

The Utilization of Facebook During Covid-19 Pandemic by First-Year College Students

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ABSTRACT

Facebook is one of the popular social networking sites used by students. First-year college students who have primarily engaged themselves in Facebook are being influenced and affected by such media platforms. Students who use Facebook frequently are likely influenced by other people. On the other hand, their studies can likely be distracted. Instead of spending their time reviewing their school lessons, students get tempted to allot much of their time using Facebook. This study determined the reasons and feedback of first-year college students using Facebook. This research using a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative in interpreting and analyzing the data. The respondents were the first-year college students of Cebu Normal University, Cebu City. Findings revealed that using Facebook may cause adverse effects on students' academic performance due to frequent use of such media. However, Facebook can also bring positive effects to the students' academic performance. As a communication tool, Facebook provides information and acquiring knowledge from the different Facebook users. Facebook is beneficial in their studies. Through Facebook, college students can now share and exchange information through brainstorming and collaborating in the Group Chat. Therefore, the utilization of Facebook in learning as a tool in instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic is beneficial to learners and lecturers.

Keywords:

Facebook; First-Year College Students; Instructional Tool

ABSTRAK

Facebook merupakan salah satu situs jejaring sosial populer yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa. Mahasiswa baru yang terutama terlibat dalam penggunaan Facebook dipengaruhi dan terpengaruh oleh platform media tersebut. Mahasiswa yang sering menggunakan Facebook kemungkinan besar dipengaruhi oleh orang lain. Di sisi lain, pelajaran mereka kemungkinan besar akan terganggu. Alih-alih menghabiskan waktu

untuk meninjau pelajaran di sekolah, mereka justru tergoda untuk menghabiskan banyak waktu untuk menggunakan Facebook. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui alasan dan tanggapan mahasiswa baru dalam menggunakan facebook. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran kuantitatif dan kualitatif dalam menafsirkan dan menganalisis data. Responden dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa baru di Cebu Normal University, Kota Cebu. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa menggunakan Facebook dapat menimbulkan efek negatif pada prestasi akademik mahasiswa karena seringnya menggunakan media tersebut. Namun, Facebook juga dapat membawa dampak positif bagi prestasi akademik siswa. Facebook, sebagai alat komunikasi, digunakan untuk memberikan informasi dan memperoleh pengetahuan dari pengguna Facebook yang berbeda. Facebook sangat berguna dalam studi mereka. Melalui Facebook, mahasiswa sekarang dapat berbagi dan bertukar informasi melalui curah pendapat dan berkolaborasi dalam Obrolan Grup. Oleh karena itu, pemanfaatan Facebook dalam pembelajaran sebagai alat bantu pengajaran selama pandemi Covid-19 bermanfaat bagi mahasiswa dan dosen.

Kata Kunci:

Facebook; Mahasiswa Baru; Alat Pengajaran

1. Introduction

The use of Facebook in teaching and learning has been practiced this time of the pandemic. This can be used for discussion and sharing or resources like reading materials, presentations, and other instructional materials sent by the teacher via Facebook page messenger. Since then, Facebook has been developed and has become famous to all people around the world. Using Facebook has become one of the habits that each individual has been addicted to because of the various platforms that it offers, such as gathering information, communicating with loved ones, running and advertise a business for entertainment purposes, and many others. Due to this phenomenon, Facebook has been convenient enough because it is hassle-free and user-friendly and can also be utilized in teaching, especially during this pandemic.

First-year students education students are utilizing Facebook in learning, especially those who fo have enough resources. Freshmen education students prioritize the use of Facebook because of its accessibility. It also has valuable features like Facebook Group and messenger, where students can create a virtual classroom and be used as an effective tool for their academic requirements. College students from different universities use Facebook as their means of communication in various forms such as chatting, video calling, posting pictures and videos, sharing and exchanging information, and many others. Thus, students become fond of using Facebook, which now becomes part of their daily living.

There are some reasons why freshmen education students use Facebook for entertainment, school matters, and many others that can affect their academic performance. The usage of Facebook among first-year students can negatively or positively affect their academic performance. Ellison et

al (2011) claim that students prefer to use Facebook or other networking sites when making their assignments, projects, and other school works. It has adverse effects on their academic performance since they will be tempted to log in to Facebook instead of their school obligations. Instead of searching for information about their lessons, they tend to spend much of their time being entertained by the said platform.

Boholano, et al (2021) quoted several "activities towards improving the quality of education in the Philippines with the belief that well-equipped teachers can deliver good quality teaching and thereby producing globally competitive learners." Furthermore, students nowadays are exposed to using Facebook to communicate, socialize, and for educational purposes. In school, for example, students are using Facebook specifically when they need to communicate with their mentors and with their classmates to ask for specific information and other instances. In line with this, students are also fond of using Facebook to interact with friends and entertainment.

