Chapter 9
The Influence of Social Media on Learning

Yasemin Gülbahar

 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1726-3224

Ankara University, Turkey

Gülgün Afacan Adanır

 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0832-1808

Ankara University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

During '90s, a debate initiated between Clark and Kozma about the role of media on learning. While Clark proposed that the media had no effect on learning, Kozma proposed that learning is influenced when method and media is combined and appropriately used. In today's world, the role of social media on learning is inevitable since social media is increasingly used by individuals with the purpose of searching for information and watching instructional videos. In this respect, the influence of social media on learning is investigated in this study within the context of Kozma's perspective. Correspondingly, the instructional content provided by social media, the appropriate instructional methods, and implications for learning theories are discussed in this chapter, together with certain practical applications. In the end, social coding platform, collaborative e-learning platform, and virtual classroom management simulation are described as practical social media applications.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has now reached global influence, with 3.53 billion active users out of the 4.33 billion active users of the Internet (Clement, 2019). With a focus on 21st century learning, social media has had a significant impact on education, with debates ongoing over its usage through integration into teaching and learning processes. More than two decades ago, Clark and Kozma started to debate whether or not technology or media has an effect on the learning process. Later, the focus of the debate shifted more

towards media versus method (Mellon, 1999). Hence, it is now time to reconsider or reframe this debate with particular focus on social media usage in education.

Clark's initial argument was that media has no influence on learning under any circumstance (Clark, 1983) and he restated later that "instructional methods are the underlying common element of all substitutable media and attributes of media" (Clark, 1994, p.7). According to Clark, medium is not respected as a message. Instead, "it is merely the vehicle whereby instruction is delivered and has no influence on instruction, just like the truck used to deliver goods to a store has no influence on the groceries it carries" (Becker 2010, p.1).

On the other hand, Kozma's counterargument was that the relationship between method and media has a strong effect on learning (Kozma, 1991). That is, Kozma refuted Clark's contention that it is the method that influences learning and not the media, instead focusing on synergy among media, content and learner interaction in this context. Kozma examined the literature related to the use of different media (e.g., books, television, computers) in education and came to the conclusion that "some students will learn a particular task regardless of the delivery device. Others, will be able to take advantage of a particular medium's characteristics to help construct knowledge" (Kozma, 1991, p. 205). Although Kozma considered the individual powerful effect of media on learning, supporters of Clark considered the importance of instructional methods and stated that same learning results are not achieved if learning methods are replaced with others (Shrock, 1994).

Today's youth were named as 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001), and are constantly surrounded by and allocate much of their time to using various technological instruments such as personal computers, mobile phones, the Internet, social media, and digital games. Digital natives are characterized as able to receive information fast, perform parallel processing, have a preference for graphics over text, and function best when networked with others (Prensky, 2001). Besides the purposes of entertainment and networking, individuals today frequently use the Internet and social media for academic purposes such as searching for information and watching informational videos. In this regard, it is therefore of significant importance to consider the role of social media in education. As stated by Kozma (1991), there is a strong relation between learning and media, hence learners are able to benefit from media when the appropriate instructional methods are applied. In this paper, the influence of social media on learning is investigated within the context of Kozma's perspective. Correspondingly, the role of social media, the instructional content provided by social media, the appropriate instructional methods, and implications for learning theories are discussed in this paper, together with certain practical applications.

The Role of Social Media in Education

Social media can be a source of considerable potential for educational institutions as well as for business organizations, depending of course on the content provider being not only a trusted informational source, but also a means to reach and interact with users. The purpose of usage, based on the capabilities of the media and the methods that employ them, have a direct or indirect influence on learning, with learners interacting through cognitive and social processes where knowledge is constructed (Kozma, 1994). It is therefore important to understand the potential relationship between social media and learning. Social media provides multiple opportunities to enrich learning processes by addressing individual differences, enhancing learning methods, and improving opportunities for learners to progress. The variety of today's multimedia sources, together with their interactive features meets the needs of today's diverse learners, where flexibility and accessibility are key requirements. As suggested by the strategy of 'Universal

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