A Study of Social Media Utilization in Higher Education

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Abstract

Social media, in specific terms, is the access of websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking through internet connections, which is a new trend in the century almost everywhere today. The phenomenon of social networking has occurred in a higher education environment. Despite the debate about the negative assumption of social media impact on the productivity of students, or lecturers based in the higher education environment, this paper aims to identify and understand the ways in which higher education institutes draw benefits by the use of such means. The research focused on four kinds of platforms connecting through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. For the same, we analyzed some of the data already been taken into consideration from different sources which show that most respondents agree for free access into social networking during working hours, and at about 65% respondents using these access not only for entertainment but also for information distribution and communication to support teaching activity. The usages vary from task assignment, information distribution, announcements, class rescheduling negotiation, examination, and so on, which uses some applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. This policy of using social media for educating students should be used in every environment.

Keywords: Social Media, Higher Education.

Introduction

Social media is the websites and applications that enable the user to create and share information or in major terms can be described as content to different other social media...
users in the world. Social media has its increasing use in worldwide organizations of all types including educational institutions. Social media unambiguously has a big impact on all areas of modern life. It’s changed not only the way people communicate, express themselves and share, but also social and public life. All areas of our lives in one degree or another have changed under the influence of social media. The strongest and most visible changes were observed in the young generations. In the study, as analyzed there is almost 70% of people using social media only of the age under 35

Through the new opportunities of the different social media like social networking sites, collaborative projects, blogs, wikis, communities, forums, content platforms, etc., young people not only communicate freely but also can create and share their feelings, opinions and emotions. One of the areas which experienced the inevitable changes under the growing use of social media in higher education. On the one hand, students continue to use social media in universities, home as well as any other sphere of their lives. On the other hand, educators embrace the opportunities of social media to connect students in the process of creating and sharing knowledge and in more efficient ways of communication. Research findings are expected to contribute to the application of online education environments to undergraduate students by using social networks. Thus, educational measures can be taken, or arrangements can be made considering the purpose of using social networks in online education environments. In addition, it is thought that it will contribute to educators by determining the intended use of social networks in learning environments. The social network promotes smart functions for students in terms of self-presentation and enhancing communication. For this reason, some educators have highlighted the positive capacity of social networking taking into consideration the easy networking options with students.

Students rely on social media these days on an extensive note and not only for educational purposes but for entertainment also. As analyzed most of the youth and even the older ones like to use social media as for entertainment purposes. According to typical ideology social media is assumed and recognized as a matter for entertainment purposes and shockingly, many people are not even aware of the additional uses of it. Most people rely on educational sites for study material which is a reliable source but sometimes, more or less social media serves as a great source for information related to general awareness and information.

Facebook brings one of the oldest and recognized platforms for information sharing which has acquired most of the social media market till now is a great source of information sharing
and recognition of spreading the information as fast as possible. Almost about 35-40% of people have recognizes it as a great source of different types of social media sharing, which is also a great source for entertainment among all those photos, video sharing and the biggest platform of connecting people on the internet. People also consider Facebook market share has been increased throughout all those years for the advantage it has provided of connecting the lives and emotions of people through the internet.

Youtube whereas it has been considered one of the strongest platforms of shirting information and providing facts and figures through videos besides the fact it has a lot of entertaining content. people not only like to view the videos but many of them are involved in making small videos about any sort of knowledge they have just to earn a sum of money. people not only rely on Youtube the most but consider as an honest platform where they can consider no rumors based on the material but also a kid-safe app. Youtube not only protects consumer viewing rights but also takes care of it is proof of adulterer material which can harm the society in any way, making it the most viewed app for information.

At the same time, using social media for non-academic purposes has a negative impact on students’ academic performance. According to the research, social media use is still limited and restricted and is not well adapted in the teaching process. However, there are some differences among the academic staff in the ways they use social media regarding scientific disciplines of education. Chewing argues that the proper deployment of Twitter and blogs could facilitate a learner-centered approach to teaching. Results show that the opportunities to discuss and share amongst themselves and with their teacher 24/7 benefit the educational process.

Research efforts have been increased during the last decade so that booming aspects of social network use for educational activities could emerge. This review does not aim at answering specific research questions, nor is it a systematic effort to critically appraise or synthesize research studies. Thus, we do not employ a specific methodological method (e.g., Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses [PRISMA]), but rather highlight relevant research and studies by presenting their results and highlighting related issues, problems, and challenges along with the possible solution.
Literature Review

1. Social Media Network: Definition and Usage

Social media is one of the major sources of information in the current century. It is the network of internet-based applications that enable the user to interact with each other but also is a great source of information.

Social media has proved its ability to boost communication between people and many industries use the power of social media for boosting sales and creating effectiveness. But, there is one industry, in particular, that is best suited which adapts these new mediums – institutions of higher education. As social networking has become one of the most popular means of communication among the college-age demographic, universities are beginning to utilize these technologies to communicate with current and prospective students (Gruber, 2009).

