SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA AS A TOOL IN LEARNING COMPUTER SUBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

We live in a dynamic world surrounded by almost endless amounts of information. Riding the coattails of information is all of the technology we have at our fingertips. For as prevalent as technology is now, is it replacing real lasting education? Does technology have a place in our classrooms? This study aimed to assess if Social Networking Sites can be blended as a Tool in learning computer subjects for the BS Information Technology students at Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City. The descriptive survey method was used which involved a questionnaire, interviews, and observations. Two hundred seventy-six (276) students currently enrolled during the first semester of the school year 2017-2018 served as respondents. Results showed that the top 5 social networking sites that are preferred by respondents as a tool in learning computer subjects are Facebook and YouTube (100.00%; n=276), this was followed by Wiki (91.60%; n=253); LinkedIn (87.68%; n=242), Twitter (83.33%; n=230) and Blogs (44.92%; n=124). Further, this reveals that these are the most common social networking media deemed to have a cutting-edge learning technology which brought students with high educational implications because of its features that is scalable and accessible even the use of smartphones.

Keywords: Social Networking, Media, Teaching and Learning, Computer Subjects, Social Science Research, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Social networking such as Facebook, Ning, and MySpace, which are the typical application of Web 2.0 technology, has been popular and widespread across multiple age groups. They not only allow users to meet strangers but also enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. Social networking sites allow people to create personal social networks and the groups who have common interests. A wide variety of tools are provided in SNSs for attracting people to interact with their friends, such as message push, discussion tool, blogs, media sharing, third-party plug-ins, and so on.

Most users of the SNSs are youngsters who were named 'Digital Natives' (Prensky, 2001), especially the majority are the students in higher education. He defined today's students as "they spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, video games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age." When Web 2.0 social media technologies emerged in the market, students quickly bond themselves to those tools such as YouTube, iTunes, Facebook, blogging and twittering, to mention a few. These applications were not developed for learning purposes. Most people use them for recreational purposes such as "gaming, communication, and shaping online spaces for expression of personal identity" (Crook, et al. 2008). Yet, social media tools are wonderful communication tools.

Students often used SNSs to stay in touch with their offline friends or bolster existing connections rather than to make new relationships. That revealed an essential message that the SNS could be a potential medium to gain more popularity of online learning than traditional e-Learning platform if the elaborately designed activities can be carefully integrated into the features of SNSs.

According to some academic literature, researchers showed that most web-based learning systems were made for just one-shot use and cannot continuously attract people to use them. The SNSs may have the potential to improve this predicament. Therefore it is on this premise that the use of social networking media as a tool in the teaching and learning aims to close the cognitive gap of classroom lessons between students and teachers before class, and links up learning experiences from inside to outside of the classroom.

With the aim of taking full advantage of these modern technologies, the Information Technology and Computer Education Unit of Leyte Normal University try its best to accommodate the needs of people, especially the younger generation. As educators, knowing what our students are using and how they are using the social media tools is necessary for schools and faculty to integrate those tools in teaching and learning activities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to assess if Social Networking Sites can be integrated as a Tool in teaching and learning Computer Subjects for the BSIT students at Leyte Normal University.

Specifically, this study would answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
   1.1 age;
   1.2 gender;
   1.3 year level;

2. What are the Top 5 Social Networking Sites that students prefer to use as a tool for learning?
3. What are the benefits that can be derived from integrating this Social Networking Sites in instruction as perceived by the students?
4. What recommendations can be derived based on the findings of the study?

METHODS

Research Design

The research method used by the researcher in this study was the descriptive method, which involved a questionnaire to determine the type of social networking media and its feature that will be blended into teaching and learning computer subject.

Research Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the University President of the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City. This was done for the determination of samples directly involved in the study and for the distribution of the questionnaires.

Respondents of the Study

This study was confined to all BS Information Technology students currently enrolled at Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City during the first semester of the school year 2017-2018. However, out of 323 expected respondents, there were only 276 who participated the actual survey which is almost 85.44 percent of the entire population.

Data Gathering Instruments

The researcher used surveyed questionnaires as primary data gathering tool for this study. The instrument consists of two parts; the first part is composed of the demographic profile of the respondents, the second part focused on the type of social networking media and its feature that will be blended into teaching and learning computer subject. Data collections were done through personal distribution and were given enough time to think about the questions as stated on the questionnaire, thus producing more accurate information period.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Responses from the questionnaires were directly encoded in an excel format. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software – descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages).

Percentages. This was used for the profile of respondents.

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \text{x } 100$$

where: P = is the percentage
      f = is the frequency
      n = total responses

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study. It deals with the profile of the BS Information Technology students and the level of satisfaction as perceived by the students.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Age	N	%
17-18	81	29.34
19-20	126	45.65
21-22	44	15.95
23-24	25	9.06
Total	276	100.00
Gender		
Female	144	52.17
Male	132	47.83
Total	276	100.00
Year Level		
First	47	17.02
Second	50	18.11
Third	104	37.69
Fourth	75	27.18
Total	144	100.00

The data shown in Table 1 contains the profile of BSIT students which consist of age, gender and year level.

