



STUDENTS' ACCEPTANCE USING FACEBOOK AS A LEARNING TOOL: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

With the advancement of technology in communication, social networks are widely used not only for connecting friends and social community but also as a means for learning. Previous research have focussed on Facebook related to teaching and learning (Bosch, 2009); college students experiences (Pempek, et al, 2009) and using Facebook for e-portfolio among higher learning students (Raja Hussein & Ng, 2010). This paper aimed to investigate the level of acceptance of using Facebook as a learning tool among students in a Public University in Kuala Lumpur. The design of this study was a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods. A self-constructed questionnaire with (25) items was used to measure the perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and students' attitude toward using Facebook as a learning tool. The survey was carried out to a purposive sampling where only students who used Facebook in learning were selected. Thus, the questionnaires were distributed to 100 students in one of the faculties in International Islamic university Malaysia IIUM. Three students were selected for the interviews. The results of this study show that only 77 respondents responded to the questionnaires. The findings indicate that there was no significant difference between male and female in their intention to use Facebook as a learning tool. On the other hand, ease of use of Facebook as a learning tool and its usefulness were significantly affected intention to use Facebook. Further enhancement of the quantitative finding was supported from the interviews where challenges and barriers are discussed.

Keywords: Social networks site, Facebook, Davis model.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Earlier theories have shown that communication and interaction has always been the centre for constructivist learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Delia & Keefe, 1982). Learning takes place by interacting with others, exchanging ideas and through critiques. The new technology platform such as Facebook and other social network sites have changed the way people interact. The collaborative tools such as chat and group setting in the Facebook allow students to interact and update information very fast. This platform allows information becomes more accessible today than it has

ever been before (Schlager et al., 2009). Facebook has been the most popular site as compared to other social networks due to its usability, interoperability and ease of use.

Currently, social networking sites are used rapidly not only among adolescents but also adults (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Many researchers have shown that social networking tools provide a good environment to support educational activities by providing interaction, collaboration, active participation, sharing information and resources and critical thinking (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008; Bosch, 2009; Pempek, et al, 2009; Raja Hussein & Ng, 2010). Nevertheless, there has been a setback of the Facebook which includes negative effect on student learning due to time consuming on surfing for social communication and inactive resources in the Facebook (Gafni and Deri, 2012). Social networks as part of our daily lives shall remain in the cyber world with new faces and design. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the extent of the usefulness, ease of use and intention to use in future. This study seeks to examine the students experience in using Facebook in learning. The focus of the research will answer the research questions namely i. Do students experience the ease of use when using Facebook in the learning process? ii. Do students find Facebook useful in learning? iii. Can ease of use and usefulness of Facebook effect their perceptions on the intention to use in future?

2. LEARNING TOOLS IN FACEBOOK

Facebook is the most powerful social networking site which is used for interaction and communication (Golder et al., 2007). Facebook is defined as "a social utility that helps people share information and communicate more efficiently with their friends, family and co-workers". Originally started as a medium for college student interaction, Facebook enables peer feedback, having goodness of fit with social context and interaction tools (Mason, 2006).

Since Facebook has high potential in providing social communication and interaction, the opportunity of academicians to take this platform for teaching is beneficial. The ability of the users to collaborate, create, and share content with other users (Lomicka & Lord, 2009) and make attachment of documents and videos will enrich the learning environment. The features include my profile, the wall, my photos and my Groups. Profile information can be divided into six basic categories namely: Basic, Contact Info, Personal, Professional, Courses, and Picture. These categories allow a user to post personal information to the identified cyber friend in the service. The major concerns of these tools include privacy disclosure (Hewitt & Forte, 2006), and also the belief that it does not accommodate academic purposes (Charnigo & Barnett-Ellis 2007).

