

Exploring Social Networking in Education: Benefits and Drawbacks

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Abstract

In the twenty-first century, humankind has advanced in all aspect of existence. Everything comes from technology, which has given individuals access to a wide range of convenient living options. Social networking sites have evolved to refer to people who use the Internet and web applications for communication in the context of today's electronic media. This is mostly the outcome of a paradigm change in culture regarding the potential and applications of the internet. Social media has evolved over time to become a reliable and credible information source as well as a platform for businesses to engage with customers. It is no longer just about people interacting with one another and sharing photos. (Dlamini, 2019: Social Media's Place in Education) Starting out. Introducing social media into the classroom facilitates learning by giving students access to more relevant material and enabling them to interact with other students and educational systems.

Keywords: Social Networking , Communication, Education

Introduction:

The globe has quickly changed in the last several years to become a global digital community. According to this perspective, a significant role for online social networks has evolved in this change. Social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and blogs are being used by more people than ever before for networking, knowledge sharing, content creation, and communication. According to this perspective, the development of online social networks has assisted the community in enacting social reforms in recent times. People are becoming more and more openly and freely involved in the conversation about the nation's growth, particularly in the area of education. Social networking sites are quickly rising to prominence as tools for public and interpersonal communication. Social networking sites are contemporary, interactive communication platforms that let users connect with one another and exchange thoughts, stories, images, messages, and interesting information. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking sites as:

“Web based services that allow individuals to construct a Public or semipublic profile within a bounded system (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.(pp.78-100.)

Social networks are online platforms, services, or websites that concentrate on fostering and displaying interpersonal connections between individuals who, for instance, have similar hobbies or pastimes. Social networking services let users contact with a specific set of friends through their accounts (Awake, 2011). A user's representation (often a profile), their social connections, and a range of extra services make up social networks (wikipedia, 2011). The majority of social networks are web-based and offer ways for users to communicate online, including instant messaging and email. Social networks also enable users to participate in events and activities within their own networks.

Need of social networking in Education:

Networking represents proactive attempts by individuals to develop and maintain personal and professional relationships with others for the purpose of mutual benefit in their work or career (Forret & Dougherty, 2001).

Teachers, on the other hand, have started modifying themselves in this pattern by embracing social networking sites as a method for contact with their students because a lot of students use them. In order to facilitate academic discussions, teachers and lecturers create chat rooms, online groups, and forums. They also publish assignments, tests, and quizzes in addition to helping students with their homework. Students can collaborate on their projects, productions, and ideas through social networking, which fosters transparency amongst them and socialization on the other side. Notes, books, assignments, and other relevant materials are exchanged. Any friend or participant has the ability to see, edit, or create content on another person's profile or personal page. The collaborative web supports social networked learning, in which students use personal tools for self-directed and problem-based learning. It is rich in applications that can promote knowledge sharing, interaction, collaboration, and communication (Munguatosha et al., 2011). An increasing number of individuals are passionate about creating and sharing their own content, which they do through blogging, digital file distribution in the form of audio and video, and even pod-casting. With the speed at which technology is changing the workplace today, online networking is crucial for professional advancement as well. Currently, the primary medium for taking part in networking activities is social media. These are a some of the well-known social networking that have effective educational benefits:

- **EDMODO:** Primarily utilized for educational factors, Edmodo is the biggest social media platform.
- **ENGLISH BABY:** The primary goal of the English Baby website is to teach conversational English.
- **LIVEMOCHA:** Livemocha is a social media platform that instructs people in a number of languages. This website allows its users to carry out tasks including uploading and editing content.
- **ACADMIA.EDU:** Specifically designed for scientists and their college students, Acadmia.edu is a science-related website. In addition, the website provides users who upload research papers with an overview of how many individuals have accessed the papers and their reviews.
- **EPERNICUS:** Designed primarily for academics and researchers, Epernicus is an additional social networking platform with an emphasis on social networking features.
- **COURSE CRACKER** is an online community that facilitates communication between educators, parents, and students, thereby improving the quality of education. On this website, users can share their assignments, tests, course materials, and other educational resources while also gaining access to the content that has been submitted.
- **STUDENTS CIRCLE NETWORK** One of the newest additions to the club of social networking sites is the Students Circle Network, which offers various course materials including science, business, engineering, computing, and the humanities.
- **9TH PERIOD:** Online tools and web apps are the primary focus of this website. It therefore makes education easier.
- **THE SYNOPSIS:** Students, instructors, and researchers studying biology worldwide are the primary focus of this website.
- **THE MOLECULAR FORCES:** Teachers can share their study guides and methods of instruction on this website. The website serves as a fantastic forum for exchanging and posing queries regarding novel concepts.

