A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN HIGHER EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS

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Abstract

Social media usage has reached almost every individual. Primarily it was intended for the personal purpose and social networking, but over the period of time, social media platforms are being used for digital marketing, group communication, event planning and many more. Even educational establishments have started making active use of social media platforms for promoting their services and various ongoing activities on their campus. In an active classroom environment, where the learning is student-centric and based on activities instead of a basic chalk-and-talk method, some social media-based activities could be planned for an improved result. However, it is not possible to teach the entire syllabus using this method, but some activities, especially collaborative activities could be planned using Social Media. Supervision on the usage of Social Media is very important at the same time, in order to make sure that class activities are going in an intended way. This research paper highlights the usage of most commonly used SM platforms in Higher Education institutions. A general analysis is performed by considering one of the largest private higher education organizations in Oman. The results of this analysis show positive reviews, in which the majority of the stakeholders, including students and staff. Finally, a new framework is suggested for effective use of SM in order to enhance teaching and learning experience in Higher Education.

Keywords: Social media in Education, Collaborative learning, Education Technology, flipped Teaching.

1 INTRODUCTION

The use of different social networking platforms in different institutions is critical and contributes greatly to supporting the various activities of the organization. The main objective of this paper is to see how efficient social networking platforms are in the education sector. On the other hand, One of the best leading educational institutions that have been striving to enhance students' abilities and improve teaching and learning methods in the past and present. The (MEC) College has sought to introduce various educational techniques and social networks that contribute to enhancing the intellectual and cognitive aspects of the students. The college has also set specific rules for students and their employees to use the various means, taking into account the rules and regulations. This is to avoid students from taking negative aspects and deviating from the use of these methods for non-academic purposes, which affects the student's achievement level or may indirectly affect the student's and health status. Furthermore, loss of time in the use of these means of non-necessity and learning. Also in order to protect the resources of the institution and the exploitation of staff at the time of work in the performance of their personal work so the laws and procedures come with a positive aim to protect its users from falling into Legal issues. Finally, the success of the various sectors and the extent of knowledge of the values and vision of the organization using modern technological advanced technologies for the events of progress and development of the institution significantly contributes to the association and progress in the future significantly.

2 LITERATURE

Various Social Networking techniques currently in use have made significant progress because of the introduction of new technologies in the Internet platforms. The institutions use various social media as an easy and fast way to reach and communication the most modern means and techniques of education. The current use of SM in institutions of Higher Education, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp… is one of the best methods and methods of communication in modern communication techniques, which have been based on the foundations of education and used of the students. Furthermore, it is characterized by the faculty members has a proven track record in establishing procedures and laws and prohibiting the personal use of modern technologies for personal and non-educational purposes for their students.[6]
Oman has witnessed rapid progress in the introduction of modern technologies in the field of education and significantly in its various educational institutions throughout the Sultanate, in line with the progress of the outside world in the field of communication and modern technology in addition to creating modern platforms to communicate with the faculty staff of the institution and students. Oman is one of the most advanced countries in the range of teaching. It seeks to apply various social media to facilitate the teaching process and to create a relationship of communication and speed to obtain knowledge and scientific progress in various fields of education in the Sultanate. The introduction of various ways of social communication in the field of education has directly contributed to the promotion of research thinking and the rapid development of scientific skills among students. It has also greatly helped in the events of tangible changes and improvements in institutions of higher education. Finally, from my point of view, it is noteworthy that these means contributed to the great link between educational institutions in the external and internal levels, which increased the activities and progress of educational institutions by exchanging ideas and innovation in teaching methods and scientific research due to the ease of communication and exchange of information and educational efficiency.

2.1 Usage of Social Networking In [Higher Education] Establishments

According to (Hamid, 2009), despite the importance of progress in teaching and learning and the presence of advantages and disadvantages in the use of various social Media platforms (SN) in Higher Education. Because users of Web 2.0 are young people. However, the application of these techniques in the field of education needs to develop a clear plan and procedures for students to limit their expectations about the various technologies that can be used across the Internet platform.[3]

Based on (Tham & Werner, 2005), over the last few years, there has been a marked growth in the use of many modern universities and colleges of modern education techniques using various means of social communication. This is because of the provision of new and fast technologies that facilitate the speed of student learning and access to information and scientific research. As well as the existence of various courses and electronic documents that facilitate the student to learn. Because of the change in teaching methods from traditional classroom methods to distance learning (using multimedia presentations). So the use these techniques Contributed significantly to create of a wide source of information.[2]

2.2 Elements Affecting the Usage of SM in Higher Education

According to (Firpo, 2009) and (Eller, 2012) use of SM in Education is very effective because of the sharing of information and various multimedia presentations.