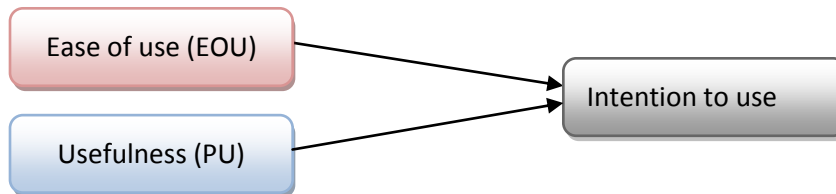
3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Vygotsky (1978) has emphasized on social interactions and actions as the tool for learning. This Socio-cultural Theory relates learning to cognitive development, interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions. Thus, students can learn through collaborating with peers in the Facebook medium. In line with constructivists learning theory, the building of knowledge and idea sharing together with feedback allow students to think critically, construct own knowledge through awareness of the learning process (Bruner, 1966; Bakhtin, 1981).

With the benefits of Facebook, it also challenges the educators to be vigilant, pro-active, having full readiness to respond to the students. These challenges may create the problem of time constraint and hinder active feedback. Further interruptions of dragging discussion and unnecessary interactions will defeat the purpose of learning. Thus, the theory of Acceptance by Davis is essential to measure on the behaviour of using Facebook in learning. Davis (1989) has proposed a model to show the extent of acceptance of a new technology where a few factors influence the usage. He uses the term perceived ease of use to indicate that by using the technology will ensure less or free effort to manage the system. On the other hand, *perceived usefulness* indicates a person belief of using the technology will benefit his or her job performance. The extension of this theory includes Rogers (2003) to further define usefulness as “the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than its precursor.”(p. 195)

Both factors namely usefulness and ease of use will affect the attitude to use the technology. Additionally, this attitude will directly predict the intention to use and future action to use in real job environment. This model has further been developed and extended. However, the factors adopted in this study include ease of use, usefulness affect intention to use. Figure 1.0 reveals the hypothesized framework to underpin the present study.

Figure- 1. Acceptance model (adapted from Davis, 1989).



4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey method for data collection. Using 5-Likert scale self constructed questionnaire (strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree), the questions were related to ease of use, usefulness and intention to use Facebook in teaching and learning. The questionnaires were distributed to 100 students in one the faculty in one of the public university in Malaysia. This purposive sampling was based on the real usage of Facebook in the learning environment. Facebook has been used as part of the interactions, communication, assignment submission and writing in the English language course.

Three students were selected among the respondents of the survey for the semi-structured interview. They were asked on the three factors studied namely, usefulness of Facebook, its ease of use and their intention to use further in the future. The findings of the interviews were transcribed and revealed back to the students for clarification and validation. The results were then compared from both quantitative and qualitative approach.

5. ANALYSES PROCEDURE

The results are discussed according to the descriptive statistics to reveal the spread of gender and nationality breakdown. Using multiple regressions analyses (MRA) to examine the factors affecting involved, model summary is revealed to show the variance explained of the model. Further discussion is based on the significant path and relationships of the independent variables (Ease of use, usefulness) and dependent variable (Intention to use). Prior to the MRA, the researcher used the compute mean score for each variable involved.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 and Table 2 reveal the breakdown of gender and nationalities of the respondents. The respective faculty selected has more male students (63.6%) than the females (36.4%). The majority of respondents were among International students 55.8% while the Malaysian was only (44.2%). This selected faculty offers an introductory course for English language to prepare students for the undergraduate and post graduate levels.

Table- 1. Breakdown of gender among respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	49	63.6
	Female	28	36.4
	Total	77	100.0

Table- 2. Nationality of respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Malaysian	34	44.2
	Non-Malaysian	43	55.8
	Total	77	100.0

Table- 3. Studies level among respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Degree	20	26.0	26.3
	Master	46	59.7	60.5
	PHD	10	13.0	13.2
	Total	76	98.7	100.0
Missing	System	1	1.3	
Total		77	100.0	

Table 3 shows the students level in their studies. Majority of the respondents were Masters Students (46%). Further results and discussion are based on the research questions.

6.1. Do students' experiences of ease of use in Facebook affect their perceptions towards the intention to use in future?

Prior in answering this question, the researcher examined the model summary of variance explained. It was found to show a good explanation of the predictors of 51.9% ($R^2=0.519$) to the

intention to use with ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) reveals significant model ($F(1,56) = 30.185$, $p = 0.000$). Despite the model is fit, it shows a non-significant relationship between ease of use and intention to use ($p > 0.05$). Table 4.0 reveals the MRA results.