Additionally, as the above study mentions, "in light of this pandemic where social distancing is required, and mass gathering is prohibited, educational institutions are compelled to find ways to capacitate teachers further." Facebook is essential in sending assignments and discussions via messenger or Facebook page. The teachers and students are maximizing technology to its full potential to attain the lesson's objectives.

Several studies were conducted about the use of Facebook in teaching and learning. This study explores the reasons for utilizing Facebook in the classroom and determines students' experiences and feedback utilizing these social networking sites.

The researchers observe that in colleges and universities, the teachers and mentors use Facebook in making announcements, updating school activities, sending and uploading educational files, which are helpful in the learning process of college students. Nowadays, college students have every reason they need to open their Facebook account now and then. For this reason, college students are now addicted to using Facebook and become dependent on the services it offers.

This study aimed to determine the importance of utilizing Facebook in teaching and learning by freshmen education students. Moreover, this will also explore students' experiences and feedback about Facebook as an instructional tool.

2. Methods

This study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods in determining the results of the data gathered. Quantitative research strategy quantifies the problem by generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. This type of method is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, and behavior. In this research, the quantitative data collection includes paper surveys to the college students in public universities about their Facebook usage.

The survey questionnaires were given only to random college students in public institutions. They are to answer a questionnaire with ten (10) questions. Every item in the questionnaire has boxes provided for each choice. The respondents are to put checkmarks on the box that best reflect their Facebook usage and habits. Also, in the second part, which is qualitative in which the participants were given a table with ten situations, and they are to put a checkmark to the column that corresponds to how often they use Facebook. They can also write their feedback on the space provided. Google forms were sent to the participants of the study.

The study participants are limited only to college students ages 19 to 22 years old from Cebu Normal University-Main Campus comprises the College of Teacher Education. Ethical considers observed, like sending an informed consent and in case of refusal to a particular respondent, the researchers are not in authority to force such declination instead to take considerations to the decisions made by the participants. There is no risk involved in this study since all documents were sent via Facebook messenger to observe the proper health protocol due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This study is purely academics. The respondent's responses and information were treated with the utmost confidentiality.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the data gathered, the researchers tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted the data.

Table 1. Reasons for Facebook Utilization of the Freshmen Students

Reasons	Percentage	Rank
Social Interaction	34.5%	1
Educational Purposes	26.5%	2
Entertainment	19.5%	3.5
Personal Updates (Posting photos or videos)	19.5%	3.5

Table 1 shows that the primary reason freshmen students of Cebu Normal University used Facebook is Social Interaction. This implies that students use Facebook in order to gain more friends and to build new friendships. Also, students make use of Facebook to have constant communication with their loved ones. They socialized on Facebook by having open communication with one another as they express themselves freely. This study affirms the statement of Fern and Taylor cited in Luzano et al (2011) that Facebook has become the number one choice among college students because they can express themselves with their friends since social interaction has the highest percentage among the other reasons of using Facebook. Peluchette and Karl (2010), as cited in Taylor, Mulligan and Ishida (2012), mentioned that "Facebook is the leading site for college students." This is true in this study because most students and teachers are using Facebook to give school activities and other learning tasks.

More so, Facebook plays a vital role in the educational aspect of the students. Using this application, the students can easily send and receive documents or files needed for their studies.

Students use Facebook for asking and answering questions and posting information related to their lessons in school. In line with this, Boyd and Ellison (2008), as cited in Taylor, Mulligan and Ishida (2012), define social networks such as Facebook as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system. Some students are using it for educational purposes. Students would like to do some online collaboration with their classmates. It also provides news on what is happening in the real world and even in their school. Gikas and Grant (2013), as cited in Nadeak (2020), pointed out that online learning was implemented in Indonesia and the use of mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops that can be used to access information anywhere and anytime to support online education in the country.

In addition to this, when students are feeling bored, they use social media as a tool to at least enjoy their leisure time. Nowadays, several students visit Facebook at their most convenient time, making it the cheapest way to watch film, videos, news, listen to music and other media. Facebook also offers a varied platform of games in which students enjoy playing them. As Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007), claims "Facebook seems well-suited to facilitate the students' experiences, in that detailed profiles highlight both commonalities and differences among participants." For instance, users can play games with other people in any part of the world, watch movies and listen to music. Above all, it helps users to form new relationships on this site.