The following are the most popular social networking websites that promote education:

- **WIKIPEDIA** It is a well-known social media platform with millions of users accessing its vast collection of educational articles every hour. Many people are sharing their thoughts and opinions in forum-based settings in the discussion board. In addition, they examine, edit, cite sources, provide comments, raise issues, and share the knowledge they have learned from the article.
- **FACEBOOK:** With about a billion members worldwide, Facebook is a well-known social media platform. This website is thought to be the greatest one for spreading knowledge. Virtually all students in the current generation have a Facebook account. Facebook groups are created specifically for schools and classes, so instructors and students may exchange information, ask questions and receive responses, remind one another of forthcoming activities, and more on this website.
- **LINKEDIN:** Designed primarily for business networking and connections, LinkedIn is one of the biggest websites. Almost a million businesses and professionals utilize this website worldwide. LinkedIn not only teaches its members, but it also offers companies and job seekers favorable advantages. Similar to Facebook, there are an enormous number of educator-focused groups on LinkedIn.

Pros and Cons of Social Networking In Education:

Students and institutions have many opportunities to enhance their teaching techniques through the use of social media and network tools. In addition to online lessons and materials, students can gain access to millions of educational videos through this connection. (Dlamini, 2019: Social Media's Place in Education)

Pros of Social Networking In Education:

Interaction and Cooperation

Social media facilitates improved interpersonal interactions. Any student can use their cellphones, tablets, laptops, or any other technology that would enable them to communicate with others to connect with any of his friends, classmates, or teacher via Kids Messenger, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Twitter, and more. All students will find it easier to communicate at any time rather than waiting for a certain day to meet in person. Social media is useful since it allows students and teachers to share documents, PDFs, homework assignments, and even tests. It is not just for chat discussion. (Willbold, 2019)

Finding Concrete Information Online

Information is no longer limited to libraries and books; students can also find information online on a variety of websites and social media platforms. Students can use the news stream option on social media to look for answers to any queries they may have, based on the subjects they are currently studying. Students can access pertinent tabs that provide further information and solutions when they visit a particular page. Kids might be inspired to create school projects by browsing through websites like Pinterest and Tumblr, where they can find tutorial videos and images. (Willbold, 2019)

Because YouTube offers a vast array of instructional films, it is the ideal place for students to find videos that will help them comprehend and become ready for college or university.

For students, social media is the new Google—it's like having a new library. It will include each institution's most recent data along with its curriculum and resources.

Parental Participation

As is common knowledge, schools host weekly or monthly parent-teacher conferences to enable parents to stay in touch with them and the teachers and receive updates on their children's academic progress. It's also crucial to update them on any changes to the curriculum and the initiatives and activities undertaken by the schools during these sessions. Social media is therefore simpler for parents and the school. Parents can visit the school's website at any time to view the news and stay up to speed on projects, events, and activities relating to the school. They can also follow the school on Facebook and Twitter. Parents can communicate with the school through Skype meetings. Because of the regular communication and the mix of the official and informal relationship, these communications between the parents and the schools have a favorable effect on both. By using social media in this way, parents may stay informed about their children's academic progress and achievements. (Willbold, 2019)

Enhanced Reading, Communication, and Literacy Skills

Students find reading and writing in class to be somewhat dull because there aren't many tasks that the teacher may or may not provide. Social media is therefore more enjoyable to read about and write on. Students are more inclined to read and analyze material that they are interested in, especially if it includes visually appealing animations. They explore social media to identify themes that interest them. Students are motivated to read and learn more when they are exposed to colors and animations. This is also inferred from online chats, remarks, books, news, and articles that offer a never-ending supply of material to read, requiring readers to put in extra time and effort to understand.