Table- 4.MRA in predicting ease of use, usefulness on intention to use.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.318	.302		1.052	.297
EOU	.330	.118	.298	2.804	.007
PU	.556	.113	.525	4.932	.000*

a. Dependent Variable: IU

Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$

Thus, ease of use is not strong enough to predict their behavior in using Facebook in future. This could be due the lecturers' failure to attend the students' interactions. Further, it may not accommodate academic purposes (Charnigo& Barnet-Ellis 2007) with negative effect on student learning due to time consuming (Gafni & Deri, 2012). Further investigation from the interview reveal the following findings.

Responding to question on easy to use, features and characteristics of Facebook easy to understand and manoeuvre, the feedback include:

- Respondent 1: Facebook easy to use. Just a few clicks away. But, Im not sure if I can use in the class.'
- Respondent 2: Yes, not difficult and every has it. I will use if the lecturer wants to use properly. At the moment he only use it to give announcement. Not much of discussion'

Thus, despite knowing the ease of use of the technology, it is not possible for them to use in future or real learning environment. Knowing does not lead to believing and confident to use in future. Further, emphasis is not given on the importance of communication after classroom learning despite Vygotsky (1978)'s theory of cognitive development where reasoning and critical thinking will be prompted through collaboration and communication with peers and surrounding. Unless encouraged and make compulsory to students, they may use it effectively for learning.

6.2. Do students perceive usefulness affect their intention to use Facebook in future learning?

It was found a strong relationship with $\beta = .525$ at $p < 0.05$ (significant path) indicating perceived usefulness affect students intention to use in future. This result is parallel with Davis (1989) as the benefits of the technology will enhance students' behavior to take action. However, the interview shows otherwise.

Based on the question 'Do you think that social networking site like Facebook is important to be used in teaching and learning process?' The first response shows that "Maybe it is important but I can't use this kind of social networking like Facebook in my writing because I don't have much time to search Facebook or search twitter because it needs long time" The respondent elaborates :

‘The lecturer does not encourage to use anything besides the traditional one we use in normal class.’

On the other hand, second respondent seems disagree with the first respondent. He believes that using Facebook is easy and need to be adopted in and outside the classroom.

- ‘I like Facebook and its easy to use.’
- ‘I can interact with my friends on updates, and even with my lecturer’
- ‘I can get attention from my lecturer if I use Facebook’.

Thus, the evidence indicates a scenario that students and lecturers were more focussed on teaching in the classroom without emphasizing the importance of social networking sites to support asynchronous communication in learning. The quantitative results show a significant relationship between usefulness and intention to use. The qualitative however reveal a mix perceptions and inconsistency. This indicates that teaching strategies need to be incorporated with social network in order for students to believe in the system and making use of it.

Further asked on ‘ Do you find Facebook useful to be used in your English learning?’

- Respondent 1: ‘Yes, when I have problem like I don't understand grammar I will ask teacher to email me and that is a good communicate, and Facebook it is important to be use in teaching because everyone have an account on Facebook and I think it is important to improve my English learning, I can communicate with my teacher in my free time and also I can communicate with my friends by English language. I think I am getting improve in my English from the chatting in Facebook because I have a lot of foreigner friends and I chatting with them by English language and it help me in writing as well’. Despite the in proficiency in English language, they managed to respond back to the interviewer.
- Respondent 2: ‘yah, me too, the last time I couldn't write in English and my friends total help me. in the night I chatting with my best friend in Malaysia and off course I don't know what is Malaysian language is that is why she talk with me by using English language and when I write by using wrong sentence she will fix it for me and told me what is the right answer, this encourage me to learn English better.’

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The results have shown that despite the students find the ease of use of using Facebook in learning English language; it does not influence their perceptions to use in future. Only the usefulness has significantly influence their intention to use in future. The challenges and obstacles of getting feedback and too much of disruption along the discussion hinder their intention to use. However, when introduce to appropriate strategies in teaching, Facebook can be a good vehicle to enhance communication in and outside the classroom environment. The implications of the findings provide information of students’ perceptions of the importance in using social network sites for future learning. Thus, they are able to receive the new pedagogical potentials in learning English if they are given the opportunity to incorporate with assignments, feedback from two ways communication and collaborative work.

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