



**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
(IIUM) LECTURERS' USE OF SOCIAL NETWORK
SITES (SNSs) FOR TEACHING: STUDENTS'
PERCEPTION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THEIR
SATISFACTION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) lecturers use SNSs in teaching and learning as perceived by students. It also examined the practices among IIUM lecturers in communication, assessment and sharing resources in using SNSs for their students. Further, this study examined the influence of teaching strategies (communication, assessment, sharing resources) by IIUM lecturers via SNSs on students' satisfaction. A total of 300 undergraduate and postgraduate students were selected from Kulliyyah of Information and Communication Technology (KICT) and Kulliyyah of Education (KOED) in IIUM. These students were purposively selected based on the usage of SNSs in teaching and learning process. A mix method research was used focusing on quantitative while qualitative research via interviews were carried out to enhance the findings. A self-constructed questionnaire with 23 items was used to measure (i) the frequency usage of SNSs in teaching and learning (Everyday to Never), (ii) teaching strategies and students' satisfaction (Strongly agree to Strongly disagree) on a 5- point Likert scale. A semi-structured interviews carried out among three students (2 from KICT and 1 from KOED). The items were first content validated by four experts and underwent pilot-testing before distributing to respondents. Based on the research questions, descriptive statistics, comparison of means and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the data. The results show that the lecturers specifically include the social communication (54%) as the highest frequency use in teaching and learning activity. It is followed by updating information about the course twice a week (52%) and only 43% for sending learning resources. These results are further confirmed by the interviewees when they agree on the trend of SNSs use in teaching and learning. The level of agreement among the students in communication, assessment and sharing resources reveal above 50% (ranging 54% to 70%) indicating the actual practices of the lecturers in the teaching strategies. Finally, the overall result shows that the teaching strategies (communication, assessment and sharing resources) via SNSs significantly influence on students' satisfaction. The implications of the study show that teaching via SNSs will engage students in learning and facilitate the teaching process.

ملخص البحث

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في مدى استخدام محاضري الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية في التعليم والتعلم من وجهة نظر الطلاب. كما درست أيضاً الممارسات بين المحاضرين وطلابهم في الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية لموارد الاتصالات، والتقييم ومشاركة الموارد من خلال استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية. علاوة على ذلك، بحثت هذه الدراسة مدى تأثير استراتيجيات التدريس (الاتصالات، والتقييم، ومشاركة الموارد) عبر مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية من قبل محاضري الجامعة على رضا الطلاب. وقد تم اختيار عينه مكونه من 300 طالب من مرحلة البكالوريوس والدراسات العليا من كلية تكنولوجيا المعلومات وكلية التربية في الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية. تم اختيار هؤلاء الطلاب بشكل مقصود على أساس استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية في التدريس وعملية التعليم. وقد استخدم هذا البحث طريقة البحث المزدوجة المرتكزة على البحث الكمي والكيفي/ النوعي عن طريق المقابلات لتعزيز النتائج. تم إنشاء الاستبيان من قبل الباحثة حيث يحتوى على 23 بنداً لقياس (أ) مدى استخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية في التعليم والتعلم (دائماً إلى أبداً)، (ب) استراتيجيات التدريس ورضا الطلاب (أوافق بشدة إلى لا أوافق بشدة) باستخدام مقياس ليكرت الخماسي. وقد تم إجراء ثلاث مقابلات شبه منظمة مع ثلاثة طلاب (طالبين من كلية تكنولوجيا المعلومات و طالب واحد من كلية التربية). وقد تم التأكد من صدق فقرات الاستبانة بعرضها أولاً على مجموعة من أربعة محكمين، ومن ثم إجراء الدراسة الاستطلاعية للتأكد من صدقها وثباتها قبل توزيعها. بناء على أسئلة البحث فقط تم استخدام الإحصاء الوصفي، والمقارنة بين المتوسط لكل متغير، وتحليل الانحدار المتعدد لتحليل البيانات. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن المحاضرين في الجامعه الذين يستخدمون مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية في عملية التدريس والتعلم يستخدمونها للتواصل الاجتماعي (54٪) كأعلى استخدام متكرر في أنشطة التعليم والتعلم. كما أنهم أيضاً يستخدمونها لتحديث المعلومات حول المادة التعليمية مرتين في الأسبوع بنسبة (52٪) ونسبة (43٪) فقط لإرسال موارد التعلم. وقد أكد هذه النتائج الطلاب الذي تم مقابلتهم عندما أكدوا على ميولهم لإستخدام مواقع الشبكات الاجتماعية في التعليم والتعلم. وقد كشف مستوى الاتفاق بين الطلاب في مجال الاتصالات،التقييم ومشاركة الموارد نسبة ما فوق 50٪ (تتراوح 54٪ إلى 70٪) تشير إلى إن الممارسات فعلية للمحاضرين في استراتيجيات التدريس. أخيراً، تظهر النتيجة الاجمالية إن استراتيجيات التدريس (موارد الاتصالات، التقييم والمشاركة) عبر مواقع الشبكة الاجتماعية تؤثر تأثيراً كبيراً على رضا الطلاب. الأثار المترتبة على الدراسة تشير إلى أن التعليم عن طريق مواقع الشبكة الاجتماعية سوف يساعد على إشراك الطلاب في التعلم ومن ثم تسهيل عملية التدريس.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conformed to acceptable standard of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education (Instructional Technology).

