

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION: A TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The rise of the digital age has opened up great opportunities for people worldwide to connect with each other and access a diverse range of information. The Internet provides rich information resources which are very useful for various purposes in education, work and business as well as in keeping up with world trends. This study was conducted to determine the use of social media in education based on the perceptions and practices of teachers enrolled in Pangasinan State University's Open University Systems. The ever-growing social media has the potential of improving the quality of instruction in education. Some basic features of social media could have a great impact on the development of the teaching-learning process. This study focuses on the role of social media in education for high school teachers in Pangasinan, specifically those enrolled in the educational management major at both master and doctoral levels. It sought to discover the use of social media in teaching by investigating the profile of the teachers, the role of social media in education in different school activities and the acceptance of the role and use of social media in education. The results of the study showed that social media contributes to learning but there are some disadvantages which users need to be aware of. It is recommended that teachers blend social media with other free learning management systems.

Keywords: *Social Media, Teachers' Perspective, Teaching and Learning, Usage, Acceptance*

INTRODUCTION

In this millennium, work has become much easier through the use of the Internet, as it provides wide opportunities for users in different fields such as in business, career, work and others. The Internet could be used for storage of information, global education, online interaction and collaborative learning, improvement of interest in learning, communication without boundaries, global education, research, information catalogues and innovation in the new world. Researchers could search for information online and almost all that they need would appear on the screen. Since Web 1.0 has evolved and the use of Web 2.0 and social media are being emphasised, the amount of information available is constantly growing. Social media is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as "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". According to Muntinga,

Moorman and Smith (2011), social media websites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter provide unlimited means for Internet users to interact, express, share and create content about anything. Now, the question is, could social media be used for education? The notion that social media could be used for education has received attention in recent times due to the wide use of the platform for communication purposes. It is also one of the research agenda at Pangasinan State University.

Connectivity is a feature of social media that is much needed in learning. Information can be posted and seen by other users and this serves as a source of spreading information speedily to numerous types of audience regardless of time and place. Students, especially those in higher education, find more pleasure in using social media not just as a source of information but also as a bridge for interaction. Several studies found that students used social media mostly for personal purposes and rarely for education. It is crucial to encourage students to use the Internet or social media to gather scientific information that could be useful for their education. Teachers' role in education is not just to define or dictate ideas, generate or assign contents, but also to help every learner to construct learning paths to help them learn how to learn (Anderson & Dron, 2011). In the Philippines, which has a total population of 105 million, approximately 58% or 61 million use the Internet while 56% or 59 million use social media. Ninety-seven percent of the total Internet users use social media (<https://www.internetociety.org/news/in-the-news/>). This is a call for the researchers to conduct this study and investigate teachers' use and the role of social media in education. This study investigates the role of social media in teaching, particularly to examine the practices of the teachers enrolled at Pangasinan State University Open University Systems; the role of social media in education in different school activities; and the acceptance of the role and use of social media in education.

This study focuses on teachers undertaking their master's degrees and doctorates at Pangasinan State University Open University Systems. It will determine the contribution made by social media to education specifically in 2017. The researchers limited the respondents to educational management majors, for the possible development of instruction and educational systems. They were selected because they were the ones implementing rules and taking charge of administration at the educational institutions where they work. This study sought to investigate the possible use of social media for the development of learning. It would help us to understand the role of the platform in motivating students to learn, how widely it is used in education and what are teachers' perspective in using it. The research outcomes could help the development of the teaching-learning process. These outcomes could contribute to the preparation of learning materials to make learning much more creative and encourage students to collaborate and come up with new ideas. The findings could also motivate teachers and help them connect with students regardless of time, location and circumstances.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

There are several studies which explored the learning and teaching roles of social media. One is the qualitative research study entitled "Mobile computing devices in higher education: Student perspectives on learning with cell phones, smart phones and social media" (Gikas, 2013). It explored the use of mobile computing devices such as cell phones and smart phones in the teaching and learning processes of higher education. It also presented findings on the perception of students using mobile computing devices and what could be the role of social media in education. In a research by Nazan Dogruer, Ramadan Eyyamb and Ipek Menevisab (2011) on the use of the Internet in primary education suggested speedy spread of information through social media which could be very useful in education. Rich sources of information could be accessed online, which could greatly contribute to primary education. In a research investigating the role and use of the Internet among college

students in Korea, open-ended online survey was employed. The findings were examined through word-frequency analysis and semantic mapping. The results aimed to empower educators and policymakers in designing and planning e-learning programmes for college students. If e-learning programmes are implemented in the Philippines, it would help students to catch up with previous topics. The research could provide great support for community education (Park, 2012).

