents fortnightly. Only a few number of 11(12.35%) respondents use ResearchGate once in a monthly.

**Table 3: Frequency and time spend of ResearchGate by the Respondents**

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Daily	20	22.47%
Alternate days	18	20.22%
Weekly	31	34.83%
Fortnightly	9	10.11%
Monthly	11	12.35%

### Respondent of membership in ResearchGate

Figure 1 shows that, out of total 89 respondents, majority 12 (13.48%) of the respondents use ResearchGate from less than 6 months, 20(22.47%) of them 6-12 months, 30(33.70% ) participants 13-36 months and 27(30.33% ) respondents use since more than 3 years.

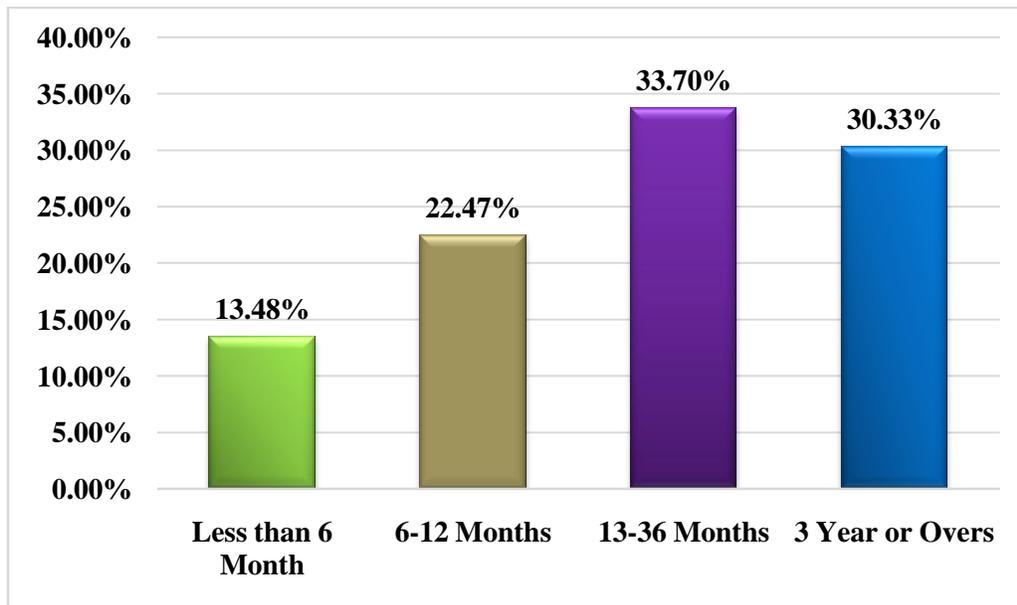


Figure 1: Membership status of ResearchGate

### Reasons of Joining ResearchGate

Table 4 shows various reasons for research scholar's motives to join in ResearchGate. But, the study has found that a large number 26(29.21%) of respondents are strongly agreed, 52(58.42%) are agreed to maintained the activities fellow of researchers followed by 11(12.35%) participants are neutral.

The study shows, a majority of the respondents 21(23.59%) strongly agree, 43(48.31%) agree and 23(25.84%) of them neutral regarding questions answer regarding research. They are connected with many expertise all over the world through academic social networking sites. The fewest numbers of respondents 1(1.12%) give their view as disagreed and 1(1.12%) of them are strongly disagreed with the following accounts.

**Table 4: Reasons for research scholar's motives**

Sl. No	Motivation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	To maintained the activities fellow of researcher	26 (29.21%)	52 (58.42%)	11 (12.35%)	Nil	Nil
2.	Questions answer regarding research	21 (23.59)	43 (48.31)	23 (25.84%)	1 (1.12%)	1 (1.12%)
3.	To pursuit topics which community given experience	12 (13.48%)	46 (51.68%)	27 (30.33%)	4 (4.49%)	Nil
4.	Link with people who possess similar interest	31 (34.83%)	51 (57.30%)	7 (7.86%)	Nil	Nil
5.	To enlarge current social research	19 (21.34%)	27 (30.33%)	38 (42.69%)	5 (5.61%)	Nil
6.	To call on researchers from different field of research	11 (12.35%)	41 (46.06%)	26 (29.21%)	9 (10.11%)	2 (2.24%)

(Note: Multiple answers are permitted)

As table 4 indicates that, the majority of respondents 12(13.48%) strongly agree and 46(51.68%) of them are agreed that they understand ResearchGate which help to pursuit topics which community given experience with their peers. Some of the participants 27(30.33%) state their motives as neutral, whereas few of them 4(4.49%) of them disagree with the declarations.

The study observes that, the number of participants 31(34.84%) strongly agree and 51(57.30%) of them agree that ResearchGate benefit to Link with people who possess similar interest which enriches is them a lot of information as well as subject knowledge. Only 7(7.86%) respondents are neutral above the statements.