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Dean, Kulliyah of Education

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the findings of this study are the results of my research effort. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degree at IIUM or any other institutions.

Zahra Mardani Landani

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Date.....

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I would like to dedicate this research work to my beloved parent Ali Asghar and Shahrbanoo for being the source of strength and inspiration. Special thanks and appreciation are due to my beloved husband Seyed Mohammad Reza who has provided endless encouragement, support and patience throughout my studies. My love and gratitude to my son Seyed Matin. I thank all for their encouragement, support and prayers. May Allah bless and reward them abundantly.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Internet evolution is an essential part of the modern world that shifts traditional teaching to innovative teaching and learning. Communication through social network sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, Blog and Twitter, with the widespread of communication technology has become a common tool in the society. These sites are examples of social websites that provide user friendly interface and accessibility to write and communicate.

Thus, SNSs are useful not only for sharing information and communication but also for helping teachers and students to enhance their daily practice by using the interactivity and multimedia features. For example in the classroom, students can create personal blogs and space to read, write and share their ideas. Students can post questions and answers to engage in learning and social cohesion (Hammoud & Bourget, 2011). In addition, many blogs are available for free such as, Posterou, Spaces, BlogSpot, WordPress, Blogger, and Blogetry.

Facebook is a popular example of social network sites that allows students to interact and communicate to others and update information very fast. Through this platform, information is more available than before (Stanciu, Mihai, & Aleca, 2012). Twitter, also known as microblogging. The main characteristic of Twitter is the feature of transmitting short messages that is limited to 140 characters. Through Twitter, students can connect to other ideas and opinion with the social online

community. In addition, through Twitter website, students can send and receive updates emails and text messages (Stanciu et al., 2012).

The use of SNSs by lecturers and students can provide a good platform for researchers to investigate the online behavior and students' satisfaction. The students' perception of SNSs such as Facebook, Blog and Twitter can help educational researchers to find out which online social activity is the students' preferences and can be integrated into teaching and learning process. Many studies have shown that SNSs can attract university students' attention to use in learning. Reports have shown that SNSs become part of the educational environment and have the potential to use as teaching tools. Information can be shared among lecturers and students. Further evidence shows that SNSs in educational context can be used as teaching methods and tools among lecturers for teaching and learning (Ellison, 2007; Selwyn, Crook, Noss & Laurillard, 2008; Schwartz, 2009).

However, SNSs have some disadvantages and limitations such as: lacking of privacy and security, receiving unlike and unkind comments, wasting time rather than studying, and sharing personal information. Moreover, the limitation of using words in some social network sites such as Twitter within the 140 characters causes misinterpretation among teachers and students. However, the advantages of SNSs outweigh the disadvantages.

Many reports have shown that new technologies and social networks in educational context are part of the students' educational learning process (Hookway, 2008). In addition, SNSs help students to receive comments from other lecturers and students and this social support will engage students to maintain their relationships with others. This engagement to use social network sites and academic benefits of online social community can influence on students' satisfaction.

Thus, social networks such as Facebook, Blog or Twitter have high potentials to be taken as a platform for teaching and learning process.

LAYOUT, INTERFACE, FEATURE AND APPLICATION OF SNS

SNSs are online platforms to create social networks and relation among those who share ideas, interest and different activities. The SNSs' layout involves: font size, colour of page, arrangement of text and graphics. The SNSs' interface providing interaction with other components and also facilitate interpersonal interaction (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007). Through SNSs' interface, users can interact with different parts of the social sites and can easily access to their functions such as chat, direct message and status updates (Burke, Marlow & Lento, 2010). It is the SNSs' features, involving creating a public profile, having a list of other users, ability to create groups, uploading video and having discussion in forums. Sending notes, gift, market place, events, music and playing games are some example of SNSs application.