These findings affirm the study of Cuesta, et al (2016) that "using social media in students and teachers conversations (e.g., chats, video calls) in a closed forum on Facebook monitored by the teacher, aimed to improve student integration into academic culture and implementation." The findings highlight that students use Facebook by posting, sharing and reacting to posts. Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) reveals "that students make use of Facebook for self-presentation." It may be through posting photos in which they can gain more likes or other reactions. While Coates (2007) as cited in Wise, Skues and Williams (2011) "notes that, since most universities now have student portals and use web-based learning management systems as a central part of course delivery, it is increasingly important to understand the effects of online learning practices." Very clearly, this includes the use of social media platforms like Facebook for student engagement.

Based on the narratives written by the student participants, the following themes emerged:

3.1 Theme 1: Facebook Accessibility

Facebook is an essential tool in learning, as mentioned by several students. This is apparent through their responses/replies:

"Facebook has given positive effects on my academic performance in school in terms of passing projects like videos. It is easier to upload than to send it through the teacher directly, than burning it in a CD and a lot more ways wherein the fact there is already a much easier way to focus about." (P 2)

"For me, Facebook usage gives us positive effects in our academic performance through watching videos that are related to our topics. Some teachers create Facebook pages wherein they can post our activities or assignments (reading materials) for advance studying. Through this, I can say that using Facebook is somehow essential to us students." (P3)

"As a 21st-century learner, I need to adopt positive change in the environment as the teacher as well. Most teachers use Facebook as one of the apparatus in giving instructions and students pass the requirements such as projects, assignments, etc. through Facebook." (P5)

"All the files we need were sent or will be sent in the group page or the group chat." (P11)

This implies that Facebook is beneficial. During major examinations, there are many paper works which are needed to be passed, and the passing of the projects has been made easier by sending it to the teachers on Facebook. Pérez, Araiza and Doerfer (2013) view "the potential benefits of Facebook for students are not only limited to the improvement of learning process used as a communication and an interaction tool, but also as a tool useful to help students in their professional development." This study affirms the findings of Pérez, Araiza and Doerfer (2013) because, based on students' feedback, Facebook has helped them learn in the new normal.

Facebook has positive effects on my academic performance in school, like the projects or performance needed to be uploaded and require many reactions. Some of the narratives of the teacher participants:

"Facebook also gives positive effects in my academic performance in schools like nay projects or performance, and dapat e upload cya kay padaghanay bar on ug likes, etc., it helps me a lot." (P9)

"In our cases, today we are more on technology, and most of our teachers will just post the activities on a Facebook page because it is more convenient to all. The other students abuse the use of Facebook. Instead of using it to spread information, they use it to ranting other people, which is bad. People should know how to use Facebook responsibly." (P13)

The findings imply that Facebook is beneficial as a tool in learning. Kabilan, Ahmad and Abidin (2010) found out that the integration of FB as an educational project or avenue for project submission with pre-determined learning objectives and outcomes for the learning experience becomes more meaningful and productive. However, technology must be readily available for teachers and students for maximum utilization.

3.2 Theme 2: The use of Facebook Usage in Developing Words of Wisdom

Some students also find Facebook as a tool for learning beyond classes. Their narratives include:

"I am following some philosophy pages and educational accounts on Facebook. I regularly see some words of wisdom regarding college life and my sense of responsibility towards my studies is heightened." (P15)

"Though Facebook has many negative effects on others, I know it is still based on the limitation. I used Facebook properly and as a source to gain more knowledge and information that would help me boost my mind and positively affect my academic performance. I control Facebook, and I never let Facebook control me." (P17)

This implies that they are still learning beyond class hours. Several Facebook pages offer learning opportunities. "Facebook group provided a platform to expose students to contemporary issues about pharmacy practice, management, business, and leadership that otherwise might not have been broached in the course (Cain & PolICASTRI, 2011). Thus, this study found out that freshmen students are learning and developing words of wisdom using Facebook.

3.3 Theme 3: Facebook Usage Activates Self - Awareness in The Process of Learning

Not all things are good sometimes; there are also limitations of it. In this line, Facebook can help people, especially students, but could also lead to distraction without moderation. Students keep on using Facebook to be aware of the happenings in school, but sometimes Facebook could also be a temptation to students. Instead of studying, they were tempted to scroll down and read some posts about their friends.

"At some point, it gives me a positive effect like I am being aware of what is happening at school or aware of the development related to my studies. However, somehow or most of the time, Facebook has also become a distraction." (P20)

It means that if Facebook is appropriately used and students know their limitations in using Facebook, it can help students. Thus, moderation in using Facebook is the best that students could do to balance their studies.

