Attitudes towards Facebook and the Use of Knowledge and Skills among Students in the English Department at the University of Hail

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Abstract
This research aims at investigating students' attitudes towards knowledge and skills in the web page of Facebook among students in the English department at the University of Hail. Social network sites such as Facebook has a significant effect on students' life. Facebook has a potential of supplementing students education with a secondary source that could enhance knowledge and skills among students with the target to further improve students' achievement. 145 students participated in the study. A 5 point Likert-type questionnaire was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into 4 dimensions of attitudes towards the adequacy, usability, efficacy, and satisfaction of knowledge and skills. The results of the study indicated that students possess high positive attitudes towards these factors with the exception of the attitudes towards adequacy of the education content which draws the attention for further investigation.
Keywords: Knowledge and skills, adequacy, efficacy, usability, satisfaction

1. Introduction:

Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become an important tool for internet users since the 1990s. ComScore Data Mine (2012) pointed out that Social Networking Sites was considered the most popular phenomena in World Wide Web engagement. Nearly 1 in every 5 minutes spent online is now spent on SNSs. Among the most popular SNSs is Facebook, which claimed to have 955 million monthly active users at the end of June 2012 (Facebook.com). Facebook users largely use the different services provided by Facebook through building their public profiles and establishing connections with others in their social networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr (2012) pointed out that young adults aged between 18-29 showed that they go online 72% on at least one social media site particularly Facebook. Thus, Facebook has a significant potential to facilitate communication and increase student participation, collaboration, information sharing, and critical thinking.

Rosado and Khuttum (2013) referred to the positive effect of information and communication technologies on pedagogical and technological applications and processes. This represented a shift from traditional printed syllabus, class lecture sessions, and written assessments and electronic Course Management Systems (CMS).

Mazman and Usluel (2007) asserted that students need more autonomy, connectivity, interaction and socio-experiential learning opportunities which can be provided through the use of LMS and CMS where the instructor can monitor the progress of his students.

Rosado and Khuttum (2013) remarked that Web 2.0 platforms enable instructors to create content that can be shared and remixed. Thus, students are active participants in creating, evaluating, transmitting and assimilating knowledge and skills. Henceforth, competence and performance development is observed. In addition, it can enhance student communication, collaboration and classroom engagement.

Lenhart et al (2012) claimed that Facebook is the most popular social network used by students. It enables students to share photographs and personal information and join in groups of similar interests. Moreover, Facebook enabled students and instructors to create, post, link, and comment and customize the course experience every term.

Ractham, Kaewkitipong and Firpo (2012) described the use of Facebook in academic settings which enhanced participation and promoted a positive learning environment in an introductory management information systems course for Thai undergraduates. On the other hand, Cheung and Vogel (2011) claimed that Facebook could enhance communication knowledge and skills between teachers and students.

Eren (2012) conducted a study on a group of 48 undergraduate students who were enrolled in one year compulsory English preparatory class. The research design included a 5 point Likert-type questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. It was found out that students have a very positive attitude towards the use of Facebook activity as a supplement to language classroom, but traditional classroom based language learning still remains a backbone for language education.

Tilfarliglu (2011) has referred to the possibility of including Facebook in education and Mason (2006) pointed out that researchers might be able to make use of the social sites to radically improve education in knowledge and skills through motivating students to be positive inside the classroom.

Mazer (2007) asserted that the use of Facebook can enable students to have successful teaching and learning. In addition, it can strengthen the relationship between the teacher and the student.

Piriyasilpa (2010) found out that the use of the Facebook site as a supplementary material for class room learning has positively enhanced students' knowledge and skills and students opinions about this activity and their use of language in their interaction. The interaction between the students and the teacher also enhances language learning.

Selwyn (2009) conducted a study on a group of 909 students in the United Kingdom. He investigated the educational use of Facebook by students. He referred to the social significance of the Facebook social networking site in the lives of the university students. He found out that that Facebook use among university students has grown rapidly. He found out that Facebook use must be seen as " identity politics of being a student rather than enhancing front stage engagement with formal studies".

On the other hand, Al-Shehri (2011) and Bosch (2009) pointed out that English language teaching suffered from the limitations of the inability to transfer learning outside the classroom. Currently social networking sites help make learning student cantered which might cater for limitation.