SNSs' features and applications enable students to share opinion, ideas, post, event and different knowledge and information in their networks. In an educational setting, using online environment such as SNSs can improve students' learning. Students not only can interact with other students and teachers but also they can interact with the course content (Bell, Compeaux & Olivera, 2005).

Facebook

News feed, wall, timeline, friend, like, unlike and comment are some features of Facebook. When students log into Facebook, they can check their messages and also enable to see their friends' activity. News feed enables students to get information such as upcoming events, profile change and birthdays. Moreover, students can see

the conversation history, which takes place among other friends. Through Facebook, students can send another student a friend request and this item is optional to accept someone request or not. Even via this option, students can easily unfriend others for any reasons. A privacy feature of Facebook is one of the benefits of this SNS that gives this opportunity to students to restrict ideas to certain people. Additionally, wall and timeline are other features of Facebook to post messages and organize the content of Facebook, respectively.

With the new technology of mobile phone, sharing videos via Facebook becomes popular among students. The feature of the responsive layout of mobile technology will accommodate the page size of Facebook. Furthermore, with Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeding technology, students are able to receive timely updates from other websites such as news headlines, video or audios. In the education context, some features such as: like, comment and share button are useful to encourage students in academic topics. The students can follow comments and messages through notification on their profile page. A red counter on the top page can help students to inform from new updates and messages. Furthermore, creating groups and pages are also some features of Facebook. Figure 1.1 shows Facebook's interface and features such as: user's profile's name, home, favorite, messages, photos, find friends, page notification and chat room.

