Awareness and Utilization of Social Networking among Teacher Trainees

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Abstract:
Digital literacy is important for every digital native throughout the world since technology is changing day by day. Digital literacy is the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share and create content using information technologies and internet. Activities like creating multimedia presentations, posting information about the individual and others online are the activities in day today life for teacher education students. These require varying degrees of digital literacy. Social networking sites (SNSs) have been defined as web based services that enable individuals to construct a semi-profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share connections and views (Boyd D and Ellison N, 2007). 300 teacher trainees of both genders were taken as a sample for this survey. Questionnaire was used as a tool for collecting data which consist of 5 dimensions (i.e) General information, Communication, Education, Personality development and Difficulties in using social networking. Results revealed that teacher trainees of both genders with science background out performed the arts background teacher trainees in the awareness and utilization of social network in all the above said dimensions.

Keywords: Digital literacy, multimedia, teacher trainees, Social networking

1. Introduction

Social networking is an excellent online tool used all over the world by millions of people for communication. Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are the major social networks. Twitter deals with more than 400 million tweets a day, LinkedIn users come to a total of 238 million and Facebook has 1.15 billion users. Social media websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are currently used by many people to connect with their friends and relatives around the globe (Dale & Lewis, 2013). These sites establish, maintain and cultivate a range of social relationships, from close friendships to casual acquaintances. The increased use of social networking sites has become an international phenomenon in the past several years. Teenagers and young adults have especially embraced these sites as a way to connect with their peers, share information, reinvent their personalities, and showcase their social lives (Boyd, 2007). Also, Oskouei (2010) said that internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination. In less than five years, these sites have grown from a niche online activity into a phenomenon through which tens of millions of internet users are connected, both in their leisure time and at work. The increasing dependence on technology for basic communication also highlights the importance of analyzing how SNS are affecting daily processes. A change in teachers permeates to all aspect of growth and advances needed in teaching-learning processes and scientific developments. Teachers' knowledge of technology for teaching and learning, problem solving skills, capacity building and other germane issues relating to education cannot be undervalued. For teachers to be able to cope with these functions of electronic technologies, there is the need for the right attitude to be cultivated towards technology as a tool for teaching and learning. Now let us go through different literatures related to social networking.

2. Review of Literature

SNSs allow students to express themselves, communicate and collect profiles that highlight their talents and experiences (Adam Mahamat Helou and Zairah Ab.Rahim). Facebook is particularly popular among college students, with some estimates that as high as 99% have a profile (Junco, 2012). Users of the SNSs are youngsters who were named Digital Natives (Prensky,M). Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as Facebook are one of the latest examples of communications technologies that have been widely-adopted by students and consequently, have the potential to become a valuable resource to support their educational communications and collaborations with faculty. However, faculty members have a track record of prohibiting classroom uses of technologies that are frequently used by students (Roblyer, M.D., McDaniel, M., Webb, M., Herman, J. & Witty, J.V, 2010). Internet is advantageous to

both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination. Several studies have been done regarding social networking and grades. Social networking sites have brought both good and bad to the present generation. Social networking site has helped many students to acquire knowledge from one another over internet without necessarily have to meet physically (Oskouei 2010). On the other hand, social networking sites have caused many problems. (Boyd, 2007). There is statistically significant negative relationship between time spent by students on online social networks and their academic performance. The time spent on online social networks was found to be heavily influenced by the attention span of the students. (Paul, J.A., Baker, H. M. & Cochran, J.D. 2012). Often students use social networking websites to discuss their academics issues formally and informally and also to interact with their instructor, teachers and professors. (Madge et al 2009). The students are then unable concentrate on their class work as some of them become unwell and weak. As a result, the students' academic performance goes down (Luppicini & Haghi, 2013).

2.1. Objectives of the Study
- To find the level of awareness and utilization of social media among the teacher trainees
- To find the difference if any, in the awareness and utilization of social media among the teacher trainees based on gender and subject.

2.2. Research Questions
Following are the research questions framed for this study:
- What level of awareness of social networking sites are utilized among the trainee teachers?
- Is there any difference between the male and female student teachers in using the social network?
- Is there any difference between the arts and science student teachers in using the social network?

2.3. Design of the Study
Survey method was adopted in this study. Teacher trainees from three different education colleges frame as a sample. Questionnaire was developed by the investigator to collect the data which was validated by the experts in the field of education and computer science. It includes 34 items with five dimensions like General information, Communication, Education, Personality development and Difficulties in using social networking. Each item reflects 'yes' or 'no' response. 300 teacher trainees of both genders were taken as sample for this survey. Percentage analysis was used as statistical method.

3. Results and Discussion

S. No	Dimensions	Female (Arts)		Male (Arts)		Female (Science)		Male (Science)	
		Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
1.	General information	10.62	14.17	14.27	13.21	12.38	10.21	14.40	10.74
2.	Communication	10.96	15.07	10.38	13.55	15.26	9.78	14.75	10.24
3.	Education	10.80	15.09	10.43	13.63	15.56	10.52	14.24	9.73
4.	Personality Development	11.41	14.29	10.38	13.93	14.44	10.18	16.02	9.35
5.	Difficulties in using social networking	10.58	15.20	9.85	14.25	14.36	11.19	14.07	10.50

Table 1: Responses of the Male and Female teacher trainees

Above table indicates the utilization of social networks for varied purposes by the teacher trainees. Regarding the general information on social network male trainees with science background were better than the female trainees. There is no much difference between the male trainees with arts and science background. As far as communication is concerned female science background trainees outperformed the male, female arts trainees and male science trainees. Male science trainees were better in their personality development compared to all other trainees. Regarding the difficulties in using the social network there is no much difference between the male and female trainees of arts and science background.

3.1. Recommendations
Following are the recommendations evolved based on the findings:
- Students should be instructed to use the social media in the effective way
- Giving personal information of female students in the social media should be avoided
- Students must be trained to utilize the social media more for the educational purposes
- Government should regulate the internet connections for better usage of the same by students

3.2. Conclusion
Social networking sites have brought evolution into the field of communication. It is used both in education and entertainment throughout the world. It has reached the student communities in the outstanding exploration. Every student should be trained to use the social networking effectively for their positive development since it is the double edged sword.

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