

A STUDY ON ROLE OF FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN AS A LEARNING TOOL IN ACADEMICS

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ABSTRACT

Gone are the days when blackboard and chalk were used in the classes. Today learning is going hand in hand with emerging technologies. From traditional methods of teaching and learning, education has moved to smart learning using different media. Social media is one such tool which is not completely explored in the world of academics. Social media allows students to participate, involve and share ideas, which is a very important factor in classroom learning. Evolving from teacher-centred learning to student centred learning social media gives students a sense of authority in the class thus making them more enthusiastic and enjoy the process of learning. The objective of social media is connecting to people and sharing information without geographical, social or cultural boundaries. Even though social media started as a medium of entertainment, soon it became a place of sharing information, ideas and knowledge. Educational institutions also slowly realizing the importance of social media and are starting to use it for effective teaching and information dissemination.

Different types of Social Medium such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Blogs can be used as tool for effective teaching. The researcher has chosen Facebook and LinkedIn to analyse the impact of using social media in the classroom among Undergraduate students. This study will analyse and interpret the data collected by students using the questionnaire method. The aim of the study is to examine the effectiveness of Facebook and LinkedIn in classroom learning in relation to its effect on Undergraduate students

Keywords: Facebook, Higher Education, Learning methods, LinkedIn, Social media and Education, Social Media, Students, Teachers, Technology,

1. INTRODUCTION

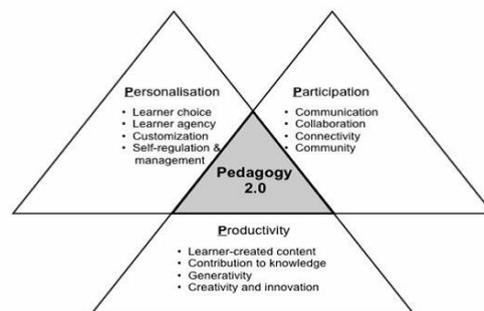
Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as the applications that are supported on the Internet and are based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow creating and interacting with contents generated by users by open and free means. Social media is now has crossed borders, becoming a platform for social connectivity. Facebook and LinkedIn are two celebrated social media platforms which people across the country are using. Education has evolved from the Gurukula system to the concept of smart classes. With world evolving there is a need for the education system to update and provide effective methods of teaching to the students to prepare them for the competitive world.

Social media is largely considered as the medium of entertainment. Its uses in academic learning are still not completely explored. Kop and Hill (2008) suggest that in this age of information technology, learners need to connect through social media for an effective learning experience.

What keeps students interested and motivated in the class? How a teacher can deliver a lecture keeping the interest of the students and fulfilling their requirements? To answer these questions the concept of student/learner-centred learning and teacher-centred learning needs to be understood.

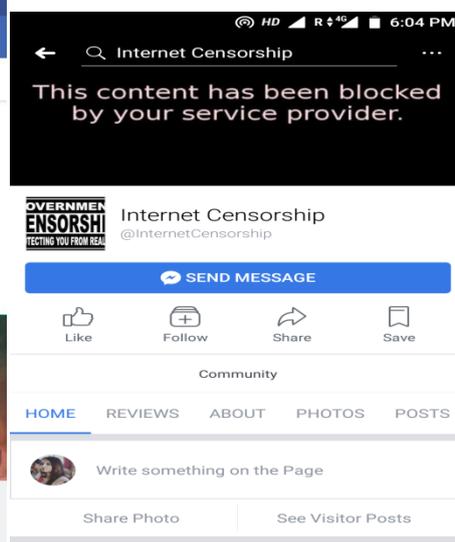
Teacher centred learning is where a teacher will decide on the structure of the class and students will learn according to that structure. Whereas in a student centred learning, students engage in active learning by using methods such as cooperative learning, open ended assignments, critical-thinking exercises, simulation, and problem-solving activities (Felder & Brent, 1996). This kind of learning will engage students in the class and also increase their level of understanding as more interaction will be involved. Social media allows for such interaction and also keeps interest of the students making them more attentive in the class.

McLoughlin and Lee (2011) explains the importance of Pedagogy. He says it promotes learner centred and self-directed learning and focuses on higher levels of engagement, user-generated content, and personalized learning.



