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The Relationship between Personal Factors, Facebook Intensity and Academic Performance of Youth Students in Libya

Mohamed Idries Ahmed Abusbiha^{a*}, Che Su Mustaffa^a

^a*Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia*

Abstract

Today, social network is very important to many people particularly for the youths in their everyday lives, integrating their online and offline experience and becoming one of the primary means of connecting and socially interacting worldwide, whether among individuals, students, business people and even governments. The purpose of this study is to propose a conceptual framework on the relationship between social network usage especially Facebook with academic performance.

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Keywords: Facebook intensity; academic performance; personal factors

1. Introduction

According to Hussain (2005), Facebook is the most popular social media worldwide, and its trend indicated that university students used social media for self-enjoyment and friendship. However, they preferred to share their study experiences & research projects, educational events, information, and developing networks. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Skype and Blog are widely used in the exchange of different information and in communicating with various cultures worldwide (O'Reilly, 2007). In the current 2000s, online social networking sites have gained popularity among college students. Facebook is one of the highly popular social media worldwide. Facebook provides an opportunity for users particularly college students to create their profiles, make personal

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: abusbah@yahoo.com

information known to other users, and upload and display pictures. Moreover, users are able to look at the profiles of other users, gather and make more friends online, and connect with those friends via messages, gifts, and photo tagging (Kalpidou, Dan Costin, & Jessica, 2011).

The increasing connection of college students to these worldwide online communities has constituted an anxiety to both parents and educators to the extent of stimulating research in this area to investigate the phenomenon. Some researchers have pointed out that students using social media learn in new ways and for this reason educators should welcome these new developments (Ito et al., 2009; Jenkins, 2006). Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009), found that Facebook could negatively affect the overall academic performance of the students. According to Khan (2009), Facebook users often experience poor performance academically. Moreover, many researchers were focused on various demographic variables such as age and gender on academic performance. The result of these researches found the significance of gender in student's academic achievement for example; they found a significant difference in GPA (grade) between male and female students in a class (Jabor et al., 2011). Similar with an analysis of data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS); Lee and Burka (1996), found a large advantage for males on the physical sciences and the modest advantage for females on the life science. However, Coley (2001), studied gender difference within ethnic groups of varying ages, and it revealed more similarities than differences. In conclusion, more research on age and gender differences in academic performance is needed to make conclusive implication of the effect of age, gender, and Facebook intensity on the academic performance of university students. This study will investigate whether students' age, gender, and Facebook intensity may make a difference in their academic performance.

2. Review of literatures

2.1. Facebook

Facebook is currently the first most tools used online social media network among users having profile to interact with other users (Nusair, Bilgihan, & Okumus, 2012). According to Hussain (2005), noted Facebook is the most popular social media worldwide, and its trend indicated that the student in university used social media to enjoy, and friendship. According to Indrupati and Henri (2012), Facebook statistics shows that out of its more than half a billion users, 50 per cent are active users who log on to Facebook every day, with people spending over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook. This research provides justification that Facebook is an activity that consumes time which in no doubt has some significant effects on the life of college students (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010).