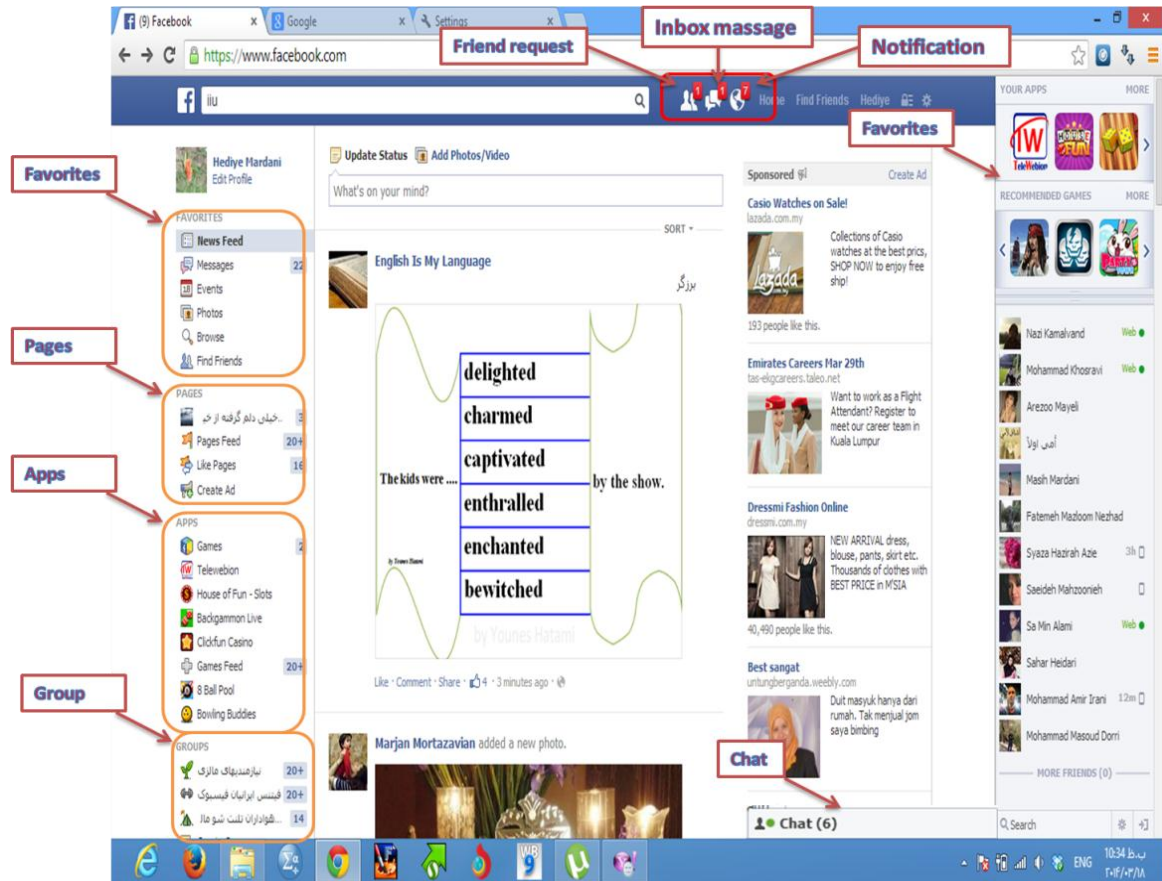


Figure 1.1: Facebook's Interface and Feature

Twitter

Twitter is a Web 2.0 technological innovation that provides a micro-blogging platform. Twitter's users are able to type short text with the restriction of 140 characters. Through e-mail or short message service (SMS) using Twitter, users can communicate together. Users can use Twitter website to tweet and also can restrict delivery of message to just their favorite followers. Compared to Facebook, Twitter's interface makes connection and communication faster. Twitter enables users to subscribe to others' tweets. Following and followers are most popular features of Twitter that help users to gain new information and knowledge. Through Twitter, users can even check the number of tweets, followers and followings. Moreover, the symbol (#) which is called hashtag is one the useful features of Twitter that enables

users to search for tweets which have specific topics. Users can easily use this symbol before a specific and relevant keyword to categorize messages. Hashtag feature helps users to search easily and quickly. The features of Twitter make it popular among news sites, politician and young students. Through Twitter, receiving and sending news are very fast compared to other social network sites (Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon, 2010). Through a mobile phone, users can update their profile by texting messages or other available application. Moreover, Searching bar, trending topics, using different languages are some features of Twitter.

Generally, students can send messages and receive others' update (tweets) and also in order to privacy and security, students can send private messages and restrict delivery only to their friends. Furthermore, students are able to search their friends by their names or user names. Figure 1.2 shows some Twitter's interface and features such as: home, discover, Tweets, following, followers, favorites, lists, photos, video.



Figure 1.2: Twitter's Interface and Feature

Blog

Blog is an example of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) that enables users to connect others, give comments and share ideas. The entries are in reverse chronological order. Main content area, archive, list of links (blogroll) and comments' option are some features and application of blog. Blog is an example of SNSs with user friendly interface and accessibility that enable users to write and communicate quickly. The web application of blog provides a two-way communication that assists users to attend in discussion. According to Hew and Cheung (2013), some features of blog such as giving comment on other's post can easily encourage users especially students to use this social network site. Customizing the design without programming knowledge, having flexible layouts, choosing different slideshows are some features of blog (Hourigan & Murray, 2010). Furthermore, posting text, embedding voice and videos are some advantages of blog that can use for academic purposes. According to Shih (2010), linking to other blogs and resources are useful features of blog that enhance the learning process and make using blog a favorite activity among users. Figure 1.3 shows Blog's interface and features.



Figure 1.3: Blog's Interface and Feature

As illustrated in Figures 1.1 to 1.3, SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter and Blog have high potential to be taken as a platform for teaching and learning process.

TEACHING INNOVATION AT INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA (IIUM)

IIUM as an International University aims to become established and well-known University in the world. The university has formulated a unique mission and vision which gives direction to the Islamization of knowledge. In an educational context, “IIUM’s vision is to become a leading international centre of educational excellence which seeks to restore the dynamic and progressive role of the Muslim Ummah in all branches of knowledge and intellectual discourse. The IIUM’s missions are: Integration; Islamization; Internationalization; and Comprehensive Excellence” (International Islamic University Malaysia, 2013).

Thus, to accomplish the missions and vision of the university, academia must embrace technology and enhance innovations in teaching and learning for all students and lecturers. In reaching the mission, IIUM has adopted learning management system (LMS) as part of innovative teaching and learning platform for content delivery and communication tools. The lecturers through LMS as a platform for e-learning can assess learning process. In addition, LMS can give the opportunity to lecturers to create and deliver educational content and also they can check students’ assignment and online progress. Moreover, students via LMS can utilize different interactive features such as discussion conference, forum discussion and video conference (Alias & Zainuddin, 2005). In addition, SNSs are also being used by lecturers in distance learning program in IIUM.

The social network sites can be embedded in the LMS as extended communicative tools for teaching and learning. Thus, IIUM lecturers and students need to create more connection and interaction among their online communities (Ustati & Syed Hassan, 2013). Lecturers can broaden this relationship and interaction with students via social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Blog. Alias and Zainuddin (2005) have conducted a study on technology innovation in IIUM and reported that students have positive attitudes toward technology innovation such as LMS. Another research in IIUM has shown the high level of LMS acceptance among students (Trayek & Syed Hassan, 2013). In addition, teaching innovation, using technologies and social network sites have many benefits for both lecturers and students such as effective time management, improving interaction and sharing educational resources.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The new trend of teaching has moved from traditional to contemporary teaching. The new method is to do less teaching and more of the students to learn and discover by themselves. Previous studies on using social network sites as teaching methods by Anghelache and Bențea (2012) reveal that most of the teachers achieve their educational objectives through using SNSs. On the other hand, there is a lack of study on using SNSs as teaching strategies by lecturers (Khedo, Suntoo, Elaheebocus & Mocktoolah, 2013). Thus, this study attempts to focus on using SNSs as new teaching strategies by lecturers in the educational field.