Facebook also can have adverse effects on my academic performance, like too much use on it. The school projects and assignments are set aside already. Making of projects is scheduled on the next time until the deadline comes to the point that it will not be made well. Also, posting nonsense things. Below are the narratives of the respondents:

"In terms of not managing the time focusing on it, it could lead me not to study at all because I cannot refrain from using it and sometimes, I can feel tired that is why I tend to sleep than study." (P22)

"As a man, I am also prone to temptation. I waste my time scrolling up and down during night time instead of doing the assignment and other paper works." (P30)

"In times that I have the urgency to study, Facebook tempts me to go online and check my posts as to how many likes, hearts, wow (emoticons) I got. By doing so, my attention is divided, making me a bit less determined to pull the midnight oil." (P25)

It cannot be avoided because everything has limitations. There are also times that some students forgot to study their notes or get tempted not to focus on studying because of Facebook.

"Facebook also can give negative effects in my academic performance like too much using on it. Ipagbaliwala nalang ang buhatonon like projects, assignments. Sige nalang ug unya unya himan himan inig ting pass na, mag kara kara na. Also posting nonsense things." (P26)

"I cannot focus anymore whenever I need to do school projects or even in studying because my mind is on Facebook because of the addiction to it. Also, Facebook is not an educational site. That is why I am always tempted to use it to forget the activities I need to comply with." (P27)

"Facebook usage has negative effects because there are times that I cannot focus on my studies due to the usage of Facebook. I am tempted to scroll my newsfeed and watch videos. It makes me lazier that is why in the end, I cannot do my paper works." (P16)

"On the other hand, Facebook has its negative effects on my academic performance because it diverts my attention to chatting, sharing posts, and such instead of doing my real purpose or intention (consider that for academic performance). Thus, it gives me a reason why I cannot focus on my studies." (P26)

Facebook nowadays has made students live a comfortable life in their studies. However, aside from these good things that it may bring, it can also negatively affect students, especially their academic performance. Chen et al (2010), as cited in Bedassa (2014), said that extensive presence on Facebook and resulting increased levels of information flow management require can engage students in some tasks while they are engaged in constant interactions and socialization that disturbs their focus on their academic tasks. One of the respondents said that her focus on studying is disturbed since her mind is on Facebook. One of the respondents also said that instead of studying her notes or making her assignments or projects, the time is spent scrolling on Facebook. In fact, absbnnews.com,

as cited in Agner (2012), said that psychologists had introduced Facebook Addiction Disorder (FAD) as a form of addiction.

3.4 Theme 4: Facebook Usage Pros and Cons in Academic Performance

Students these days are so exposed to using Facebook. It has different usage such as communication, gathering information, spreading different views and opinions, and creating varied relationships with unknown people. This could be why they keep on using Facebook, making it part of their daily habit. In addition to this, Facebook can be considered one of the distractions that may lead students to make their attention divert from their school paper works. This is in line with the study of Lubis and Rouis (2010), as they claim that "college students' academic performance and Facebook usage are not associated with each other.

Moreover, Facebook does not distract college students' concentration from studying, thus, having no impact on their academic performance." In simpler terms, there is no such thing that Facebook would distract the student from their academic performances for as long as they use it in moderation.

"Facebook has no negative effects on my academic performance because I have to balance my studies and how I use Facebook." and "In my case, Facebook usage does not have negative effects on my academic performance because I never let Facebook empower me. I control it and use it respectively".

This implies that the teacher's role in monitoring the utilization of students is crucial.

"Facebook has no negative effects on my academic performance because I have to balance my studies and how I use Facebook." (P27)

"In my case, Facebook usage does not have negative effects on my academic performance because I never let Facebook empower me. I control it and use it respectively." (P10)

Facebook is favorable for "students in terms of connectivity such as exchanging information, socialization, and other constructive activities, the literature shows that Facebook has become dangerously addictive, disrupting activities and academic goals of students" (Nadeem et al, 2020) routinely. Thus, Facebook itself will never hinder students' academic performances if they give salient attention to their academic businesses.

The Covid-19 pandemic created a new mode of instructional delivery, especially in higher education. Based on the results of survey questionnaires sent via google forms and answered by the freshmen education students, Facebook is one of the learning tools utilized by the teachers. This is

very useful to the learning since internet connection is always the aim problem. Moreover, based on their narratives, students describe Facebook as an alternative tool in teaching and learning.

4. Conclusion

Facebook as social networking site is not only for entertainment but also for education. The use of Facebook in teaching and learning as a tool in instruction is helpful to students' social interaction and their academic performance in school. Using Facebook as an instructional tool is beneficial to the students and the teachers because of its accessibility. It has a positive impact during this during the Covid-19 pandemic because this is utilized as an educational platform for sending note and presentations.

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