2. Problem Statement

In order to supplement the educational process with external support outside the classroom for students studying English language in the English department at the university of Hail, a Facebook website closed to those students and their instructors was designed with the aim of providing students with supplementary material that might contribute to enhance student achievement, particularly knowledge and skills. In this study the researcher aims at investigating the attitudes of students towards the adequacy of the content of literature, linguistics and education in addition to their attitudes towards usability, efficacy of the content and satisfaction. This study might reveal implications that might provide a platform to enhance the learning process in general.

3. Research questions

1-What are the students attitudes towards the factors of the survey namely adequacy of knowledge and skills of the content of literature, linguistics and education in the Facebook website.
2- What are the students attitudes towards the factors of the survey namely efficacy of knowledge and skills of the content of literature, linguistics and education in the Facebook website.
3- Does the Facebook website account for the requirements of usability and satisfaction among the students in the English department.

4. Methodology

4.1 Sampling and Participants

The study was conducted in the English department at the university of Hail, Saudi Arabia and continued for one term from September 2016- to December 2016. The population of the study was 700 students and the sample included 145 students chosen randomly. The sample of the study who participated in the study reviewed the content of Facebook website supplementary material posted regularly by instructors working at the English department. At the end of the term, the researcher distributed a questionnaire on the students to measure their attitudes towards the dimensions of questionnaire that address four criteria of adequacy of content, efficacy of content, usability, and satisfaction towards the knowledge and skills in the Facebook web site.

4.2 Instruments

The researcher adapted and modified the a questionnaire (Lund, 2001) for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire was administered to investigate students' attitudes towards the content of the Facebook website in light of the dimensions of the questionnaire. 145 students from the English department at the university participated in the study and responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire included 4 dimensions, adequacy of content, usability, efficacy of content and satisfaction. Students were asked to decide at which level they agreed with the following statements (1= totally disagree and 5= totally agree).

4.3 Research Design

The study lasted for one term to give sufficient time for the students in the English department at the university of Hail to review the content of the Facebook website. At the end of the term, students answered a twenty one item attitude questionnaire adapted and modified based on Lund (2001). The questionnaire measures attitudes towards adequacy of content, usability, efficacy of content and satisfaction. The questions were classified in light of the questions of the study. The questionnaire was given to two instructors specialized in educational technology for verification of item suitability and clarity of language. Changes to the questionnaire in the form of language, content and terminology were made according to the feedback received. Prior to the main study, a pilot study was carried out to obtain the reliability of the questionnaires used in this research. The pilot study was

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carried out over a period of two weeks on a group of 20 students who were not from the participants of the study. The Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be α= .86 showing that the questionnaire has high reliability. Table 1 shows the distribution of the dimensions to the questions.

Table1: Questionnaire dimensions

No	Questionnaire items	Concerned items
1	Adequacy of content	Q1- Q9
2	Usability	Q10- Q 13
3	Efficacy of content	Q14- Q18
4	Satisfaction	Q19- Q21

5. Findings

5.1 Analysis of the Quantitative data

Table 2 shows that 145 students participated in the study. 136 are Saudi students and only 9 students are non-Saudi. 24 students were in the first year of study, 45 students were in the second year of study and 76 students were in the fourth year of study and above. The age ranges from 18 and 19 years and above.

Table 2: Demographic Factors of Participants

		Frequency	Percent
NATIONAL	Saudi	136	93.8
	Non Saudi	9	6.2
YEAR	First Year	24	16.6
	Second Year	45	31.0
	Third Year	38	26.2
	Fourth years and above	38	26.2
AGE	18-19 years	69	47.6
	20-21 years	38	26.2
	22 years and above	38	26.2
	Total	145	100.0

Table 3 illustrates that the analysis of the students attitudes towards the adequacy of content (items1-6) indicates that 91.25% of the students ranked their scores 'agree' to 'totally agree'. Thus 91.25 % of the students believed that the content of the Facebook website is adequate in knowledge and skills related to literature and linguistics. But the content of education (items 7-9) is not emphasized in the content posted on the Facebook web site. Only 5% of the respondents responded that the Website contains useful knowledge and skills on education, and only 4.8% believed that the educational content is well designed and appeals to their level of understanding.

