

The Impact of Social Networks on Students' Performance

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to determine the impact of using social media and its impact on students' performance and success. This research tries to identify the relationship between students' use of social networks and their success in their studies. It tries also to find out whether time spent impacts students' performance and success. Whether students use social media more for entertainment or for teaching and information sharing purposes. The paper uses a quantitative approach for collecting the primary data. The data was collected by surveying 255 respondents from South East European University. The data analyses were done by SPSS software program. Cronbach alpha is used for testing the validity and reliability of variables used in this study. The hypotheses were tested using One Simple T-test.

The obtained empirical results show that a great number of students are aware of advantages and disadvantages by the social media. Thus, due to a great percent of times spent on social networking activities, the performance and the success of students suffer setbacks which could lead to a poor performance and they might fail to create a balance between the social media and academic activities. Furthermore, it is about their addiction, the loss of time leading to consequences in their academic development, and they are also influenced to a great extent negatively by the social networking sites, because their attention is focused on chatting and music while their academic activities are neglected.

Finally, based on the results of survey, we can conclude that impact of social media on the academic performance of students should focus more on the positive side than on the negative side to achieve balance. Hence, creating more pages for research and academic activities will enable students to improve their performance, thereby avoiding a distraction which leads to deviation from their academic work.

Keywords: Social Networks, Facebook, Twitter, Google plus, Success, Performance.

Introduction

The use of social networks nowadays plays a crucial role in communication and in dissemination of information between individuals and students. The social media has become one of the most important communication means in recent times. Social networking provides communication among people regardless of the distance, easily sharing information, files and pictures and videos, create blogs and send messages, and conducting conversations (Al-rahmi, W., & M. Othman, 2013; Rouis, S., Limayem, M., & Salehi-Sangari, E. 2011).

Nowadays there are many social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, and Flickr being used in learning for the purpose of convenient communication with other students. Social networks also play an important environment for sharing knowledge and supporting learning. This form of communication involving group work and collaboration promote learner-to-learner interactions that support sharing

of knowledge, information and resources (Dawson, 2008).

People refer to the stock of social trust, norms and networks when they need to solve common problems (Daniel et al., 2002). They seek for information about a particular subject, by finding databases, searching the Web, portals, intranets as well as more traditional sources such as books, encyclopedias, manuals or records. Furthermore, a significant amount of data comes from his or her network of interpersonal relationships (Cross et al., 2001).

Learning is a social and collective outcome and can be achieved from communications, with shared experiences, and also through social networks (Cho et al., 2007). Learners usually look for some knowledge through their informal networks of colleagues and friends in order to solve a task or an assignment. In general, for most learners it is much easier to ask for help from a friend or close colleague than an expert in the area who is totally unknown (Braun et al., 2007). Thus, Social technologies offer to their users many opportunities for communicating, interacting, sharing, generating content and context (Cook, J., & Pachler, N. 2012). Next to its wide usage for social interactions among young people, social media is also increasingly used to support learning activities and it adds value for collaborative learning in the context of higher education (Bogdanov, E., et al., 2012; De Andrea, D. C., et al., 2012).

In order to promote instruction as well as practice learning instructors in higher education settings look for technology to mediate and enhance their teaching. Many scholars argue for the purposeful integration of social media as an educational tool (Tess, P. A. (2013). In this context the paper tries to find out social media incorporation in teaching as a means of enhancing communication, sharing of information, and knowledge sharing between students and the instructors.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This paper tries to analyze and find out the eventual impact that social networks have on students' performance and success. Thus, the paper tries:

- To find out why students use social networks (Facebook, twitter, google plus, etc.),
- To check if there is a relationship between the time spent on social media and students' performance and success,
- To find out whether students use social networks more for entertainment or for educational purposes,
- To find out how much is this media used for exchanging information by teachers and students.

1.2. Research Questions and Hypothesis

The study also tries to answer the following research questions:

1. Why students use social networks?
2. Is there a relationship between the time spent on social media and students' performance and success?
3. Do students use Facebook more for entertainment than for educational purposes?