Opportunities for Distance Education

Students regularly attend lessons in order to further their education, but some students are unable to do so because of various issues. Thus, students will have more options to learn by simply sitting in front of their computers at home by utilizing the distance learning opportunities, as the term implies. (Willbold, 2019)

Cons of Social Networking In Education:

There are several disadvantages in using social media for education such as the following;

It might be a disruption

One of the main sources of distraction in the classroom may be the use of social media. Students may become side tracked from their main purpose for utilising social media when using it for study purposes if they are drawn to content other than what they are studying. This will have an impact on how they learn.

Online harassment

Social media is a fantastic tool for connecting and communicating, but it can also be used as a weapon by kids to mistreat or bully their classmates or even teachers. Both teachers and pupils will become less confident and less motivated to learn as a result.

Publishing inappropriate material on social media

While some schools integrate social media into their curriculum, others do not. This is because social media contains potentially dangerous content on a variety of subjects for users of various ages. These posts have the potential to mistreat students in one way or another and contain adultery, which is harmful for younger pupils. Schools have little control over how their children use social media or over the material on those platforms. This is especially true of websites that may appear educational on their titles but have inappropriate content.

Absence of direct communication

Although spending time streaming online with their lecturers is thought to provide a safe space for them to express themselves, it is insufficient for them to develop as individuals. When employing this method of teaching and learning, important practical skills are absent. These kids must become more involved in their social and personal lives, which can be achieved by having actual meetings and interactions with their teachers. Further repercussions include the loss of social skills as pupils will choose to communicate with others solely through social media. Students will begin to shy away from in-person interactions.

Students' Writing Abilities Could Regress

These days, autocorrect is present in all technological recommendations in addition to a plethora of writing and essay correction software, such as Grammarly. Therefore, students won't be conscious of their grammar and sentence structure errors when creating any kind of writing.

The Impact of Social Networking on the Modern Educational System :

Everything about the way we think, communicate, and interact with others has altered since social media and social networks entered our lives. The educational system was transformed by social media. (Wade, 2018).

Strengthening Impacts

Social media has the capability to empower everyone involved in the teaching and learning process, including parents, students, and teachers. 96% of students with internet access, according to statistics, use at least one social network. (Wade, 2018).

Utilising these social networks is interesting because it reveals that some students are using them to share beneficial activities and positive messages. These include a number of helpful suggestions for all students, like outlining the process for obtaining a student loan or how to work with others on global initiatives. (Wade 2018) Students utilise social media to enhance their entire learning process. (Zilles, 2019).

Teachers are reconsidering their teaching methods by utilising social media

Due of social media's many effects on education, traditional classroom lectures and sessions are gradually coming to an end. A good example would be Facebook, which allows teachers to broadcast live, facilitating contact between them and their students.

Enhanced Community via Social Media

Social media has advantages for relationships between teachers and students as well. School administrators and principals can also gain from this kind of platform by using it to upload school-related content and notify the public, particularly parents, of any updates in the school. Additionally, they can schedule sessions with parents virtually. (Wade, 2018)

In order to stay in touch with parents, some teachers also start private groups on various platform networks. When feasible, they wait for "the face-to-face" meetings. (Zilles 2019).

Conclusion:

The swift advancement of network information technology has led to the emergence of network social platforms as a crucial means of communication for students. Constructivist learning settings revolve around student interaction, and social networking sites offer a platform for creating cooperative learning communities. They encourage shared experiences and are relationship-centered by nature. Social networks connect people together and break down boundaries based on geography, class, and ethnicity. They foster interactions that would never happen in the actual world. This fosters learning possibilities that go beyond the classroom and our local communities by offering a rich fabric of content based on a diversity of experiences. It is now the responsibility of the experts to take full use of this opportunity and transform it into the dynamic global learning resource that it has the potential to be, in order to encourage students to use network social platforms appropriately.

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