

Social Media Strategies and Students' Satisfaction at Egyptian Universities

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to investigate the impact of social media strategies on student satisfaction at Egyptian universities. The research employed four social media strategies (the Predictive Practitioner, Creative Experimenter, Social Media Champion and Social Media Transformer). A survey was posted to students Facebook groups in different universities. 530 students from the universities of Alexandria, Tanta Damanhour, Kafrelsheikh, Damietta, and Suez responded to the survey. It was noted that Facebook was the most common social media platform used. The Predictive Practitioner, Creative Experimenter, and Social Media Champion strategies were not clearly implemented, as opposed to the Social Media Transformer. It was noted that there was a lack of satisfaction of students with the information reliability, responsiveness and privacy faculties unusually posted on Facebook. It has been found that the four social media strategies account for positively influencing student satisfaction at Egyptian universities.

KEYWORDS

Egyptian Universities, Facebook, Social Media Strategies, Student Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The concept 'Web 2.0' was first introduced in 2004 to the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0, leading the evolution of social media (Graham, 2005; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media platforms utilize a Web 2.0 format, which provides the users with a dynamic setting for personal interaction wherever they can interact with similarly minded people, as opposed to a Web 1.0 format wherever the user may be a passive recipient (Bennett & Glasgow, 2009; Chandran, 2016; Schroeder, 2014).

Social media may be considered as a style of electronic or on-line communication where a shared content will be manipulated or created by the users themselves (Donelle & Booth, 2012; Hamm et al., 2013). Examples of common social media channels/platforms include blogs, social networking sites (Facebook), microblogs (Twitter), wikis or collaborative information projects (Wikipedia), and content communities (YouTube) (Risiling et al., 2017).

Through further understanding of who may be engaged in the use of social media, a lot of thought can be given to what types of activities are most typical on these platforms. To understand the enormity of the volume of information flow that typifies each day in the digital realm, the numbers are reported in 60 increments. The statistical reports have explained these "every minute of every day" usage examples: Twitter users produced around 347,000 tweets; Facebook users liked around 4.1 million posts; YouTube users uploaded 400 hrs of new videos; Instagram users post around 1.7 million images and like around 2.4 million posts; Dropbox users uploaded around 830,000 new files.

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This reflects that their sharp focus on information being exchanged through the social media sites (Novillo-Ortiz & Hernández-Pérez, 2017).

Governments and international institutions consider social media as an important tool to communicate with others and also use it for a better response in international crises (Comlekç & Guney, 2016). In business, social media applications create new opportunities for organizations to collaborate in new ways with their business partner, customers, and suppliers and to improve their internal operations (Culnan et al., 2010). For organizations, the social media provide opportunities to actively engage with consumers & employees and build relationships (Abeza et. al., 2013; Williams & Chinn, 2010). Social media allows organizations to share content, facilitate interaction and build community with customers (Achen, 2016; Smith, 2013). Employees also communicate through social media sites and contribute to the organization's reputation and image. The role of internal communication expands in the direction of getting feedback from within the organization (Ng & Wang, 2013). Internally, social media can also contribute to the community development, improvement of communication processes, promotion of values and organizational culture, facilitation of information flow, and stimulation of creativity (Ng & Wang, 2013).

Social media is used by a wide variety of organizations ranging from very small businesses to Fortune 500. However, the business value derived from social media continues to cause challenges for many organizations. McKinsey published in 2009 the results of a worldwide survey of nearly 1,700 executives to investigate their companies' use of social media platforms. The results indicated that 64% use social media platforms internally, 56% to work with customers, and nearly 40% to communicate with suppliers or external partners. However, about one-third of users reported that their social media applications did not provide measurable benefits (Culnan et al., 2010). In a similar study of executives by Barnes and Mattson (2009), 52% reported they were using social media as an effective tool in their organization. When asked if their company used social media "to communicate with other companies like vendors, suppliers or partners," they found that "social networking was the most widely used with 34% reporting they employed these tools" (Remidez & Jones, 2012).

Research shows that social media has recently penetrated almost all types of organizations. Higher education institutions have not been left behind but have been adopters of this global phenomenon (Chugh, 2017). According to ProQuest's dissertation and theses database, the use of social media in education represents only 5% of all research done on social media (Chris, 2014). Social media enables educational institutions to provide information about changes to policies, new research programme, job vacancies, events, institutional news and alumni engagement. To attract more students, social media provides a perfect platform to highlight research and teaching staff, new courses, and campus facilities (Chugh, 2017). Some colleges and universities also use social media as a tool for recruiting students.

One of the major challenges of higher education to develop social media as a platform for marketing is the lack of a clear model and the process for constructing and delivering the university's marketing, especially since universities rely so heavily on faculty governance (Chapleo, 2007). One of the most common questions being discussed among those managing social media for institutions is: who at the faculty is responsible for a social media strategy in the first place? This lack of responsibility has certainly increased the apprehension of higher education stakeholders about embracing social media as a platform for marketing to reach a potentially large and engaged audience (Peruta et al., 2013). Therefore, the challenge for institutions is whether they will be able to make their structures harmonized and flexible to integrate social media into their communication policy (Ng & Wang, 2013).

Egypt, along with other countries, has witnessed a massive growth in the use of social media networks. Facebook, in particular, played a vital role in the Egyptian revolution of 2011 (Gaber & Wrights, 2014). Statistics show that the number of social media users, mainly Facebook, has reached 15 million, with a penetration of nearly 16% of the population, of which more than 73% are between the ages of 15 and 29 (Dubai School of Government, 2013).

In Egypt, internet users have increased to about 54.6% of the population in 2015, compared to 35.6% in 2012. The use of computer technology and the widespread dominance of the internet has

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