4. How much students and teachers use social networks for exchanging information?

The study will also try to answer the following hypotheses:

H1. Students use social media for exchanging information and learning content.

H2. Students use social media for posting personal issues and interacting with friends.

H3. Time spent on social media has an effect on students' performance.

1. Literature review

Nowadays, social network web sites have become influential factors in how students communicate. Social media has gained wider acceptability and usability and has become among the most important communication tools among students at the higher level of education (Al-rahmi, W., & Othman, M. 2013).

Defining social media networking sites is difficult especially since all Web 2.0 technologies seem to share similar traits of interactivity, user-generated content, content sharing and data upload and download. Hence, from a social perspective, learning is a social and collective outcome achieved through seamless conversations, shared practices, and networks of social connections (Cho et al., 2007). Usually when we think of what people use when seeking information about a particular subject, we think of databases, the web, portals, intranets or more traditional sources such as books, encyclopedias, manuals or records. However, a significant component of information used by each person comes from his or her network of interpersonal relationships (Cross et al., 2001). While learners are doing a learning task or activity, they usually look for some knowledge through their informal networks of colleagues and friends.

Social networking sites and their educational uses are of interest to many researchers. As we know, in the past, social networking was viewed as a distraction and offered no educational benefit, but nowadays social networking focuses also on supporting the relationship between teachers and students for learning purposes.

Over the years, social networking has become more and more popular among college students (Stollak, M. J., et al 2011). It is a way to make connections, not only on campus, but with friends outside of school. Social media forums like Facebook forum has changed the type of interactions of learners being more involved in discussions about course administration and assignments. Both students and staff post additional links to material that supported chapter learnings (Kent, M., 2013). Because of the social media platform's widespread adoption by college students, there is a great deal of interest in how Facebook use is related to academic performance (Junco, R. (2012). Learning is becoming increasingly self-directed and often occurs away from schools and other formal educational settings. The development new technologies have enabled people to learn anywhere and anytime (Song, D., & Lee, J., 2014).

So, this paper examines if social network sites, given their nature and capabilities, have the potential for creating new pathways to students and professors. Specifically, this paper uses empirical data to test several hypotheses regarding the influence of social networking sites on college students. This paper also aims to provide a

better understanding of “who is and who is not using these sites, why and for what purposes” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 224).

2. Methodology

The main purpose of this paper is to determine the impact of using social media and its impact on students' performance and success. The paper used both types of data, primary and secondary. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire, to highlight the role of social media during the performance and academic activities. Whereas, secondary data was collected from books, textbooks, online articles, and journals.

The structured questionnaire composed of two parts. The first part consisted of demographic statistics, whereas the second part of some statements that students had to answer. The data was collected surveying 255 respondents responding the questions. The selection of the potential candidates was randomly. The target group were students from SEE University.

The data analyses were done by SPSS software program. Cronbach alpha is used for testing the validity and reliability of variables used in this study. The hypotheses were tested using One Simple T-test.

3. Data presentation and analyses

This chapter includes a systematic presentation of data obtained from the survey about the role and impact of social network on students' performance and success.

1.1 Descriptive statistics

A structured questionnaire was sent to 300 respondents, but 255 responded it. Thus, the respondents' rate is about 85%. Table: 1 shows the number of respondents and their demographic characteristics that participated in the survey. The study included different age groups, different occupations, and origins of the respondents. There were 255 valid participants who responded 18 questions of the structured questionnaire.

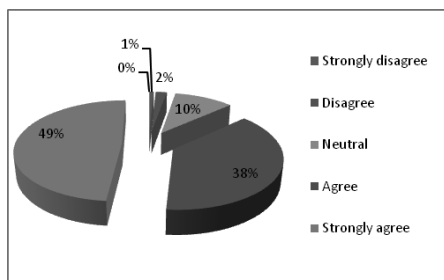
Table:1. Descriptive statistics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	male	157	61.6
	female	98	38.4
Age	less than 20	12	4.7
	21-30	175	68.6
	31-40	60	23.5
	more than 41	8	3.1
Faculty	social sciences	232	91.0
	natural sciences	23	9.0