Key elements of pedagogy 2.0, McLoughlin and Lee (2011).

Facebook: Facebook is a social media platform created to connect people together. Even though Facebook started as a medium of entertainment, its uses in academics cannot be ignored. Since Facebook is a medium of audio and visual it catches eyes of the viewers and holds the interests of the users. Apart from photo/video sharing, Facebook is home for many informative pages which can be used in the classroom environment for better understanding of the concepts. Since most of the students are well equipped with Facebook usage it will not be difficult to merge it in the academics.



Screenshots of 'Logical Indian' and 'Internet Censorship' which publishes educational content

LinkedIn: LinkedIn was started as a business platform by Konstantin Guericke, Reid Hoffman, Allen Blue, Jean-Luc Vaillant and Eric Lysoon. This was used majorly for job search and also connecting professionally with likeminded people. Unlike Facebook LinkedIn is mostly used for professional purpose. Apart from connecting to people of similar interest, LinkedIn contains many informative articles which can be useful in understanding concepts better. Another major advantage of LinkedIn is that most of the information shared on the feed are informative and educative which avoids distraction when using it.

LinkedIn Learning is a subsidiary of LinkedIn which contains online courses taught by the professionals. LinkedIn is a platform for organisations and individuals to help them achieve their goals and aspirations through personalised and data driven learning experience

(Roslansky, 2016)

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was that many educators and students consider social media as only a medium of entertainment. Many Educational institutions are yet to explore the uses of social media in academics. It is important to know how students perceive social media (Facebook and LinkedIn) as learning tool and how well they are aware of its uses in academics.

Another notion that prevails among teachers is that social media is merely a distraction which could possibly be the reason for not experimenting using it in the class. A secondary problem was to determine how well students can connect to the topics taught in the class by making use of Facebook and LinkedIn by the teachers.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of the students on use of Facebook and LinkedIn as learning tools
2. What influence does social media has on classroom interactivity?
3. Does using social media for academic purpose promote student centred learning?
4. Do students perceive use of social media as distraction in the class?

1.3 Purpose of the study

It is important to understand students' requirements in learning and Educational institutions role in promoting and nourishing students' interests is immense. Even though traditional method of teaching is widely accepted and followed, it is important to update teaching techniques to keep students more active and interested in learning.

This study tries to analyse students requirements in classroom, what keeps them interested and motivated and what is the learning outcome by inculcating social media as a tool in the classroom. The study will also explain the uses of Facebook and LinkedIn as an educational tool which is largely considered by students and teachers as an entertainment and business medium.

1.4 Limitations of the study

1. The study only focuses on Facebook and LinkedIn as teaching and learning tools
2. The participants were selected from one college in Bangalore

3. Since technology is not accessible in every part of the country, this research holds good mostly for urban set up
4. The results were specific to this setting and might not hold true for all the colleges in India
5. The results of the study are limited to reliability of the participants

1.5 Operational Definitions

1. **Social Media**- “A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

2. **Facebook**- One of the leading social networking sites used by students in higher education. Established in 2004, Facebook allows users to connect via the Internet to create a profile, post videos, photos, and connect with friends (Dabner, 2012).

3. **LinkedIn** -LinkedIn (LI) is a professional networking website. While other social networking sites such as Facebook and Myspace focus more on personal and social networking. LinkedIn allows professionals to create and maintain career-oriented business connections and promote their services or professional skills. (<https://www.techopedia.com/definition/26940/linkedinli>)

4. **Perception**- A thought, belief, or opinion, often held by many people and based on appearances (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, n.d.)