As shown in table 4, the study demonstrates that at present research scholars enlarge current social research through several ResearchGate of academic social networking sites. As shows in table 3, majority of the participants 19(21.34%) strongly agree, 27(30.33%) agree and 38(42.69%) of them neutral in motives of using ResearchGate. Therefore, some of them 5(5.61%) respondents are disagreed. The study also reveals, majority of respondents 41(46.06%)

believe that ResearchGate play a very important role to call on researchers from different field of research.

### Activities of ResearchGate by respondents

Table 5 shows that the different activities of research scholars are involved in ResearchGate. During the survey, it is observed that research scholars are positively giving their activities about the various statements. The majority of the respondents 7(7.86%) strongly agree that through ResearchGate researchers interaction around the world constantly followed by 31(34.83%) are agreed, 38(42.69%) of them neutral and 11(12.35%) respondents give their activities as disagreed, while few of them 2(2.24%) are strongly disagreed with following statements.

The study shows, a majority of the 33(37.07%) participants are agreed, 29(32.58%) participants neutral and 21(23.59%) of them are disagreed that ResearchGate help regularly using for updating their profile information through ResearchGate. A few respondents (4.49%) give their activities as strongly agreed and 2(2.24%) of them strongly disagreed with the statements.

**Table 5: Activities of research scholars in ResearchGate**

S. No.	Reasons	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Interacting with researchers across the around constantly	7 (7.86%)	31 (34.83%)	38 (42.69%)	11 (12.35%)	2 (2.24%)
2	Regularly using for updating my profile information	4 (4.49%)	33 (37.07%)	29 (32.58%)	21 (23.59%)	2 (2.24%)
3	Posting research article papers	13 (14.60%)	50 (56.17%)	15 (16.85%)	6 (6.74%)	5 (5.61%)
4	Reading articles and reviewing papers of others	22 (24.71%)	54 (60.67%)	9 (10.11%)	3 (3.37%)	1 (1.12%)
5	Regularly replying question posted in the area of interest of me	7 (7.86%)	25 (28.08%)	41 (46.06%)	15 (16.85%)	1 (1.12%)
6	Looking for job opportunity	2 (2.24%)	9 (10.11%)	39 (43.82%)	24 (26.96%)	15 (16.85%)

(Note: Multiple answers are permitted)

As table 5 indicates, the majority of respondents 13(14.60%) are strongly agreed, 50(56.17%) agreed and 15(16.85%) of them neutral that they appreciate ResearchGate that help to posting research article papers with their colleagues. Some of the participants 6(6.74%) state their activities as disagreed and 5(5.6%) of them strongly disagreed with the following statements. The study initiate, a large number of participants 54(60.67%)are agreed, 22(24.71%) are strongly agreed, and 9(10.11%) of them neutral that ResearchGate help to reading articles and reviewing papers of others. The fewest number of respondents 3(3.37) are disagreed and 1(1.12%) of them strongly disagreed with the statements.

As shows in table 5, majority of participants 7(7.86%) are strongly agreed, while 25(28.08%) of them are agreed and 41(46.06%) of them are remarked as neutral that they gain ResearchGate that help to regularly replying question posted in the area of interest of their. Some of the respondents 15(16.85%) are disagreed and 1(1.12%) of them strongly disagreed with the following statements.

The study shows that a majority of the 39(43.82%) respondents are neutral, 24(26.96%)are disagreed and 15(16.85%) of them are remarked strongly disagreed that they realized ResearchGate help to look for job opportunity. Some number of respondents 9(10.11%) are agreed and 2(2.24%)are strongly disagreed with the statements.

### **Benefits for using ResearchGate**

Table 6 shows that a majority of the participants 55(61.79%) agree that ResearchGate has improved their ability to collaborate with peers. Out of 89 respondents, 21(23.59%) of them are remarked as neutral and 10(11.23%) of them are strongly agreed. Only a few numbers of participants are disagreed with this statement.

**Table 6: Benefits of using ResearchGate**

S. No.	Reasons	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	It has improved my ability to collaborate with peers	10 (11.23%)	55 (61.79%)	21 (23.59%)	2 (2.24%)	1 (1.12%)
2	It has ameliorated the quantity of my scholarly work	17 (19.10%)	51 (57.30%)	20 (22.47%)	1 (1.12%)	Nil
3	It has enriched my research performance	2 (2.24%)	13 (14.60%)	50 (56.17%)	23 (25.84%)	1 (1.12%)
4	It has scale up my visibility/popularly among my peers	6 (6.74%)	57 (64.04%)	23 (25.84%)	3 (3.37%)	Nil
5	It has amplified my citations counts	10 (11.23%)	52 (58.42 %)	21 (23.59%)	6 (6.74%)	Nil

(Note: Multiple answers are permitted)

The study reveals that almost 51(57.30%) participants are agreed that ResearchGate has ameliorated the quantity of their scholarly work which are followed by 17(19.10%) strongly agreed, 20(22.47%) neutral and 1(1.12%) of them are disagreed with the following statements.

As table 6 indicates, a large number of the respondents 50(56.17%) are neutral, 23(25.84%)are disagreed and 13(14.60%) of them are agreed that ResearchGate help to enriched their research performance with their colleuges. Some of the participants 2(2.24%) are opined with strongly agree and 1(1.12%) of them are disagreed with the statements.