Social media take on many different forms, such as internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wiki, podcast, photo or video sharing, rating and social bookmarking. Social media types are divided into six categories such as

- Collaborative project (ex. Wikipedia)
- Blogs and microblogs (twitter)
- Content communities (YouTube)
- Social networking sites (Facebook)

Technologies used in social media include a blog, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-posting, email, instant messaging, music-sharing.

Functionality and the usage of Social Media networks have spread into several aspects as described in the framework proposed by Kietzmann. The framework that shows the seven-building block of social media functionality, are identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationship, reputation and groups.

2. Usage of Social Network in Higher Education

There are pros and cons to social network usage in the higher education environment. Although some Web users are youngster, adopting the social technologies in the classroom needs a careful plan for some reason.
Despite the pros and cons, some of the social network media have exceeded their functionality, from non formal media into formal and official media, both for public information and communication. Facebook and Twitter for example. Facebook itself, after 3 years release (2007), that the site introduced the fan page concept which is successfully attracting many users to create their fan page officially. The owner of fan pages varies from small or individual businesses into a big company such as HP, Apple, Google and so on. Many universities jumped at the opportunity to create an official Facebook, and also some sub-organization in the university, for example, library, student association, student forums, etc. Fan pages can create a viral marketing effect because it can catch the interest of the friends of people who already become a fan and creating a handle to socialize among people. Having a Twitter account can become one “official” identity in virtual worlds, besides email address as you can see informal poster publication in the public area. Many students and lecturer creates network using twitter and follows each other. It also helps the user to spread information and express their views and opinions directly to the others.

The usage of Social media in higher education can vary from marketing media, information media, communication media, feedback up-gradation, complain filling, announcement, sharing assignment and examination. The intensity of Social media usage depends on some factor such as:

- The background and behavior of the user
- University policy on internet access
- The behavior of university communication
- The role and rule of Social media in daily communication
- The attitude of the user

By the study conducted in Chennai, which stated that the usage of social media has increased due to the custom of Smartphones by the Students. As per the data collected, out of 60 respondents, 76.7% of the Students have aware about the social media through classmates and friends, 20% of the students have aware about the social media through their parents and relatives and 3.3% of the Students have aware about social media through others.

Social Networking sites are playing a dominant role in the routine life of the Students. 46.7% of the Students having an account in WhatsApp, 36.7% of the Students having their membership on Instagram and 16.7% of the students are having their account on Facebook.
3. Habit of knowledge management by the students through social media

Students are using social media in their routine life to become a habit. This habit leads them to social media learning. To study the habit of knowledge management by the Students through social media the following variables have taken for the analysis:

Acquiring knowledge, Storing Knowledge, Sharing Study materials, Watching online Video, faster and easier way to share knowledge, updated Knowledge related to subjects,

Improvement of communication skills, Improvement of technology skills, Increase in the exposure of diverse views, Develop a positive image, Engagement of learning, Increases awareness and Develops social connection.

Out of 60 respondents, 36.7% of the students are using social media for acquiring knowledge, 40% of the Students are agreed with, using social media for storing knowledge, 40% of the Students are sharing study materials through social media, another 40% of the Students are having a moderate opinion about watching online videos lessons in YouTube, 50% of the Students are opined that social media is a faster and easier way to share knowledge, 53.3% of the Students are having agreed that Social media helps to acquire updated knowledge related to subjects and 50% of the Students are highly agree with the statement 'it increases the engagement of learning'.

Beyond the subjects, 36.7% of the Students are opined that using social media helps to improve the communication skills, 40.0% of the Students agrees that the custom of social media assist them in improving technological skills, another 40% of the Students agreed with, the increase in the exposure of diverse views in the world, out of 60 respondents 40% of the students are having the moderate opinion that, using social media develops a positive image in the society, 53.3% of the Students agree that, Social media helps in creating awareness about the concepts other than the subjects and 40% of the Students are agreed that, it develops social connection.

Limitations of the Research

There is a limitation to every aspect and there are some related to the social media usage in the educational environment as well which takes into consideration the different aspects where it does not cover the areas of low availability of internet connection and mobile phones which makes it not appropriate in terms for those people who are not connected to social
media on regular basis in continuity and cannot make it as useful for them as it as useful to us in the environment of higher education.

Also, social media has several drawbacks which make it uncomfortable for some people to use it for higher education and people feel less interested to make it a useful source of spreading information in other areas to people.

There exist also those people who don’t spread the information further i.e. they intake the information and are less likely to spread it further to other people for their benefit which makes the flow of information cycle discontinued and less helpful to the people. Also, there are people who are not active on any social media platform which makes the information available to them but still not connected to any sort of information that has been spread in the environment by their classmates and peers.

