

The Influence of Social Networks on High School Students' Performance

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ABSTRACT

Social networks are becoming an integral part of people's lives. Students are spending much time on social media and are considered the largest category that uses such application. This study tries to explore the influence of social media use, and especially Facebook, on high school students' performance. The study used the GPA of students in four courses and their responses regarding the use of social media. Statistical analysis is used to infer this relationship and its implications. Results indicated a support of this study aim and the relationship between the different dimensions of Facebook influence on students with respect to the time spent on the Internet and Facebook specifically. Conclusions and future work are stated at the end.

Keywords: Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Networks, Facebook, High School, Jordan, Performance, Social Networks, Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media (SM) is the fastest growing web application in the 21st century. The diverse applications of SM like Wikis, video streaming and applications, and social networks make it the phenomenon of the century. Facebook counted users topped all social media applications with over 955 million users in 2013, followed by Twitter with 500 million users (www.thecountriesof.com). Such huge user base is

comparable to countries, which indicates the importance of such applications.

The age distribution of Facebook users is concentrated on the younger categories where 300 million users are 18-24 years old, and 120 million users are between 13-17 years old (www.quintly.com). The same source indicated a nearly equal distribution of users between males and females. In Jordan, users of Facebook accounted for 2.5 million users at the end of 2012, with similar Internet users'

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size (www.internetworldstats.com). The last statistics indicate that Jordanians use Facebook through their mobiles, and the Internet. Such high penetration (38%) is indicative of the importance of Facebook and the social media domain for young people.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is an important factor that opened doors for remote learning and remote access of educational material. Such phenomenon is called “e-learning”, where ICT is used as a facilitator of communication, assignment management, and task collaboration. A study in Jordan concluded that e-learning systems are not fully utilized in Jordan and many applications are not used by students and instructors (Abu-Shanab, Ababneh & Momani, 2012; Abu-Shanab, Momani & Ababneh, 2012). Such results indicate that it is important to reach students wherever they are, and especially on social media applications.

This study will explore the influence of Facebook on students’ performance and how they spend their time. As seen previously, young Jordanians are the major category that uses social networks, where they spend substantial time on the net. Such issue is influencing their academic performance. Research connected school/university performance with Facebook use. This study will try to empirically explore such relationship regardless of its type of influence, bad or good.

The following section will explore the influence of social networks. The following section will cover a description of the research method used in this research. Data analyses and discussion of results will follow in the fourth section. Finally, research conclusions and future work will be depicted at the end.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A study by Abu-Shanab and Al-Tarawneh (2013) explored the advantages and disadvantages of Facebook utilizing university students. A sample of 206 students responded to a survey containing 10 advantages and 10 disadvantages of Facebook, and yielded interesting results. The study did not focus on students’ academic performance, but took the issue as a general view of social media influence. Social networks are becoming major tools for education, and entertainment. The human nature is keen on interacting with people and finding common areas and interests.

In education, two streams are prevailing: the use of social networks as a tool supporting activities deemed important for the purpose of educational institutions, instructors, and students. The second stream is the bad influence social network inflicts on students behaviors and time management. This study will explore the relationship between performance and SN use. The following sections will review the literature related to the two streams and the performance issue related to students.

2.1. The Advantages of SN

Research emphasized the importance of social networks in influencing young people. A study by Abu-Shanab and Frehat (2015) utilized 302 responses of young people in Jordan and investigated the influence of social networks on social reform through a conceptual model with five predictors of intention to use social networks and they are: satisfaction, isolation, trust, social participation and intensity of SN use. Results indicated a significant prediction of intensity and isolation only.

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