

Chapter 38

Online Social Networking Behavior and Its Influence Towards Students' Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

Online social networking (OSN) is an online application that has grown rapidly in prevalence and popularity in recent years. This chapter synthesizes the literature review concerning use of OSN in school, college, and university, and academic performance of students. It offers definitions of OSN, followed by the status of current knowledge about the use of OSN and academic performance of students. Based on the secondary sources, it concludes the entry with recommendations for future research direction on the relationship between use of OSN and academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Online social networking (OSN) is an online application that has grown rapidly in prevalence and popularity in recent years. Millions of Malaysian youngsters, teenagers, students (either at school, college or university's level) use OSN websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Friendster and LinkedIn every day. Besides, Malaysian higher education also has adopted OSN on a wider scale and young Malaysians are very active users of OSN (Zakaria, Watson, & Edwards, 2010). In other words, the use of online social network has become necessary among younger generation.

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The emergence of online social network has become a major trend over the years with growing popularity amongst the younger generation (Onuoha & Saheed, 2011). When online social networking becomes more popular, literature, however, suggests that there is an ongoing debate on the role of online social networks in the academic performance of users.

This article synthesizes the literature review concerning use of OSN in school, college and university, and academic performance of students. It offers definitions of OSN, followed by the status of current knowledge about the use of OSN and academic performance of students. Based on the secondary sources, it concludes the entry with recommendations for future research direction on the relationship between use of OSN and academic performance.

BACKGROUND

Online social networking sites (OSNs) are websites that give users a range of services based on web technologies that allow individuals to build a public or semi public profile with relationships system, have a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and finally, view and navigate through the list of users' connections with those who share a connection in the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

OSNs are also defined as a range of activities enabled by social technologies or social media tools include blog, microblog, wiki, social networking site, video sharing site and online discussion board or forum, and operationalized by a group of people (Hamid et al., 2009). It enables users to socialize and create networks online. Examples of OSNs that are used on a regular basis by millions of people nowadays are Facebook, Twitters, MySpace, Friendster, Youtube and Skype. Ahmed and Qazi (2011) meanwhile cited that, the most successful and largest social networking site is Facebook with more than 500 million members had been found as active users of Facebook in July 2010. In Malaysia, social interaction in cyberspace by using social networking has been adapted by many people and has changed their communication (Mustafa & Hamzah, 2011).

We define online social networking as the latest online communication tool that allows users to create a public or private profile to interact with people in their networks, share their profile information, communicate with others, and share data and information within that system.

The social technologies can support interaction among students by allowing them to actively participate in a discussion. The students can work collaboratively in an online social environment to solve problems with their peers, or to organize social events. The collaborative production's principle embedded in social technologies enable learners and teachers to share and publish artifacts produced as a result of the learning activity (for example, course materials such as course syllabus, course notes and assignments). In this regard, the use of social technologies has changed the demand of education.

Online social networking can be classified into five categories (Fraser & Dutta, 2008), namely, (i) egocentric networks - act as a platform to build a network of friends; (ii) web communities - collecting members with identity ties based on interest, gender, race, nation, religion and others; (iii) opportunistic web - the members gathered for business purpose or professional relationship using OSN site such as LinkedIn; (iv) passion-centric network - gathered people who share interests or hobbies (communities of interest); and (v) media-sharing site - this site is defined based on its contents (such as Youtube for those who want to share videos).

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