

Evaluation Of Teaching Staff Experiences In Using Social Networks: A Descriptive Study

¹Yousef Omar Alrashed,

Self-Development Department, Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract: The current research aimed at investigating the challenges of utilizing the social networks in Higher Education from the viewpoints of the university staff members. The questionnaire validity and reliability were assured, and it was administered to (350) university staff members in Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University. The results of the statistical analysis showed that there are five main challenges that hinder utilizing the social networks in the educational process, namely, the Financial and administrative challenges, the teachers' challenges, the learners' challenges, the social networks challenges, and the technical challenges. The research concluded with the recommendations.

Keywords: Perception, obstacles, social media, higher education.

Introduction

Technology has become an integral part of our daily life. It has entered every field including the learning process at different levels of education. Educators started to explore the way modern technologies can successfully enhance student learning, assist higher education institutions in encouraging digital literacy among their students. Priority is given to the best and most appropriate methods that enable students to share learning processes with their peers. Interaction and communication using all communication channels are also emphasized (Kumi-Yeboah & Blankson, 2018). Social media networks are one of the most important means of communication between individuals and groups and have become a basic procedural technique in understanding human interactions, interpreting texts and media experiences. With all its methods of communication, as well as transmission of knowledge, communication is considered a stand-alone science that has its own specific techniques, components, methods and forms (Sukar & Al-Hopi, 2011). Therefore, higher education institutions should take advantage of social media networks to create social educational environments that enable them to keep pace with developments and to integrate technology into education, because education in general is not immune to these developments. In other words, educational institutions should constantly seek to benefit from these developments, to break the gap between what the learner receives in the educational institution and what he experiences in reality. (Al-Anzi, 2013).

Attitudes towards using social media in teaching were analyzed, and there were conflicting results regarding the benefits and challenges involved in using such tools in higher education (Hussein, 2013; Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2009; Rogers-Estable, 2014). In order to proceed with the investigation of academic attitudes towards social media, this study focuses on the obstacles that prevent the use of social media in teaching. Different attitudes appear regarding using social media in higher education to enhance learning and teaching; while some academics trust and explore multiple areas of social media and seek to blend them into their multi-dimensional educational experiences, others are hesitant to use social media and prefer to accurately understand the nature of the tool or process in advance. Hence, this study sought to identify a wide range of factors, experiences, expectations and perceptions that may keep teachers from using social media as a basis for learning. The problem of the current research is to identify the obstacles to employing social media in the development of the educational output in higher education institutions in a clear and comprehensive manner. Discussion handles different dimensions of the obstacles hindering the employment of technology in educational institutions in general, and in higher education institutions in particular. In addition, this study examines ways to overcome these obstacles from the point of view of faculty members. Thus, the study tries to answer the following main question: what are the perceptions of faculty members about the obstacles to the use of social media in higher education at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University? This main question is divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What are the material and administrative obstacles that prevent employing the social media in higher education?
2. What are the social media-related obstacles that prevent its employment in higher education?
3. What are the technical –related obstacles that prevent the employment of social media in higher education?

Study Purpose

The theoretical importance of the current research is studying the obstacles that prevent the employment of social media in higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is expected that this research will be useful to those in charge of adult education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As for the practical importance of the current research, it

comes from its results that can benefit researchers and those interested in the field as well as those in charge of higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review

Social Media and the Learning Process

Social media can play a significant role in the teaching and learning process. Not only does it provide students with access to useful information, but also connects them with learning groups and other educational systems that make the overall learning process more interesting and engaging. Social platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram are used by almost everyone. These social channels revolve around collaboration, communication, knowledge sharing, and content generation - something of great value in an educational context. Social media has a lot to offer to the educational community, here are some of the direct benefits of using social media for the academic world as cited by Jain (2019) such as: 1) Cooperative learning, as the using social media has made the interaction process between teachers and students easier and faster; 2) Exchange of information by students as they are constantly connected to the internet through their smartphones thus quickly transferring information to their recipients; 3) Marketing through social media which consider a great marketing tool to reach potential students, which enables institutions to establish their brand in the academic world; 4) Helps boost academic/professional research that provides collaborative opportunities to foster research initiatives. It is one of the best platforms for extracting secondary data; 5) Continue teaching from anywhere and everywhere; and 6) Create a virtual library by taking advantage of blogs through uploading academic work, lectures, and other important videos that will allow students to take relevant input as reference material for their studies.