In addition, SNSs grow rapidly at different levels of educational settings and sharing information becomes easier. Many studies have been carried out to reveal the benefits of SNSs as learning tools in higher education. One of the benefits is students'

satisfaction (Rosmala, 2012). However, researchers are still at the beginning stage of exploring students' perception and preferences among social networks (Lewis, Kaufman, Gonzalez, Wimmer, & Christakis, 2008). As yet to be revealed is the extent of using SNSs in teaching and learning and this study seeks to determine the extent of using SNSs by lecturers as perceived by students.

The tendency to use the latest technology in social networks should be considered by the fact that we are at the beginning step in the SNSs learning environment and many aspects of SNSs need to be explored. Moreover, claim has shown that there is not enough study of SNSs in Malaysia context that can be used in education (Hamat, Embi, & Abu Hassan, 2012). Recent studies in IIUM have shown that most of the topics on SNSs are about the general use of SNSs in education. The survey findings from the International Islamic University have shown that the IIUM students have positive perceptions about utilizing SNSs in their educational activities. So, social network sites can be used as teaching tools in education. However, more evidences are needed to identify the way of using social network sites such as Facebook, Blog and Twitter in education, particularly in Malaysia (Ramli, Ghani, Aziz, Ahmad, Saidon, Muhammad & Rosydi, 2011). Thus, this study aims to further determine the influence of using SNSs as teaching tools on IIUM students' engagement and satisfaction based on the potential of SNSs' technology.

Moreover, McCarthy (2009) carried out a study on using SNSs among first year students at the University of Adelaide. The findings of the study have shown that students have a positive attitude toward using SNSs as a platform for teaching and learning. The interactivity of the assessment through SNSs was interesting and enjoyable as perceived by the students. So, SNSs can be used as a tool for pedagogical interaction and assessment (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007). However, more

research should be carried out in using SNSs as means of assessment by lecturers in teaching and learning process (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Thus, the present study aims to further examine the use of SNSs for assessment by IIUM lecturers.

Overall, teachers should use various teaching strategies that include active learning and interactivity in teaching. Teachers should use teaching methods and techniques that are suitable for different students who have different learning styles. Some studies have shown that using technology and social media can help teachers to accommodate high interactivity (Bicen & Cavus, 2011). However, teachers still feel uncomfortable to use SNSs to connect with their students (Musibau, Eyinnaya, Edward, Wantrudis, & Nojeem, 2011).

More studies must be done on different teaching methods such as using social network sites to support students' engagement and satisfaction (Güneş, Dilek, Çelikoğlu, & Demir, 2011). Thus, this study seeks to determine the influence of using SNSs as a teaching strategy by lecturers on students' engagement and satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research is based on the experience and perceptions of students. The objectives of this study were:

1. To find out the extent to which IIUM lecturers use SNSs in teaching and learning process as perceived by students.
2. To explore the practices among IIUM lecturers in communication, assessment and sharing resources in using SNSs for their students.
3. To explore the influence of the teaching strategies (communication, assessment and sharing resources) via SNSs on students' satisfaction.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the objectives, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. To what extent do IIUM lecturers use SNS in teaching and learning process?
2. What are the practices among IIUM lecturers in communication, assessment and sharing resources in using SNSs for their students?
3. Do the teaching strategies (communication, assessment and sharing resources) via SNSs influence students' satisfaction?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this technology era, the finding of the present study has helped lecturers to be aware of the benefits as another method of teaching and learning where students are able to communicate with their lecturers and classmates through SNSs for academic purposes (Cunsa & Savicka, 2012). Users have found out that they can use SNSs for pedagogical goals such as searching for new academic information, doing assignment, posting academic topic and content and getting feedback from lecturers and other students.

In addition, the study is significant for lecturers to use SNSs as a tool for communication. Through SNSs, not only lecturers and students can communicate together but also they can have wider communication with outside university' boundary and community (Ku, Chu, & Tseng, 2013). The finding can be used as guideline to implement SNSs as a tool of teaching as the alternative education strategy in schools and universities. The finding enabled them to include the use of SNSs such as Blog, Facebook or Twitter as one of the activities that should be integrated by