Success of studies studimeve (average grade)	6.0 - 6.9	5	2.0
	7.0 - 7.9	73	28.6
	8.0 - 8.9	116	45.5
	9.0 - 9.9	52	20.4
	10	9	3.5
Which social network do you use more?	facebook	213	83.5
	twitter	2	0.8
	linked in	29	11.4
	others	11	4.3
How much time do you spend on social networks?	less tan 1 hour	63	24.7
	2 - 3 hours	105	41.2
	3 - 4 hours	55	21.6
	more than 5 hours	32	12.5

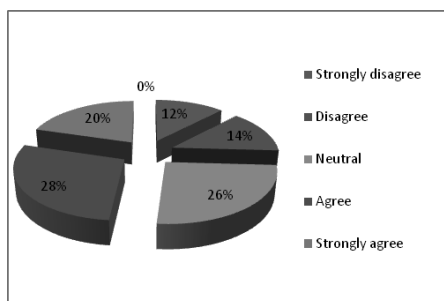
The figures below show the frequencies, percentages of respondents about the reasons of using social networks, i.e. if they use for exchanging political, economic and social ideas or because the fact that social networks help them with information dissemination, informs them what happens in university, offers academic and personal support.

Figure: 1. Social networks help with information dissemination



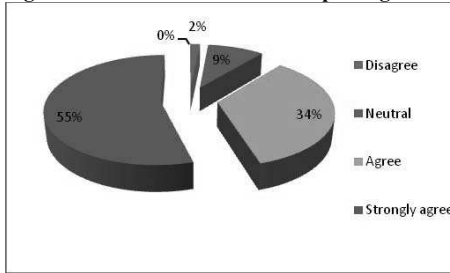
From the results obtained and presented in figure:1 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, it can be said that 38% agree that the social networks help with information dissemination and 49% strongly agree with this statement. Only 1% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure: 2. Social networks help posting lectures from professors and students



The results obtained and presented in figure: 2 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, show that 28% agree that the social networks help posting lectures from professors and students and 20% strongly agree with this statement, whereas 12% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure 3. Social networks enable posting different information



The results obtained in figure:3 show the distribution of the respondents' responses, where 34% agree that the social networks help posting lectures from professors and students and 55% strongly agree with this statement.

Figure 4. I get informed through social networks what happens in university

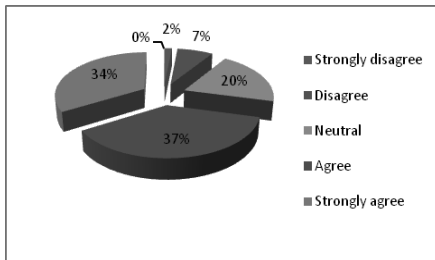
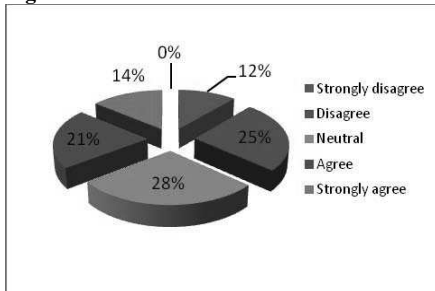


Figure: 4 shows the distribution of the respondents' responses, and it can be noted that about 37% agree that they get informed through social networks what happens in university and 34% strongly agree with this statement. Only 2% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure 5. Social networks offer academic and personal support



The results obtained and presented in figure: 5 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 21% agree that social networks offer academic and personal support and 14% strongly agree with this statement. Only 12% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure 6. I use social networks for links/ contacts with friends and colleagues

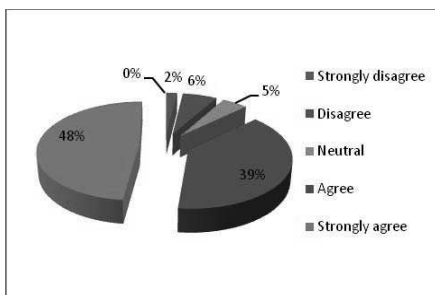


Figure: 6 shows the distribution of the respondents' responses, where 39 % agree that they use social networks for links with friends and colleagues and 48% strongly agree with this statement. Only 2% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure: 7. I use social networks for posting personal issues, photos, information.