5. **Distraction**- Forgetting information needed for processing the most important task. (Speier, Valaciah, & Bessey, 1999)

6. **Student centred learning**- Student centred instruction attempts to engender active learning by using methods such as cooperative learning, open ended assignments, critical-thinking exercises, simulation, and problem-solving activities (Felder & Brent, 1996)

7. **Technology**- Technology refers to methods, systems, and devices which are the result of scientific knowledge being used for practical purposes. (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/technology>)

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Connectivism- Connectivism is a social theory by George Siemens which talks about learning in the digital era. Connectivism stresses on importance of technology in learning process and how it is important for people to be up to date in this fast pacing world. Drawing parallel to Behaviourism and Cognitivism, Connectivism talks about learning outside body (Simon Bailey, 2017) that is making use of technology to interact, learn and share ideas. Siemens states that information is not only available in the individual but it occurs outside individual or within organisations (Siemens, 2005). He also tells that by using technology to learn will help in both knowledge consumption and knowledge creations (Siemens, n.d.).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Extending Student' Discussions beyond Lecture Room Walls via Facebook by Bernard Bahati, 2015

In this paper Bernard Bahati focuses on using Facebook as an effective tool for academic learning. He also discusses about the 3 R's literacy- Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic which is considered as a traditional approach to learning. Here he talks about the importance of including new technologies in teaching to be part of the knowledge society. Knowledge society he explains, is a society which knows how to use information effectively.

The author goes on to explain the study conducted at the University of Glasgow (Dunn 2013) to find the Facebook usage at the university for academic purposes.

The results from the college – wide survey indicate that 92% of students use some kind of social media but Facebook remains the most popular social network (86%), followed by Twitter (41%) and Google+ (24%). 87% use at least one of these networks for personal use. However, 33% indicated that they also use their accounts to network specifically with other professionals and 24% use it to aide their research and studies.

The author further explains the purpose of his study, he says that this study was conducted to investigate the students' feedback and reflections about the use of Facebook as a tool that facilitates after class discussions which brings out the creative side of students.

The researcher chose postgraduate students of Rawanda University for his study. 48 students were chosen as the participants. A Facebook group was created where the participants were requested to join. The group was named as "KIE/MEd: Curriculum and Instruction/ECI 606". This group was used as a discussion venue after the seminars where students shared ideas, views and opinions which gave them opportunity to discuss freely.

Survey questionnaire was distributed among the students via email to analyse the study conducted among 48 students

Extending Student' Discussions Beyond Lecture Room Walls via Facebook by Bernard Bahati, focuses on only one social media i.e., Facebook to understand its role in the academics, Whereas article fails to explain other important and widely used social media in academics such as Twitter, Blogs, Wiki, LinkedIn and YouTube

Bernard Bahati concludes the article saying that the question is not whether Facebook is a good medium for teaching or learning, the question is how effectively students and teachers make use of the linking, sharing and networking power of Facebook for effective teaching and learning.

2.2 Social Media and Education: Using Social Media for better Academic results by Brayden Fox, 2017

Social media has emerged as a vital tool of communication and has created ways for mobilizing and gathering people together at one particular point as per the need. According to B&C(2010), the term social media is widely used now a days.

Over the years many authors and experts like Graber (1996), Morris (2002), Han (2008) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have looked at the social media's impact and influence, few have actually provided an acceptable definition of the term of new media. In basic sense, new media is the digital communication technology that is continuously evolving and developing and has uncertain terms and uses (Peters, 2009).

In this article Brayden Fox talks about different benefits of social media in academic learning. Author says that social media is a medium where there is abundance of information and students have many options to choose information relevant to them and make use of it in the academic learning.

Brayden Fox then goes on to discuss about Learning Management systems (LMS) which now has become integral part of education system. Social media is popular and familiar among students. By combining these two in academics, learning can be enhanced in the classroom

Brayden Fox emphasizes on the importance of social media in enhancing reading and writing skills. He says since students are comfortable using social media, they will pay attention in reading content on it and thus improving their reading and writing skills.

The author concludes the article by saying, social media and education are now important part of education and helps in increasing effectiveness and productivity in the classroom.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sources of Data

Data can be obtained either from primary or secondary sources. Primary data is the information obtained first-hand for the specific purpose of the study. Secondary data refers to information gathered from various sources that already exist.

In this study, primary data has been collected in the form of personal interviews

3.2 Research Instrument

The Interview questions was the only research instrument used for collecting primary data. Face to face interview with the students was also conducted.

3.3 Sample

Random sampling method was employed for this study. 10 undergraduate students were interviewed for the study

3.4 Population

Population for this study is undergraduate students between the age of 18 to 22

3.5 Sample procedure

10 students were selected randomly and were asked set of questions to understand the use of social media in academics and its impact on learning. The respondents' views were taken into consideration and answers were analysed through interpretations and observations.