Most of the research addressing social media in the learning environment evidenced positive results (Novak & Cowling, 2011; Pollara & Zhu (2011). For instance, Pollara and Zhu (2011) conducted a study that aimed to identify the effectiveness of using Facebook in developing concepts among secondary education students and the social relationships between students and teachers. It used the experimental approach. Its sample included (45) students. The study used the Social Relationship Scale and a cognitive achievement test in the science course. The results showed the effectiveness of using Facebook in providing students with the concepts of science as well as in enhancing social interaction between students and teachers. The study conducted by Ractham and Firpo (2011) aimed to identify the effectiveness of using social networks to enhance the learning process at the postgraduate level at the University of Thailand. The sample of the study consisted of (69) students. It used the quantitative observation method. The observation period was (105) days and it used the experimental approach to reach the results. The results concluded that the use of Facebook helps in enhancing learning, teaching and creating a participatory aspect in the learning environment. Teaching with Facebook helps support cooperation during learning.

Cheung, et al (2011) conducted a study that aimed to identify university students' use of the Facebook network. The research sample consisted of (182) students. It used a questionnaire presented to university students on the use of Facebook. The study used the descriptive approach. The results concluded that students prefer to use the Facebook network in education for different reasons. For example, all students have a personal page on Facebook, which makes education through that network easy. In addition, communication and collaboration using Facebook enable users to blog and build content across a large area on the network. The study of Grosseck, Bran, and Tiru, (2011) aimed to explore students' awareness of the importance of Facebook and its role as a social networking site in education. The study sample consisted of (300) male and female students. It was based on a questionnaire as a tool to collect data from the sample. The results proved that social networks play an effective role in students' lives. The results also indicated that teachers greatly support adopting the idea of social networks in developing the educational process at the academic level. In addition, the results indicated that students spend most of their time communicating with their friends and colleagues through Facebook. Thus, Facebook can be used as one of the most important social networks in improving the educational process. The available literature shows that using social media of various kinds in education is still unresearched, especially in the Arab countries. Few studies dealt with the employment of social networks in adult education in these countries in general, and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in particular. Thus, this study identified the obstacles that prevent the employment of social media in higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Methodology

Study Design and Sample

The current study design focused on a cross-sectional data collection technique in the form of questionnaire survey, which enables the researcher to get respondents view and opinion in respect to the social phenomenon under study (Jdaitawi, 2020; Jdaitawi, 2020; Sekaran, 2003). The study conducted at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University located in Eastern Region in Saudi Arabia. Before collecting the data, the university scientific council Deanship was

contacted for assistance and permission to go through the study. A verbal agreement also was given by the participants. The Sample of this study comprised of 350 teaching staff at the university.

Measurement

The measurement used to gauge the social media obstacles in the university education among teachers was developed by the researcher based on the available literature (Alhrsh et al., 2008; Almousa, 2001). The measure consists of 47 items and were distributed into five factors which are, administrative (11 items), instructor (9 items), student (7 items), social media (11 items), and technical obstacles (10 items). Specifically, the measure comprised of 47 questions, whose answers are measured on a 5-point Liker scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). In order to identify the obstacles level from teacher perspective, the measure was divided into five levels which are: 1-1.80 (no problem at all); 1.81-2.60 (no problem); 2.61-3.40 (little problem); 3.41-4.20 (there is a problem); and above 4.21 (to many problems). However, the measure was validated by group of experts and test-retest was conducted and achieved the recommended values. In addition, overall Cronbach' Alpha reliability of the measure was .865.

Study Results

The study used several descriptive statistics to answer the research questions. Regarding question 1, "What are the material and administrative obstacles that prevent the use of social media in education"? Analysis of the responses in table 1 indicates that material and administrative obstacles to employing social media in higher education from the viewpoint of faculty members in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia include different factors. For instance, there are no legislations or laws enacted by higher education institutions intended to stress relying on and employing social media in the learning process. For instance, the majority of the respondents answer item number 1 "no regular law organized using social media tools effectively in the learning-teaching process" between agree and strongly agree. Item number 4 "most of universities skip using social media tools in their learning-teaching process" answer between strongly disagree. Regarding questions 2, "What are the teacher-related obstacles that prevent the use of social media in education"? Analysis of the data in table 1 indicates that teacher-related obstacles regarding the employment of social media in higher education from the viewpoint of the faculty members in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia include several points. First, most faculty members confirmed that many teachers do not have enough time to use social media due to their heavy teaching load. In addition, they lack competencies of interacting efficiently through social media in the teaching process. For instance, the majority of the respondents answer item number 1 "limited time to use social media tools" between neutral and disagree.