Based on (Oradini and Saunders, 2008), propose that students on campus can take advantage of all social communication systems according to the laws and regulations allowed in the institution, allowing the use of various sites related to education and benefit from them.[1]

Based on this guide (Siemens, 2007), higher education institutions in the 21st century are in the process of change. Students in this age are directly familiar with the latest technologies of digital technology and the Internet. The effective use of various SM in teaching and learning contributes significantly and directly to the diversity of student participation, scientific innovation, and educational settings.[4]

In addition, the practice of diverse social networking has become an important component because it has become part of contemporary methods of scientific life. Therefore, various higher education institutions should benefit from the opportunity to facilitate these techniques in the daily lives of students. With a view to improving and developing the methods. Quite a few SM supported the students and the schools in providing innovative methods of learning and in preparing educators for the outside world by the means of progressive learning skills [5].

The literary articles discussed above reinforce the efficacy of the practice of social communication techniques in teaching and learning, the techniques and controls that educators and students must follow throughout their presence in the institution. These recent technologies upsurge the prospects of learning and interchange thoughts and skills amongst the students. This has a constructive influence on increasing the competence and skills of the affiliates of the institution. However, the educational institution must enforce approvals and controls for all users of these technologies. The aim is to protect the inappropriate usage of the technologies and follow the laws of the country to avoid legal problems both for the individual and the Institute. These recent technologies have also added to the establishment of a kind of express communication and direct tie amid the different departments of the institution. The College of the Middle East is one of the best private and progressive colleges that have been realistically
using these in their campus. These modern technologies has aided in the sharing of experiences and communicating with other educational institutions outside and inside the Sultanate.

3 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

In order to implement and officialize the use of social media in education, various external factors needs to be taken into consideration. This involves social, legal and ethical factors pertaining to the country in which the higher education institution is located.

3.1 Social, legal and ethical factors

Before institutionalizing the usage of social media, the academic affairs department of the HEI, must ensure about all the possible implications in future. This involves consideration of society related factors such as blocking of some source of objectionable content, which is inappropriate for the society’s norms and regulations. Apart from these, legal factors such as copyright issues should also be taken into consideration and HEI must ensure that whatever activities are being practiced on social media, should be moderated before being given among the students.

3.2 IT Policies

IT and network related policies of the institution defines the fair usage of social media and its content. Therefore, it is important to keep this as one of the key element in the proposed framework. Network firewalls could be very helpful in blocking the un-desired websites and social media handles.

3.3 Cloud Services

In order to extend the implementation of this framework among the students in large quantity, it is important to opt for cloud-based services. Due to increased number of social media users, the problem related to Big Data management is in rise from day to day. Not only this, but various multimedia content for the classroom activities, such as audio-visual content, increases the amount of data on server. Hence, based on the requirements, HEI may opt for cloud services for smooth conduct of activities.
3.4 Classroom activities

As the first stage, learning outcomes are analyzed and content in which social media can be used as a part of activities could be identified. Apart from these assessments are also designed in order to assess the learning of the students.

At the second stage, the content is shared with the students either using Social Media activities or through Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Finally, the activities are given in the class and students are encouraged to take up this activities and participate in various formative assessments.

3.5 Feedback, Assessment & Evaluation

Once activities are finished, teacher is advised to collect feedback by the end of each session. This is further analyzed based on some quantitative and qualitative data. Further, these assessments are evaluated to check if learning outcomes are met.

Evaluation also results in various recommendations for improvements in further design of activities.

4 POSSIBLE CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The most common issue which may come on implementation of this framework is the participation of students in class activities. Some of the students doesn’t want to reveal their social media identity and some doesn’t even want to open account of social media. This could be avoided if we identify some social media in which student doesn’t have to create IDs on popular SM sites such as Facebook etc. One such social media application is Kaizala from Microsoft. This doesn’t involve sharing of public identities and students can work in collaborative environment.

Another challenge is deviation of young minds from the actual topic to be discussed in the class. As we know that social media is popular for personal purpose and blogging. Hence in order to avoid misuse of privilege to use SM in the classes, the teacher must monitor the usage either directly or by means of peer tutors. Moreover, the teacher must ensure that IT Service unit is being informed in case of usage of any new social media platforms, so that its implications and feasibility could be studied and tested before its actual implementation.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The practice of using social media in teaching and learning offers countless digital expertise for educators and students. It aids in developing the skills in using recent software to support students and to create an online community of learners with the help of courses and workshops for students across the Internet platform via varied SM. If practiced with care, the social media implementation in academics could be proven as boon and the media which is responsible to divert the attention of students during these days, could be used for them to conduct class activities and learn from each other in a monitored environment.

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