However, the study demonstrates that at present research scholars has scaled up their visibility/popularly among their peers. As it is shown in table 6, majority of participants 57(64.04%) are agreed and 23(25.84%) of them are neutral. The fewest number of respondents 6(6.74%) are agreed and 3(3.37%) are disagreed with the statements. The study also exposes that, majority of the respondents 52(58.42 %) are agreed, 21(23.59%) neutral and 10(11.23%) of them are strongly agreed that ResearchGate has amplified their citations counts. Some number of respondents 6(6.74%) are disagreed with the following statements.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The study reveals those research scholars' several motivation factors, activities and avail for joining an online research community in an academic social networking service ResearchGate. Findings of the study suggest that ResearchGate is extremely popular among research scholars of science department. Though, the much-needed motivation or awareness of ResearchGate among social science and humanities is not observed. Differently, in total research scholar's motivation of joining ResearchGate is to be linked, avail visibility and follow colleague researcher. Activities while using ResearchGate includes article upload, commenting, reading and reviewing. In addition to this, research scholar's demand for article is not often available in their institution.

Finally, research scholar avail of joining ResearchGate is multidimensional, such as prominence, accessibility, teamwork, and most importantly an update to the latest research. However, research scholars have provided no evidence to suggest that using ResearchGate have enhanced their research performance. In total, research scholars are indeed using ResearchGate for their benefit in which sharing is one of the core movement. Besides this, sharing is intrinsic to scholarship and self-promotion and will continue regardless of the publisher's restriction and embargoes. More importantly, the advent of technology and social media has made sharing much easier now. Therefore, if publishers do not recognize the changing landscape of scholarly communication, they may be left behind.

The finding of the study suggests that ResearchGate is very popular among the research scholars. It provides the foundation for further research into research scholars' cooperative effort, sharing actions. It can be concluded that ResearchGate have become one of the most vital role and large online stages for all around the world, Where Research scholars linked with colleagues for sharing and accessing real time relevant information.

**References:**

1. Gewin, V. Collaboration: Social networking seeks critical mass. *Nature*, 2010, 468, 993–994.
2. Jeng, Wei; Daqing, He & Jiepu, Jiang. User participation in an academic social networking service: A survey of open group users on Mendeley. *J. Association Inf. Sci. Technol.*, 2015, 66(5), 890-904.
3. Krause, J. Tracking reference with social media tools: Organizing what you've read or want to read. In *Social media for academics: a practical guide*, edited by D. R. Neal. Oxford: Chandos Pub, 2012.
4. Aligarh Muslim University, ([www.amu.ac.in](http://www.amu.ac.in)).
5. Vom Brocke, J.; Simons, A.; Niehaves, B.; Riemer, K.; Plattfaut, R. & Clevén, A. Reconstructing the giant: On the importance of rigour in documenting the literature search process. In *17th European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS 2009)*, 2009. pp. 2206–2217.
6. Dickersin, K.; Scherer, R. & Lefebvre, C. Identifying relevant studies for systematic reviews. *British Med. J.*, 1994, 309(6964), 1286–1291.
7. Goodwin, S.; Jeng, W. & He, D. Changing communication on ResearchGate through interface updates. In *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 2014, 51(1), 1-4.
8. ResearchGate (2015). <https://www.ResearchGate.net/about> (accessed on 15 November 2016).
9. Chakraborty, N. Activities and reasons for using social networking sites by research scholars in NEHU: A study on Facebook and ResearchGate. In *PLANNER-2012: Building Participatory Library Services in Digital Era*, 1-3 March, 2016, Gangtok, Sikkim. 2016. pp. 19-27.
10. Thelwall, M. & Kousha, K. ResearchGate: Disseminating, communicating, and measuring Scholarship? *J. Association Info. Sci. Technol.*, 2015, 66(5), 876-889.
11. Hammook, Z.; Mistic, J. & Mistic, V.B. Crawling ResearchGate. net to measure student/supervisor collaboration. In *Global Communications Conference (GLOBECOM)*, 2015 IEEE: Connecting all through communication, 6-10 Dec 2015, San Diego, CA, USA. 2015, pp. 1-6.

12. Yu, M.C.; Wu, Y.C.J.; Alhalabi, W.; Kao, H.Y. & Wu, W.H. ResearchGate: An effective altmetric indicator for active researchers? *Comp. Human Behavior*, 2016, 55, 1001-1006.
13. Hoffmann, C.P.; Lutz, C. & Meckel, M. A relational altmetric? Network centrality on ResearchGate as an indicator of scientific impact. *J. Association Info. Sci. Technol.*, 2015, 7(4), 765-775.
14. Elsayed, A.M. The Use of Academic Social Networks Among Arab Researchers A Survey. *Social Sci. Comput. Rev.*, 2016, 34(3), 378-91.
15. Singson, M. & Hangsing, P. Implication of 80/20 rule in electronic journal usage of UGC-infonet consortia. *J. Academic Lib.*, 2015, 41(2), 207-219.
16. Giglia, E. Academic social networks: It's time to change the way we do research. *European J. Phy. Rehabilitation Med.*, 2011, 47(2), 345-350.