Table 1. Summary of the Teacher Opinion about Administrative and Teachers Obstacles

| Item No.Mean/SD | | Answer | Item No.Mean/SD | | Answer |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Item 1 | Mean 4.6 SD 0.7 | Stro/Agree | Item 12 | Mean 4.6 SD 0.6 | Stro/Disagree |
| Item 2 | Mean 2.0 SD 0.5 | Stro/Disagree | Item 13 | Mean 2.4 SD 0.8 | Ston/Disagree |
| Item 3 | Mean 2.4 SD 1.0 | Stro/Disagree | Item 14 | Mean 4.1 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 4 | Mean 2.6 SD 0.8 | Stro/Disagree | Item 15 | Mean 3.6 SD 1.1 | Agree |
| Item 5 | Mean 4.5 SD 0.6 | Stro/Agree | Item 16 | Mean 3.8 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 6 | Mean 3.5 SD 0.8 | Agree | Item 17 | Mean 2.7 SD 0.9 | Neutral |
| Item 7 | Mean 3.5 SD 1.0 | Agree | Item 18 | Mean 2.4 SD 0.6 | Stro/disagree |
| Item 8 | Mean 3.7 SD 0.8 | Ston/Agree | Item 19 | Mean 3.8 SD 0.9 | Agree |
| Item 10 | Mean 4.6 SD 0.7 | Neutral | | | |
| Item 11 | Mean 3.3 SD 0.8 | Stro/Agree | | | |

Regarding questions 2, “What are the obstacles related to social media that prevent its use in education”? Through the results of the analysis attached to table 2 for the most important obstacles closely related to social media regarding their employment in higher education from the viewpoint of the faculty members in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, shown as follows: Difficulty providing feedback on students' performance in some social media environments, in addition to some difficulties during evaluation processes through social media. For instance, the majority of the respondents answer item number 3 “integration difficulties between different curriculums in using social media tools” between neutral and disagree. Regarding questions 3, “What are the technical –related obstacles that prevent the employment of social media in higher education”? Analysis of data in table 3 reveals different technical problems related to the employment of social media in higher education from the viewpoint of the faculty members in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. First, a lot of ads and annoying sites that distract and irritate learners must be taken into account in the educational process. Second, teachers should be aware of the complexity of the operating systems, which requires a lot of training and practice on the part of teachers and students. The results are presented in table 3.

Table 2. Summary of the Teacher Opinion about Students and Social Media Obstacles

| Item No. | Mean/SD | Answer | Item No. | Mean/SD | Answer |
|----------|--------------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|---------|
| Item 20 | Mean 4.6 SD 0.8 | Strongly Agree | Item 30 | Mean 3.7 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 21 | Mean 3.7 SD 0.7 | Agree | Item 31 | Mean 3.7 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 22 | Mean 4.4 SD 0.8 | Strongly Agree | Item 32 | Mean 3.8 SD 0.9 | Agree |
| Item 23 | Mean 2.5 SD 0.5 | Disagree | Item 33 | Mean 2.8 SD 0.6 | Neutral |
| Item 24 | Mean 2.7 SD 0.7 | Disagree | Item 34 | Mean 3.7 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 25 | Mean 3.1 SD 0.7 | Neutral | Item 35 | Mean 3.9 SD 0.9 | Agree |
| Item 26 | Mean 4.1 SD 0.9 | Agree | Item 36 | Mean 3.7 SD 0.9 | Agree |
| Item 27 | Mean 1.9 SD 0.5 | Disagree | Item 37 | Mean 3.2 SD 0.8 | Neutral |
| Item 28 | Mean 2.7 SD 0.8 | Neutral | | | |
| Item 29 | Mean 3.2 SD 0.8 | Neutral | | | |

Table 3. Summary of the Teacher Opinion about Technical Obstacles

| Item No. | Mean/SD | Answer | Item No. | Mean/SD | Answer |
|----------|--------------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|
| Item 1 | Mean 3.3 SD 0.9 | Neutral | Item 6 | Mean 3.8 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 2 | Mean 4.4 SD 0.6 | Strongly Agree | Item 7 | Mean 3.6 SD 1.0 | Agree |
| Item 3 | Mean 2.3 SD 0.6 | Disagree | Item 8 | Mean 3.8 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 4 | Mean 2.6 SD 0.7 | Disagree | Item 9 | Mean 3.5 SD 0.8 | Agree |
| Item 5 | Mean 2.4 SD 0.7 | Disagree | Item 10 | Mean 4.5 SD 0.8 | Strongly Agree |