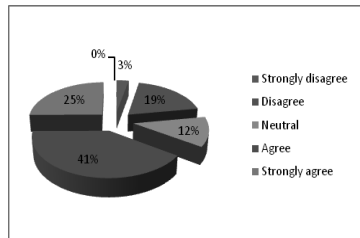
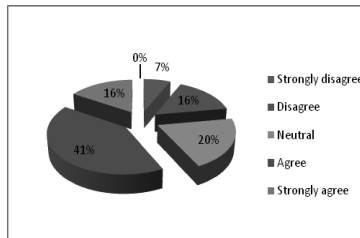


Figure: 7 shows the results obtained and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 41% agree that they use social networks for posting personal issues, photos, information and 25% strongly agree with this statement. Only 3% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure: 8. I use social networks to entertain with friends



The results obtained and presented in figure: 8 show the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 41% agree that they use social networks to entertain with friends and 16% strongly agree with this statement. Only 7% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure: 9. I use social networks for exchanging politics, economic and social ideas

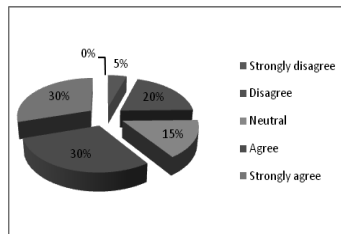
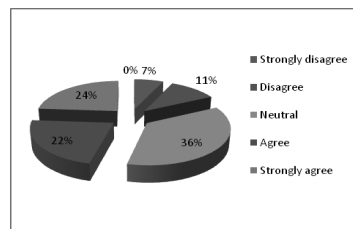


Figure: 9 shows the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 30% agree that they use social networks for exchanging politics, economic and social ideas and 30% also strongly agree with this statement. Only 5% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement

Figure: 10. Students through social networks spend more time than they benefit from it



The results obtained and presented in figure: 10 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 22% agree that students through social networks spend more time than they benefit from it and 24% strongly agree with this statement. Only 7% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure: 11. I cannot start my day without login in social networks

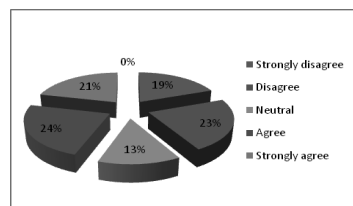


Figure: 11 shows the results obtained and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 24% agree that they cannot start the day without login in social networks and 21% strongly agree with this statement. Only 19% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Figure: 12. Social networks limit our time for other student activities

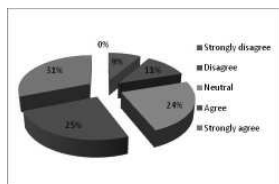


Figure:12 shows the results obtained and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 25% agree that social networks limit their time for other student activities and 31% strongly agree with this statement, whereas 9% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

1.2 The Reliability Statistics

1.2.1 The Cronbach alpha

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability.

Table: 2. Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	255	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	255	100.0

Table: 3. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.711	12

The alpha coefficient for the twelve items is .711, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. The reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered "acceptable" in most social science research situations.

Table: 4. Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Social networks help with information dissemination	4.32	.802	255
Social networks help posting lectures from professors and students	3.31	1.277	255
Social networks enable posting different information	4.42	.727	255
I get informed through social networks what happens in university	3.94	.988	255
Social networks offer academic and personal support	3.02	1.220	255
I use social networks for links/ contacts with friends and colleagues	4.25	.947	255
I use social networks for posting personal issues, photos, information.	3.65	1.143	255
I use social networks to entertain with friends	3.44	1.135	255
I use social networks for exchanging politics, economic and social ideas	3.60	1.235	255
Students through social networks spend more time than they benefit from it	3.46	1.163	255
I cannot start my day without login in in social networks	3.05	1.444	255
Social networks limit our time for other student activities	3.58	1.270	255

The one-sample statistics table shows the mean of responses, the standard deviation, and the number of participants in each condition, which is 255. One Sample T Test was used to analyze students' responses. The one-sample t test shows whether a mean of a single variable differs from a specified constant. In our test the test value is 3.

