

Chapter 11

Social Media Integration in Educational Administration as Information and Smart Systems: Digital Literacy for Economic, Social, and Political Engagement in Namibia

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation and access to social media platforms that allow easy access to information systems and services, content creation, and sharing, in a convenient form, has taken education administration and management by storm. Facebook is one of the many online media that can let education administrators and managers interact with each other or their subordinates by sharing information about themselves or any topical community issue via personal profiles or institutional profiles. Furthermore, it is noted that social media applications by their nature have the capabilities of educating, informing, entertaining (leisure), and socializing the audience. The research revealed that there are various groups on Facebook where youthful education administrators can use to post educational information and discuss pertinent issues concerning their institutions. Indeed, social media are being used as channels to foster economic, social, and political development education among Namibian educational administrators.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the education systems have been facing alternatives in learning and teaching activities with new and multi-use of technologies in which they transformed learning environments (Durnalı, Orakcı, & Aktan, 2019). School administration and management experts (e.g. Erçetin, Akbaşlı and Durnalı, 2018; Durnalı, 2013;2019) have been debating on the adverse effect of digitalisation and how it can enhance administrative services of schools, tertiary institutions and relevant departments from primary to tertiary educational level. This led to discussions and academic conversations among educational administration researchers around the globe. Several studies (Raja, 2018; Raut & Patil, 2016) revealed that the emergence of social media platforms brought positive changes to administration and management as school leaders, Heads of Departments, inspectors, Directors of education both in urban and rural areas can now virtually manage their functional units with easy. It came to light that some educational managers created Facebook pages for their schools or institutions of higher learning; departments, classes or probably staff members. In other cases, they have created WhatsApp groups to enhance and fasten their communications with their subordinates. This did not only economically benefit the institution as it is now spending less money on organising offline meetings, but it is accelerating the decision making processes at that institution.

Though this was supposed to be a good opportunity for e-governance in educational administration, there are some individuals that have created their own social media platforms and pages depicting institutional names. However, these platforms to certain extend are not used wisely and are mostly accused of spreading Fake News and misinformation about policies, incidences and overall management of educational systems in developing world. We are currently facing numerals challenges in this and as educational administrators, we need to be vigilant and become digital literate to ensure that our digital actions, space and efforts are not compromised by the most digital literate members of the society aimed at causing chaos in education. These technological advancements such as education 4.0, society 5.0 calls for greater efforts from us as educational administrators to upgrade our digital competencies on social and cultural ethics of these platforms. Additionally, this also require our systems, policies and systems to be reformed, revisited and re-engineered to be digitally ready for all the good and bad effects of virtual administration. The arrival of these digital platforms serve as an extension that can make education as a lifelong learning opportunities for administrators for continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills. Our local educational legislations as well as school policies are also demanding contemporary soft and technical skills that we all need to have to make sure that activities are digitised to the benefits of our learners and students. During the integration process we should also not forget that the digital divide is partly claimed to be a crippling factor the integration and utilisation of various technologies in the administration of educational institutions be it at primary, secondary or tertiary levels. Namibia is one of those countries that is trying by all means to narrow this gap through public private partnership agreements. Therefore, utilisation of social media as a virtual public, where social, economic and political education takes place became now a pressing issue for all educational administrators and managers.

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