Discussion

The result in questions one indicated problem related to social media in higher education environment. The faculty members indicated that there are many problems related to the availability of equipped rooms or computers with good internet connections. In other words, classrooms lack the required networks and the necessary infrastructure needed to enable teachers to manage the educational process through social media. This result is consistent with the

study of both (Al-Sallal, 2016). The results also confirmed that there is no comprehensive plan to integrate social media into the educational process. Also, there are no serious initiatives by higher education institutions relating to using social media in the educational process. The faculty members also indicated that there are signs of interest from employees of higher education institutions regarding the employment of social media in the educational process. Also, technology has been a key element in the educational process that can be a starting point for employing social media to promote the educational output.

The results in question two showed there was a problem in using social media that related to teachers' skills. Lacking the required skills can be attributed to the absence of training courses or workshops that enable them to use these media in teaching processes. In addition to their heavy teaching loads, faculty members indicated that there is no clear system to follow up the performance of faculty members and their use of e-learning systems. Such obstacles prevent the effective use of social media in the teaching process. Another point is that academics believe that engaging in social media employment requires an active member of online communities who can follow what is posted or sent to their accounts, which will take a lot of time and energy. This seems to add more tasks and responsibilities to their normal academic responsibilities. Thus, teachers seem to have no time for tasks due to their educational, social, administrative and private responsibilities. Some faculty members indicated that many teachers have the necessary technological skills to employ social media in the educational process. All they need is some support from higher institutions to manage the educational process. In the end, teachers are unlikely to resist change entailed in integrating technology into the educational process. This result is consistent with Alsolamy (20016) who reported that faculty members face a challenge with digital skills and how to transfer their traditional teaching methods to digital platforms. Their academic experience in delivering educational material seems to be insufficient. They need to be aware of students' learning preferences. They should also be familiar with technology and its tools, the use of appropriate educational techniques, and the creation of the most appropriate method for specific groups or individuals. Lack of training can be a major reason for some lecturers to be hesitant and consequently lack interest in employing social media in an academic environment.

The result also indicated that there was a problem related to students in terms of using social media in the learning-teaching process. One of these issues is students' convictions about social media an educational tool. For instance, students seem to be convinced that social media is means of communication and building social relationships between individuals and that it is an entertainment tool, not a tool for learning. Also, one of the obstacles associated with employing social media in the educational process is the lack of the necessary competencies regarding the skills of using the English language as the first language in designing social media platforms. In addition, social media institutions did not provide any material or moral incentives to outstanding students who depend on social media in the educational process. Faculty members stated that the increase in the number of students in higher education institutions is an obstacle to affective employment of social media in the educational process, as social networks have the ability to interact with a large number of audiences. Social media provides confidentiality and privacy in saving data and information. This result is consistent with the study of (Alsolamy, 2016), who emphasized that privacy concerns constitute an obstacle to the use of social media.

Result of the study also found problem related to social media tools. Communication networks are considered as one of the effective tools in developing the knowledge side, but the performance aspect may not be optimally developed among students. There are also obstacles related to the lack of learning through social media to deal with the material in depth, the lack of clarity of the systems and methods of learning through social media, and there is ambiguity surrounding the goals and philosophy of learning through social media. Another obstacle is the fact that social media are open-source networks and difficult to control. In addition, there are problems related to electronic viruses that may damage devices and stored data. Furthermore, the information on the networks may be inaccurate in terms of its correctness and orientation. More obstacles include the lack of technical support necessary to overcome the problems that stand in the way of achieving communication between students and those in charge of the educational process. Other obstacles have to do with language problems, a major obstacle in handling some networks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be realized that the previous obstacles have an impact on academics and their views on the use of social media in their personal and academic lives. So educational institutions can play a major role in providing effective solutions to deal with the large number of students in the classroom, the time teachers spend while answering student's questions about their subject matter and consider the efforts teachers make while teaching and communicating with them. Such steps will help in developing strategies to organize and evaluate teachers' academic work. Plans should also be developed to boost teachers' knowledge, capabilities and experiences in using social media applications in teaching.