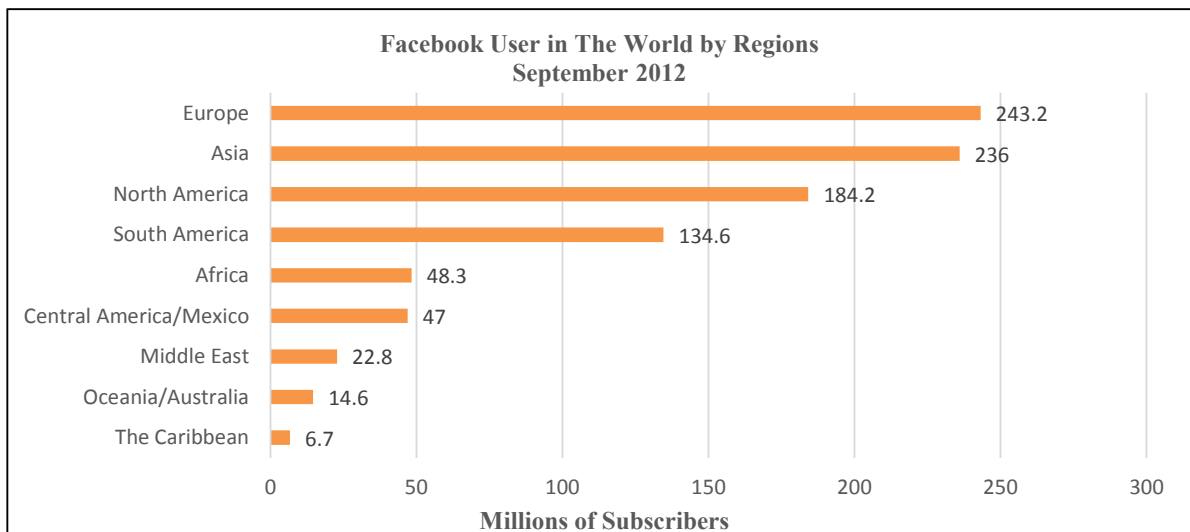


Fig.1. Facebook Users in the World distribution by Socialbakers
Source: (Facebook Users in the World distribution by Internet World Stats, 2012).

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Facebook users in the World according to regions by September 2012. The highest number of Facebook users in the world is Europe with 243.2 million users, followed by Asia with 236 million users. From figure 1 show there is increasing in the number of Facebook user's worldwide shows its rapid growth worldwide.

2.2. Facebook in the Arabic world

Based on the research carried out by the Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation program in 2011, social networking and Web 2.0 technologies penetration in the Arab region is elevating to the topmost level. In terms of demography, the total number of Facebook users in the Arab world stands at 21,361,863 in December 2010, an increase from 11,978,300 in January 2010 with a 78% annual growth rate. Furthermore, youths with ages ranging from 15 to 29 constitute about one-third of the population in the Arab region and makes up about 75% of Facebook users, while the population in Libya is 6,545,619 and the number of Facebook users is 260,400 people (3.98%) (Dubai School of Government, 2011).

3. Personal factors

3.1. Gender

Several theories have been presented to explain why having an instructor with similar racial or gender characteristics might increase a student's academic performance (Price, 2010). One of the explanations most thoroughly studied in past literature is the idea that faculty members serve as a mentor or role model for students, and having a mentor or role model of the same gender or race increases academic performance (Jacobi, 1991; Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Moreover, Tessema, Ready and Malone, (2012), found that gender is a significantly correlated with students' ACT scores, satisfaction with major curriculum and college GPA. In the same vein Chee, Pino, & Smith, (2005); Russell & Lehman, (2008) noted that female students tend to have higher GPAs than male students.

3.2. Age

According to Abubakar and Adegboyega (2012), found that age correlated with GPA of Mathematics students. Also, Yousefi, et al. (2010), recorded correlation between age and academic achievement among 400 Iranian students in the age range of 15-19 years. However, Jost (2008), found no relationship between age and academic performance in distance learning courses. In other words, older students performed better in distance learning course because overall they tend to perform better in higher education than younger students.

4. Academic performance

Carr (2008), found that internet usage among students can cause poor academic performance because it will decrease their ability to concentrate on things such as a research article or information, as they spend more time with things related to entertainment. Hamilton (2009), found that college students who log on daily to Facebook have a significant lower grade point averages (GPAs) than those who do not use it.

5. Facebook and academic performance

Youth have been identified to be among the most creative users of social network sites and are vulnerable to its consequences. Researchers in recent time in this field have found that youth spend a substantive segment of their daily life connecting or relating via social media. Following these scenarios, there have been contentions and questions put up about the consequences of the social networking sites on youth development (Ahn, 2011) and on

college student academic performance (Bartlett & Wasley, 2008). According to Khan (2009), Facebook users often time experience poor performance academically. Similarly, Englander, Terregrossa and Wang (2010), posit that social media is negative associated with academic performance of a student and is a lot more momentous than its advantages.