In "Exploring Facebook to Enhance Learning and Student Engagement: A Case from the University of Philippines Open University," Esteves (2012) studied the potential use of Facebook in education since Philippine users are some of the most active users of Facebook. The study indicated the distinctive components and functionalities of Facebook, for example, the wall, like, share and poke features could easily engage students in online learning. The study noted that student engagement improved, as evidenced by voluntary postings and continuous discussions and sharing even when these were not requested by the professor. The study's most significant finding was that Facebook's features made it very useful for teaching practical skills to a large number of users via video tutorials.

Despite the number of studies conducted on the use of social media, there are no visible guidelines for its use in the field of education because of the distraction it causes in the learning process. Social media is also not customisable, as it relies on the developers and websites. There are several learning management systems available online but students spend more time in social networking than any other learning management system website.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers adopted the quantitative method of research. The use of survey as a method of data collection has gained popularity over the years because of a great deal of valuable information on people's perception on issues, products, policies and/or events. It is also more common to use questionnaires because it yields information that is more systematic for all respondents.

Sources of Data

The students of Pangasinan State University Open University Systems, limited to the duration of 2016 to 2017, served as the source of data for this study. Open University Systems is a component of Pangasinan State University which offers master and doctoral programmes for Pangasinan and nearby provinces. The researchers used purposive sampling to determine the results based on the perception of graduate students in Open University Systems.

Data Analysis

The researchers used survey questionnaire as the tool to gather data from the respondents. A set of instruments was prepared for the respondents. The questionnaire comprised three parts, the first part of which highlighted the demographics of the respondents while the second part explored their perception towards the use of social media for academic and non-academic use, which was answered based on a Likert five-point scale (see Table 1). The third part of the survey focused on the use and acceptance of social media.

Table 1: Likert Rating Scale

Scale	Range	Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Extremely Useful
4	3.21 - 4.20	Useful
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Not Useful
1	1.00 – 1.80	Extremely Not Useful

All students from Master of Arts in Education and Doctor of Education were invited to participate in the survey. The respondents were requested to complete the survey within a 14-day period from the date of issuance.

The survey questionnaire was distributed to the doctoral and master students during their classes while Google forms were used to distribute the questionnaire further. The gathered data was inserted into a spreadsheet which automatically computed the results. A total of 45 out of 55 respondents, or 81.81%, answered the survey questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondents

The 45 respondents who had taken part in the survey, comprised of 62.2% females and 37.8% males. The majority, at 68.9%, were education majors while the others were senior high school teachers who studied other majors such as business, fisheries, mathematics, social studies and others. Most of the respondents were government employees. With regard to the level of teaching, 44.4% of the respondents taught high school or senior high school, 35.6% taught elementary school and 20% taught at the tertiary or college level. As for their respective work locations, 20% were from the city of Dagupan, 15.6% were from the municipality of Binmaley, 11.1% were from the municipality of Lingayen and the rest were from other municipalities in the province of Pangasinan.

Perception of Teachers on the Usefulness of Social Media in the Classroom

The results on perceptions of teachers on the usefulness of social media focused on academic and non-academic usage. The majority of the respondents agreed that social media was useful for academic-related activities. As shown in Table 2, social media was seen as very useful for student interaction in collaborative learning, followed by student-teacher interactions.

Based on the summarised results of the study, both interactions and collaboration received the highest weighted mean of 4.30; this is because social media was primarily used in communication, announcements and posting of grades. Examinations and quizzes obtained the lowest weighted mean, which indicated that social media was not totally suitable for these purposes.

Table 2: Summary of Usefulness of Social Media in School Activities

Activity	WM	Interpretation
Announcement	4.19	Useful
Posting of Grades	4.17	Useful
General Discussion	4.11	Useful
Conducting Quizzes	3.74	Useful
Take Home Assignments	4.00	Useful
Student Interaction for Collaborative Learning	4.30	Extremely Useful
Student Interaction for Peer Tutoring	3.94	Useful
Projects and Activities per group	4.02	Useful
Individual Projects and Activities	4.13	Useful
Major Examinations	3.89	Useful
Minor Examinations	3.67	Useful
Student-Teacher Interactions	4.30	Extremely Useful

Usage and Acceptance

The study found that all of the respondents had Facebook accounts, while 68.9% had Google+ accounts and 62.2% had YouTube accounts. Facebook is the social media most often used by the respondents as shown in Figure 1.

