Impact of Social Networking Sites on Student Academic Performance:
The Case of University of Bahrain

Youssef Harrath, Department of Computer Science, University of Bahrain, Zallaq, Bahrain

Hadeel Alobaidy, Department of Computer Science, College of Information Technology, University of Bahrain, Zallaq, Bahrain

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to study the impact of Social Networking Sites on student academic performance. An online survey was conducted and 628 students of University of Bahrain replied. This research studies and explores the relationships between the use of SNS and students' academic performance. The survey questions (21) were grouped into 8 variables that identify the interest that the students draw from SNS. Furthermore, these variables aim to show the effects of SNS on students' academic performance and the futuristic online and offline paradigms that can enhance teaching methodology. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the collected data and find correlations between SNS and the students' academic performance. From this research it was found that the SNS have positive and negative impacts on student academic performance. At the end, the authors came up with fruitful recommendations on how to get benefit from the SNS to improve the learning process.

KEYWORDS

Data Analysis, Social Networking Sites, SPSS, Student Academic Performance

INTRODUCTION

Social Networking Sites (SNS) are internet-based platforms for communication. SNS are used for many purposes such as conversations, sharing information and web creation content. They allow users to create public profiles and interact with each other.

Students perhaps are among the biggest users of SNS which could influence their academic performance and knowledge acquisition. There is substantial amount of debate about the impact of SNS on student performance, both positive and negative. The authors focused in this study on the effect of SNS on student performance and the potential risk that students may encounter because of the time lost from their studies, reflecting weak performance or even failure. In this age, SNS could be powerful tools for enhancing educational capabilities and helping students to acquire good academic results to qualify them competing in the workplace. Alternatively, SNS could become sources of trouble causing weak performance and unsatisfactory academic results.

SNS have positive and negative influence on student academic performance and behavior. The students get more and more attracted to these sites for many reasons. One of them is to search for

easily accessible and eventually non-secure and non-trusted information. This reduces their learning and academic research capabilities. In addition to that, students who get excessively involved in SNS activities while studying will have lack of concentration and dispersion of mind. Other negative aspects to the SNS include the lack of real human contact and communication skills, time wastage, and negative impact on mental and physical health.

On the other hand, SNS could help students in self-development, creativity, communication enhancement, knowledge and information sharing, and technological competencies increase. Through social networking, students will have greater access to knowledge and information which enhance their capabilities to perform and excel in their studies.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, OBJECTIVES, AND SCOPE

The use of SNS by students has been widely debated among educators, parents, teachers and policy makers. As new learning tools, SNS could have positive impact on student academic performance, given that these new technologies are adequately used. Unfortunately, large number of students are abusing the use of these technologies by wasting lots of their time chatting with their friends or watching movies, i.e. they are not utilizing productively these technologies in their academic work.

Students should try to improve their educational outcomes by using SNS to share knowledge, solve problems, conduct research, and gain access to new information. The Internet has become an important source of information to supplement students' knowledge in solving problems and enhance learning. Educators, parents and university professors should take part of the responsibility in monitoring students and try to help them with their selection and use of SNS.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of SNS on students' academic performance. The study attempts to review some of the debate concerning the use of SNS and the potential impact they may have on students' academic performance. The emphasis on learning in modern education could make good use of the new technologies to strengthen students' knowledge acquisition and improve their skills. This, however, depends on the collective efforts of all those involved in learning processes and their ability to encourage the use of SNS for improving the quality of higher education.

The main objective of this study was to analyze the impact and influence of SNS usage on undergraduate student's academic performance at the University of Bahrain (UoB). In order to achieve this objective, the following research questions were raised for the study:

1. Which SNS are used by UoB students and during how much time?
2. To what extent do UoB students make use of SNS to help them in their learning process?
3. What is the perceived influence of SNS on the academic performance of UoB students and the motivations behind their SNS use?
4. How SNS can be used as a learning platform for UoB students?
5. Which appropriate recommendations can be extracted from the study?

The scope of the study is restricted to undergraduate BSc students of UoB; the only national higher education institution in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Based on latest statistics around 22000 national and international students attend the University of Bahrain. Students are studying in one of the 10 different colleges: College of Arts, College of Business Administration, College of Engineering, College of Information Technology, College of Law, College of Science, College of Applied Studies, Bahrain Teachers College, College of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, and College of Health Sciences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rate of change in the statistics and research results related to SNS and their impact is growing quickly with time. Facts change from one year to another. Thanks to the smart phone technology

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