Table: 5. One Sample T-Test

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Social networks help with information dissemination	26.244	254	.000	1.318	1.22	1.42
Social networks help posting lectures from professors and students	3.873	254	.000	.310	.15	.47
Social networks enable posting different information	31.199	254	.000	1.420	1.33	1.51
I get informed through social networks what happens in university	15.206	254	.000	.941	.82	1.06
Social networks offer academic and personal support	.205	254	.837	.016	-.13	.17
I use social networks for links/ contacts with friends and colleagues	21.088	254	.000	1.251	1.13	1.37
I use social networks for posting personal issues, photos, information.	9.093	254	.000	.651	.51	.79
I use social networks to entertain with friends	6.237	254	.000	.443	.30	.58
I use social networks for exchanging politics, economic and social ideas	7.760	254	.000	.600	.45	.75
Students through social networks spend more time than they benefit from it	6.302	254	.000	.459	.32	.60
I cannot start my day without login in social networks	.521	254	.603	.047	-.13	.23
Social networks limit our time for other student activities	7.345	254	.000	.584	.43	.74

Concerning the impact of social media on students' performance, the respondents

had to answer the structured questionnaire by selecting one of the following options:

5 = Strongly agree

4 = Agree

3 = Neutral

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly disagree

Students had to select 1 to 5 options concerning their attitude related with social media and students' performance. Thus, the hypothesized test value in our study is 3 and it can split customers into those that agree with the statements and those that disagree with the statements. In this way referring to table: 5, the hypotheses can be rejected or accepted.

The obtained results show that students H:1 is accepted, i.e., *students use social media for exchanging information and learning content*. All questions related with this hypothesis have greater means than the test value 3. A big *t*, with a small *p*-value, means that the null hypothesis is rejected, and we would claim that students use social media for shoring information.

The second hypothesis (H:2) of the study that *students use social media for posting personal issues and interacting with friends* is accepted based on the obtained results from table:17 Where all the questions means related with the second hypothesis are bigger than the test value 3. So, a big *t*, with a small *p*-value, means that the null hypothesis is rejected, and we would claim that students use social media for posting personal issues and interacting with friends.

Concerning the third hypothesis (H:3) of the study *that time spent on social media has an effect on students' performance* is accepted because the obtained results show that time has a negative effect on students' performance and their academic activities.

Table:17 shows the means of the answers to be more than the test value 3.

Conclusions

This research paper leads to some interesting results showing that a great number of students are aware of the social media (for advantages and disadvantages) and had access to various social networking sites, i.e. 41% of them use social networks to entertain with friends, 41% for posting personal issues, photos, information, 34% agree that social networks enable them posting different information, 37% because they get informed through social networks what happens in university, etc. Also, 41% of them spent 2-3 hours on social networking sites than in academic activities. Thus, due to a great percent of times spent on social networking activities, the performance and the success of students suffer setbacks which could lead to a poor performance in the student's academics and therefore, fail to create a balance between the social media and academic activities.

On the other hand, students as they are aware of the social networking sites, i.e. about their addiction, the loss time, the consequences in their academic development, they still had access to them and use them permanently. The results show that they are influenced to a great extent by the social networking sites negatively, because their attention is focused on chatting and music while their academic activities are

neglected.

So based on the results of survey, i.e. their addiction to social networking sites, we conclude that social networking sites should be expanded and new pages should be created to enhance academic activities and to avoid setbacks in the students' performance. Therefore, students should create a balance between chatting and other activities, including academic activities, because the impact of social media on the academic performance of students should focus more on the positive side rather than on the negative side in order to achieve the balance. Hence, creating more pages for research and academic activities will enable students to improve their performance, thereby avoiding a distraction which leads to deviation from their academic work.

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