It is not investigated why different social networking environments are used. In the study, psychological factors such as personality types of the participants were not investigated because it is out of the scope of the study. In future studies, it is thought that the relationship between social networks and psychological variables such as personality types, self-confidence, loneliness, and shyness should be discussed comprehensively.

In addition to that due to certain constraints, secondary data was use and we couldn’t search on ourselves which has made them dependent and not limited to our subjectivity and research and cannot be totally relied upon for giving accurate results.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this research is to uncover some facts about Social media usage in higher education by identifying the dominant usages on the academic specific activity. The result expected can answer such questions as:

1. To understand the positive benefits of Social media usage in higher education
2. To study the dominant functionality of Social Media usage in higher education
3. To study the dependency of students in higher education on social media
Research Methodology

Secondary research involves data that has been collected by somebody else already. This type of data is called “past data” and is usually accessible via past researchers, government records, and various online and offline resources.

Secondary research involves re-analyzing, interpreting, or reviewing past data. The role of the researcher is always to specify how this past data informs his current research.

In contrast to primary research, secondary research is easier, particularly because the researcher is less involved with the actual process of collecting the data. Furthermore, secondary research requires less time and less money.

Of all the obvious advantages one is that, compared to primary research, secondary research is inexpensive. Primary research, maximum times requires spending a lot of money. For instance, members of the research team should be paid salaries also requiring often travel and transportation costs. One may need to pay for office space and equipment and compensate your participants for taking part. There may be other overhead costs too.

These costs do not exist while doing secondary research. Although researchers may need to purchase secondary data sets, this is always less costly than if the research were to be conducted from bottom and scratch.

But there is a setback to very situation Thus, although secondary data may provide one with a large scope of professionally collected data, this data is unlikely to be fully appropriate to your own research question. There are several reasons for this. For instance, one may be interested in the data of a particular population, in a specific geographic region, and to be collected during a specific time frame. However, the secondary data may have focused on a slightly different population, may have been collected in a different geographical region, or may have been collected a long time ago.

The research methodology acquired and used in the paper is using secondary data. Data extracted from different reputed papers have been used which state the effective relationship of students with social media usage in higher education. Due to the different constraints and limitations, secondary data was to be used and we will make sure that in the near future the methodology used will be primary data which will be more specific to its conclusion and researches according to what is stated. The research states the positive impact of the
methodology used and giving a better understanding of the social media and higher education environment.

**Recommendation**

People can be more aware of the platforms they can use for educational purposes in the higher education environment and make use of the technological advantage given to them, which will make things and education easier for them to use in higher education. Also, appropriate planning should be made to prevent addiction to social networking, control its use, and increase the opportunities and reduce the threats of this too. The basic need internet should also be available to everyone and if not those aspects where people are not connected to the internet should be kept in mind while preparing the data and the other aspects of how people use social media as a base of information they need in the world. The most connected to the internet also do not take advantage of the platforms available to them so spreading the knowledge and motivation to people to use social media as a mode of information rather than just sitting around and only as a base of staying connected to people's needs to be done. Considering the findings of the current study, it can be suggested that for collaborative learning, social networking sites especially Instagram and WhatsApp can be a good option to support communication.

**Conclusions**

Social media is an important source to connect with each other with fast and easy. It helps the Student in acquiring knowledge, sharing knowledge and also develops a good social connection that brings a lead to learn new things in their subjects and about the career.

The usage of Social media in higher education has an emerging new opportunity both for basic functional usage or academic specific usage. The main functionalities of usage Social media are for sharing, conversation and relationship were, the level of social networking addiction of the students was moderate, and male students had a higher level of addiction to social networking than female students.

Facebook and Twitter seem more interesting for lecturers to share their opinion or build communication with the students and friends. Where you tube stand the first position so as to use for educational purpose and understanding different concepts in the terms of gaining
knowledge. Where Instagram is standing last in place to be used for educational purposes and information sharing.

Many people out of the total respondents inquired to use social media for educational purposes but also simultaneously they use social media for the use of connecting the people and chatting or for entertainment. An only a small portion of lecturers are blogging and updating the content frequently. Usage of Social media in academic activity was dominated by resource material sharing and searching and task assignment.

The negative impact such as wasted resources by using the network for entertainment is relatively small compared with positive benefits. Most of the respondents using Social media not only for entertainment but also for task assignment, announcement, class rescheduling negotiation, and examination. As derived from this result, the university needs to explore the intensity of social media usage before decide to implement limited access on the social media site.

The rapid growth of social media usage in higher education is a fact that we can deny anymore. Despite refusing it, we should think about the most effective way to adopt it in higher education and promote the suitable usage policy based on environment user behavior. Given the importance of addiction to social networking and its potentially destructive impact on students’ academic performance, similar studies are recommended in other universities and in different fields to obtain a more conclusive result.

In this regard, the use of mix methods can help to better understand the phenomenon of addiction to social networking and its relationship with the academic performance of students.

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