4. ANALYSIS

Face to Face interview was conducted among 10 respondents

Q1: Do you have Facebook and LinkedIn account? How long have you been using these social media?

Responses received to this question are, out of 10 respondents, 6 respondents have both Facebook and LinkedIn accounts and 4 respondents have only Facebook account.

Majority of the respondents were using Facebook regularly and for long time than LinkedIn because Facebook contains information which are entertaining and visually appealing than LinkedIn

Q2: How do you perceive Facebook and LinkedIn as academic learning tools?

Two most common responses received to this questions were, 'Audio-visual medium' and 'Entertainment-Informative' medium

Most of the respondents use Facebook for its Audio-Visual quality. They believe that this quality of both Facebook and LinkedIn makes the class more interesting and motivating.

Even though Facebook is largely considered as an entertainment medium respondents agree that there are many informative pages and posts which can be used for academic learning

Three respondents spoke about LinkedIn learning and told they take up online LinkedIn learning course to understand the concepts. Other three respondents had a LinkedIn account but were not using it actively because they consider LinkedIn as only a tool for job search.

Q3: Do you think social media has larger influence on classroom interaction?

All the respondents agreed that social media has larger influence on classroom interactivity. Two common responses were 'Familiarity' and 'Sense of confidence'.

Since the younger generation is more familiar with the use of social media, when it is used as a tool in classroom teaching, students participate more because they would be familiar with the format of social media. Respondents also think that it boosts their confidence level when talking about something they are familiar about.

Other responses include the way content is shared on social media, for example conveying information through memes or other humorous way can help in indulging in classroom participation.

Q4: Does using Facebook and LinkedIn for academic purpose make you feel that teachers are acknowledging students' needs?

All the respondents agreed that this approach makes them feel important and allows them to choose the mode of learning rather than just following what the teacher is teaching.

Q5: Do you think by using Facebook and LinkedIn in the class there are chances of getting distracted?

Nine out of Ten respondents think that it causes distraction in the class. The reasons they listed out are, pool of information which can confuse them on what to read/watch or what not to. Other reason is the advertisement pop ups in these social media which could cause distraction. Unnecessary or irrelevant information, Personal photos/Videos are also reasons listed by the respondents on distraction.

Respondents feel that by they might not be distracted much by using LinkedIn because the content shared on LinkedIn are more of informative than entertainment.

5. OBSERVATION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the study conducted, there were observations and recommendations as well as scope for future studies.

Students agree that use of Facebook and LinkedIn is effective in the classroom learning and it increases the interest level and participation in the class. In the interview most respondents also feel that many teachers do not use Facebook and LinkedIn as a tool for academic learning and they wish to experience these tools more in class.

Students also feel that there is a need of balance use of these tools in the class as it is also important to follow traditional method of teaching as it gives more personal touch to the class learning. In the study, it is observed that students are not using LinkedIn much for academic purposes and the reason being lack of awareness among students about the use of these tools for academics. LinkedIn being recognised as the professional application, is not explored by the students. Even though they have heard about LinkedIn learning, they are not actively using it because of lack of knowledge about it. Students feel that if proper training is given on the uses of these tools, they are open to use it as learning tools in academics.

The study answers all the Research questions by data collection and by interpretation of that data

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APPENDIX

I Anitha H S, hereby declare that prior permission was taken from the respondents before conducting the interview and confirm that all responses will remain confidential.

Interview Questions

1. Do you have Facebook and LinkedIn account? How long have you been using these social media?

National Conference on Media and Society Changing Dimensions in Media : Looking for New Paradigms

CMS Campus , Jain University, Bangalore



22nd March 2019

www.conferenceworld.in

ISBN : 978-93-87793-81-1

2. How do you perceive Facebook and LinkedIn as academic learning tools?
3. Do you think social media has larger influence on classroom interaction?
4. Does using Facebook and LinkedIn for academic purpose make you feel that teachers are acknowledging students' needs?
5. Do you think by using Facebook and LinkedIn in the class there are chances of getting distracted?