Age. The most number of respondents as shown in the table were 19-20 years old (45.65%; n=126), came next is 17 -18 years old (29.34%, n=81), this was followed with 21-22 years old (15.95%, n=44), while 23-24 years old represent the smallest portion of the sample (9.06%, n=6).

Gender. The data disclosed that female respondents dominate having (52.17%; n=144) and male which has (47.83%; n=132) from 276 respondents.

Year Graduated. The data showed that most respondents were on the third year level having (37.69%; n=104), fourth year level (27.18%; n=75), second-year level (18.11%; n=50) and the smallest is in the first year level (17.02%; n=47).

Table 2: Top 5 Social Networking Sites as Preferred by Respondents as a Tool for Learning

Social Networking Media	N=276	%
Facebook	276	100.00
Wiki	253	91.60
Youtube	276	100.00
LinkedIn	242	87.68
Bulletin Board	110	39.85
Blogs	124	44.92
Twitter	230	83.33
Podcast	17	6.15
Virtual Worlds	4	1.44
RSS	19	6.88
Stumble Upon	2	0.72
Netlog	28	10.14
Plunk	19	6.88
Jaiku	27	9.78

Table 2 above showed that the top 5 social networking sites that are preferred by respondents as a tool for learning are Facebook and YouTube (100.00%; n=276), this was followed by Wiki (91.60%; n=253); LinkedIn (87.68%; n=242), Twitter (83.33%; n=230) and Blogs (44.92%; n=124). This only shows that these are the most common social networking media deemed to have a cutting-edge learning technology which brought students with high educational implications because of its features that is scalable and accessible even the use of smartphones. Further, students have a favorable attitude, trust, and confidence in the use of these media because of its popularity level in public interaction.

Table 3: Benefits of Integrating Social Networking Site as a Tool for Instruction as Perceived by Respondents

Benefits	n =276	%
Use as Learning Management System	266	96.37
Reference Citations	150	54.34
Announcements	247	89.49
Post Class Notes	235	85.14
Create Group Discussions	264	95.65
Feedback Result Efficiency	250	90.57
Relationship Building	273	98.91
Social Engagement	276	100.00
Web Engagement	224	81.15
Convenience	276	100.00

The data presented in Table 3 disclosed that respondents consider the integration of social networking media as a tool for learning with the following benefits such as Social Engagement (100.00%; n= 276) and Convenience (100.00%; n=276). This was followed by Relationship Building (98.91%; n=273) while the least is Reference Citations (54.34%; n=150). This benefits mainly from "*Social Engagement*" creates a social element to educational technology that would allow healthy competition among students in the classroom. Students who use technology are motivated to improve performance. Just like they do at home on their gaming consoles. Trying to beat high scores at home and trying to beat high scores in math use the same psychology. Hence, *"Convenience"* as benefits mean using technology the classroom can be taken anywhere. With all the knowledge and resources contained and deliverable on demand on a mobile device, students can learn at home or in the "field". Mobile technology allows for greater collaboration between students promoting strong foundations in group work. For "*Relationship Building*" as benefit mean that today's students are accessing Facebook, Twitter and even Instagram to connect and share with those around them and one of the most interesting things about social media is that users can interact and engage with each other solely through a Web presence, perhaps never even meeting in person. While "*Reference Citations*" mean that students using these media such as Facebook, it has hundreds of applications (apps) that can be used for educational purposes. Worldcat.org's, CiteMe is an app that provides formatted citations for books. Currently, CiteMe provides APA, Chicago, Harvard, MLA, and Turbian formats. Further, whatever these social networking media brought to our educational system, educators may consider that the world is moving towards technology at a breakneck pace. Educators have a

responsibility to introduce, encourage, and help student's master technology, as well as subjects, as it applies to school and the future.

CONCLUSIONS

With the fast advancement of technology, there will be more cutting-edge technologies appearing in the market on a daily basis. As educators, should we ignore them or chase after them? Based on the findings of the study, using social media as tools in learning sometimes can be very challenging to educators. Students can be a very good consulting source because they are the experts and they have a better understanding of the tools. The future technology integration in education should focus on what students use instead of what the school wants them to use to guarantee maximum efficiency. When students become the stakeholders of their own learning, education will be truly revolutionized through the effective collaboration between educators and students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In relation to the foregoing findings and conclusion drawn, the researcher formulated the following recommendations:

1. Information Technology Educational leaders of the university may start to try blending this Social Networking Media identified as a tool in teaching and learning so as to accommodate the demand of times and the students.
2. Constantly monitor and evaluate the outcome based on the result of integration to determine if it is really doable and effective tool in order to fully give students its best in providing quality education.
3. Revolutionize teaching pedagogy by adopting new tools in the educational environment.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Rommel Lagutan Verecio has completed BS Computer Science, MS Information Technology and Doctor of Management in Human Resource Management. Presently, he is connected at Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City as the Chair of the Information Technology & Computer Education Unit. E-mail: rlverecio@lnu.edu.ph.

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