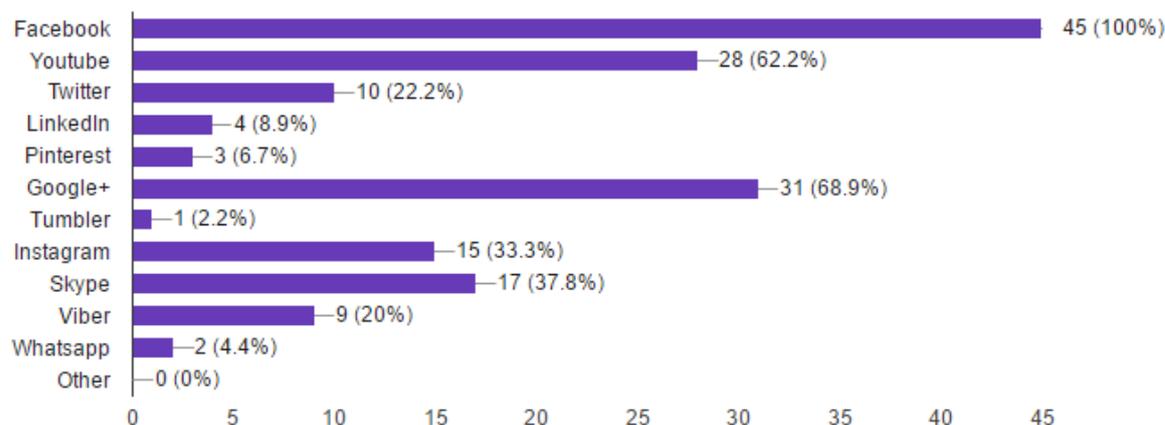


Figure 1: Teachers' Social Media Accounts

While 77.8% of the respondents had used their social media accounts for more than five years, 13.3 percent had done so for less than three to five years and 4.4% for less than one to three years. On daily basis, 35.6% of the respondents used their accounts for one to three hours, 24.4% for three to five hours and the other 24.4% for less than an hour.

Their main purpose of having an account was social networking (88.9%) and obtaining news updates (80%) followed by video streaming and downloading (48.9%).

A total of 97.8% used social media accounts for education-related activities, with just one respondent not doing so because it did not suit the respondent's needs.

With regard to the number of hours used for social media, 43.2% respondents used 26% to 50% of their total time on social media, while 36.4% used less than 25% of the total time spent.

The respondents were asked for what educational purpose they used social media, to which 81.8% of the respondents said they downloaded course materials. The second highest use was for submission of reports and sharing of files and documents, at 79.5%. Also high was the use of social media for obtaining updates and other class-related activities, at 77.3%. Lastly, 72.7% used social media for professional networking with other students and educators. It could therefore be said that the majority of the respondents used social media for educational purposes.

The respondents were also asked their opinion on the importance of social media in today's education. Most of them, at 86.4%, said it facilitated communication and built connections. This was followed by 81.8% who said it allowed more accessibility and 65.9% who agreed that it helped or improved the preparation and submission process. Meanwhile, 52.3% agreed that it facilitated the blended approach to learning and 50% agreed that it served as an online platform for discussion.

The respondents were also asked the disadvantages of social media in education, whereby 81.8% said it distracted the focus of students in fulfilling their school requirements, followed by 70.5% who stated that students might become too dependent on the apps for their school requirements. Meanwhile, 65.9% responded that students might lose the ability to engage in face-to-face communication and 45.5% said that many bloggers and writers posted wrong information on social media sites, which might lead to confusion among students.

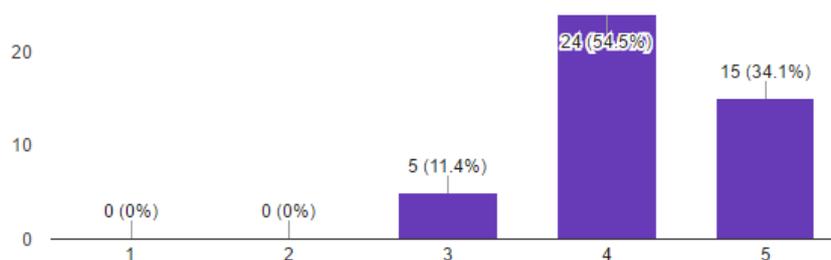


Figure 2: Teachers' Overall Satisfaction with the Use of Social Media in Education

Figure 2 shows that 54.5% of respondents were satisfied with the use of social media in education, 93.2% of the total respondents faced low Internet connectivity.

The study also discovered that the respondents used social media as an education alternative in the absence of learning management systems. The majority used social media for professional networking with other students and educators instead of formal e-mails and learning management systems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study showed that social media could play a vital role in education and help both teachers and students maximise the use of social networking, despite the finding that it was a source of distraction for students and was unsuitable for the setting of examinations and quizzes. Since the study was conducted only on Pangasinan State

University Open University Systems students, it is recommended that the study also be conducted in other graduate schools in the region for improvement and increasing research validity. It is also recommended that teachers be made aware of the disadvantages of social media and be encouraged to use alternative learning management systems available for free such as Google Classroom.

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