This research provides justification that Facebook is an activity that consumes time which no doubt has some significant effects on the life of college students (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). The interest of the student for his/her field of study remains unchanged in spite of his/her presence on Facebook. Self-devotion to the process of learning in college entails a willingness to fulfil the necessary daily learning activities like regular attendance to classes and timely preparation of school assignments. It involves commencement and engagement in studies, associates with inner pleasure drawn from group member of learners, and stimulates studying to fulfil the classes' needs (Chapman, 2003).

6. Theories

According to Miller, Butts and Rode (2002), said theories provide an abstract understanding of the communication process which moves beyond the description of a single event by providing a means to understand how all the events are related. At its most basic level, theories provide a tool from which people make sense of the world around them. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2008), theories help summarise the nature of a particular process, focus attention on particular concepts, clarify observations, predict behaviour, and generate personal and social change.

6.1. *Uses and gratification theory*

Uses and gratifications theory is one of the most widely applied media theories. According to LaRose and Eastin (2004), Uses and Gratifications theory holds that people actively seek out specific media and specific content to generate specific gratifications. Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007), found that Facebook use was motivated primarily by social gratifications, which include maintaining existing social ties and being able to reconnect with friends from the past. Similarly with, Lampe, Ellison & Steinfield (2006), found that Facebook was used primarily to help university students keep in touch with high school friends, who are often geographically distant, and to learn more about new people they have met offline. Corroborating these studies, one of the few investigations that systematically employed the U&G theory found that Facebook was used to build and maintain university students' social networks, as well as to learn about social events (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

6.2. *Cognitive load theory*

Cognitive load theory defines that multitasking simultaneously can influence the effectiveness of the brain to completely achieve the completion of every task with success. Multitasking is capable of affecting the abilities of students to learn well, as a result, of distraction from their school work and be subjecting their brains to excess load (Wood et al., 2012). As social networking site contributes to the lives of students in today's generation, the trend of multitasking has become an issue that continues to grow (Junco & Cotten, 2012). Because students use Facebook while studying, they lose concentration when doing their homework that can negatively affect the performance on their studies.

7. Research hypotheses

Based on the relationship between the variables described in the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H₁: Gender is significantly related to academic performance.

H₂: Age is significantly related to academic performance.

H₃: Facebook intensity are related to academic performance.

8. Proposed framework

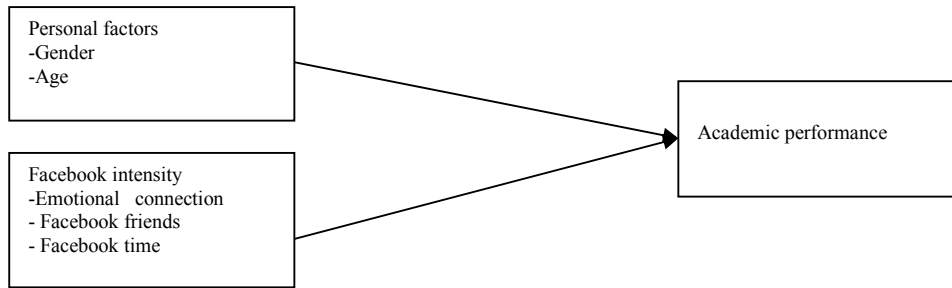


Fig.2. Proposed framework

In the above framework, two variables will be tested to see their relationship with academic performance. The first variable is personal factors which include gender and age. This part of the framework will show if the gender and age of the students can affect their academic performance. The second variable is Facebook intensity. Within this variable, there are three factors that can affect the students' academic performance which are emotional connection, Facebook friends, and Facebook Time.

9. Conclusion

With rapid technological advancement and increasing popularity of social media, youths today face a seemingly never-ending choice of how to spend their time and attention. While social media such as Facebook can be an effective tool in forming and maintaining social relations, it may also take time away from their studies. The proposed framework will provide an insight of the effect of not only gender and age, but also Facebook intensity on students' academic performance.

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