Limitations and Suggestions

Based on the study results, there are some obstacles identified by the participants, and they highlighted the importance of using social media in the educational environment especially during COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, activating the use of social media in teaching various courses in the field of higher education by setting laws and legislations to take advantage of all the services provided by social media. These laws and legislations would greatly improve the educational output and provide the infrastructure for that. The study also highlights the spreading cultural awareness among students and teachers on the importance and feasibility of using social media in the educational process in general and providing them with the required training for that. There are obstacles in higher education institutions, therefore, developing solutions to the obstacles that prevent the employment of social media, especially from the administrative point of view. Provide teachers with training to integrate social media into learning, taking into account academic load and responsibilities. Also, developing adult education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through social media in light of the experiences of other countries. Limitations also related to the study also noted, such as the sample was from one university, future studies should conduct teachers' perspectives from different universities. Another limitation, quantitative method was used to collect data from the participants, future studies should use another method such as interview and observations to get clear picture about the phenomenon.

References

1. Alezi, J. (2013). The effectiveness of social networks in science achievement and students attitudes towards knowledge community among Third middle school students in Madinah" Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Umm Alqura University.
2. Alhersh, A., Fakhori M., & Yamen, H. (2008). Learning computer: theory and application. (ORID publisher and Printer, Jordan.
3. Ajjan, H., & Hartshorne, R. (2009). Investigating faculty decisions to adopt Web 2.0 technologies: Theory and empirical tests .The Internet and Higher Education, 11(2), 71-80.
4. Almousa A. (2001). Internet usage in higher education, "King Saud University Journal of Educational Studies 1(15).
5. Alsalal, M. (2016). Actual social networks usage in the communication learning and its obstacles from teacher female students. Arabic Journal of Social and Educational Studies 9, 181-222.
6. Alsolamy F. (2016). Social networking in higher education: Academics' attitudes, uses, motivations and concerns. A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Sheffield Hallam University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
7. Cheung, C., Chiu, P., & Lee, M. (2011). Online social networks: Why do students use Facebook? Computers in Human Behavior 27(4), 1337-1343.
8. Grosseck, G., Bran, R., & Tiru, L. (2011). Dear teacher, what should I write on my wall? A case study on academic uses of Facebook. Procedural Social and Behavioral Sciences 15(1), 425-436.
9. Hamoudh A. (2013). The role of social network in enhancing Palestinian Youth participation in social issues. Unpublished Master Thesis, Research and Arabic Studies.
10. Hussein, Z. (2013). Effectiveness of Facebook Based Learning to Enhance Creativity among Islamic Studies Students by Employing Isman Instructional Design Model. Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – TOJET 12(1), 60-67.
11. Jain R. (2019). Use of Social Media in Teaching And Learning: Emerging Role Of Social Media And Its Importance In Teaching And Learning. ASMA (2019). (Adoption of Social Media in Academia).16-17 September 2019 (Annual Convention & Awards). from: <https://2u.pw/xdeAo>.
12. Jdaitawi, M. (2020). The effect of using problem-based learning upon students emotions towards learning and levels of communication skills in three different disciplines. Croatian Journal of Education, 22(1), 207-240. <http://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v22i13215>.
13. Jdaitawi, M. (2020). Does flipped learning promote positive emotions in science education? A comparison between traditional and flipped classroom approaches. Electronic Journal of e-Learning, 18(6), 516-524. DOI:10.34190/JEL.18.6.004.
14. Kumi-Yeboah, A. (2018). Blankson H. Social media and use of technology in higher education. (pp. 932-952) IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-5631-2.ch041.
15. Novak, J. & Cowling, M. (2011). The implementation of social networking as a tool for improving student participation in the classroom. In ISANA International Academy Association Conference Proceedings 22, 1-10.

16. Pollara, P. & Zhu, J. (2013). Social Networking and Education: Using Facebook as an Education Space. In Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2011 (pp. 3330-3338). Chesapeake, VA: AACE, Retrieved January 12, 2013 from: <http://www.editlib.org/p/36833>.
17. Ractham, P., & Firpo, D. (2011). Using Social Networking Technology to Enhance Learning in Higher Education: A Case Study Using Facebook. System Sciences (HICSS), 2011 44th Hawaii International Conference, 1-10, 4-7 Jan 2011.
18. Rogers-Estable, M. (2014). Web 2.0 Use in Higher Education. European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning 17(2), 130-142. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2478/eurodl-2014-0024>.
19. Sekaran, U. (2003). Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach. 4th Edition, John Wiley & Sons, New York.
20. Sukar, M. & Alhobi, J. (2011). Social networks: Its types, conditions, effects and obstacles; Quran study subject. Unpublished Master Thesis, Islamic University, Gaza.