Table 3: Attitudes towards adequacy of content

	Mean	disagree (%)	Neutral(%)	Agree(%)
q1	4.63	9.0%	.0%	91.0%
q2	4.28	9.0%	4.8%	86.2%
q3	4.63	8.3%	.0%	91.7%
q4	4.30	6.9%	1.4%	91.7%
q5	4.68	6.2%	.0%	93.8%
q6	4.70	4.8%	2.1%	93.1%
q7	1.29	93.8%	1.4%	4.8%
q8	1.52	91.7%	2.8%	5.5%
q9	1.57	86.2%	9.0%	4.8%
Total	3.51			91.25

Table 4 and 5 displays students attitudes towards the Usability and satisfaction of the Facebook website among the students in the English department. Results of the analysis (items 10-13) show that 92.6% of the students ranked their scores "agree" to "totally agree". Thus, 92.6% of the students believed that the content of the Facebook website particularly, literature, linguistics and education appeals to the usability requirements and intuitiveness among students. On the other hand, students attitudes towards Satisfaction (items 19-21) displayed that 93.6 believed that the content of literature, linguistics and education is satisfactory and appropriate for the students and appeals to their level of understanding.

Table 4: Attitudes towards usability

	Mean	disagree (%)	Neutral(%)	Agree(%)
q10	4.61	8.3%	.0%	91.7%
q11	4.57	9.0%	.0%	91.0%
q12	4.72	6.9%	.0%	93.1%
q13	4.72	5.5%	.0%	94.5%
Total	4.66			92.6

Table 5: Attitudes towards satisfaction

	Mean	disagree (%)	Neutral(%)	Agree(%)
q19	4.63	6.9%	.7%	92.4%
q20	4.70	5.5%	.0%	94.5%
q21	4.57	6.3%	.0%	93.8%
Satisfaction	4.63			93.6

Table 6 illustrates the attitudes of students towards efficacy of the knowledge and skills in the content of the Facebook website. 93.5% of the students believed that the content of knowledge and skills has high potential of efficacy in the content of literature, linguistics and education.

Table 6: Attitudes towards efficacy of the content

	Mean	disagree (%)	Neutral(%)	Agree(%)
q14	4.79	4.8%	.7%	94.5%
q15	4.70	5.6%	.0%	94.4%
q16	4.77	3.4%	.0%	96.6%
q17	4.57	6.9%	.7%	92.4%
q18	4.57	10.3%	.0%	89.7%
Efficacy	4.68			93.5

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to investigates the attitudes of students studying in the English department at the university of Hail towards the adequacy of the content, usability and satisfactions, and towards efficacy of the content of the Facebook website. Findings of this research reveals that there are generally high positive attitudes towards all the factors with the exception of the adequacy of the content of education.

The first question of this study investigated students attitudes towards the factors of the survey namely adequacy of knowledge and skills of the content of literature, linguistics and education in the Facebook website. The results of the analysis of the first question displayed that students attitudes towards the content of literature and linguistics was 91.25% which indicates that there is clear interest in these fields of literature and linguistics among instructors in the English department. On the other hand, the results of items 7-9 demonstrated that there is instrumental shortage of topics that cover the field of education in the website 4.8%. This indicates that this field is not sufficiently covered in the Facebook website. On the other hand, the study plan of the English language in the English department reflects similar interests with only three courses on education out of 41 courses that constitute the requirements for BA requirements in the English department.

The results of this question conforms with the results by Rosado and Khuttum (2012) who emphasized that the content of the website influences students who need to evaluate and assimilate required knowledge and skills that could affect student communication and collaboration. Piriyasilpa (2010) also supports these findings through focusing on the interaction element that is provided only by the courses of education such as the course of Techniques of language teaching which emphasizes interaction between students and instructors and between students themselves. The majority of student respondents suggested that there is high adequacy in the knowledge and skills in both literature and linguistics but there was scarcity of the content of education.

Moreover, the content in the part of education is tackled by the studies of Mazman and Usluel (2007) and Selwyn (2009) who emphasized the importance of autonomy and socio-experiential learning opportunities which are displayed in the courses of education that lacks enough content according to the students.

The second question investigated students attitudes towards the factors of the survey namely efficacy of knowledge and skills of the content of literature, linguistics and education in the Facebook website. The results of the question displayed that Facebook is an effective means that clearly enhances students attitudes towards the efficacy of knowledge and skills which ultimately enables students to have successful teaching and

learning experiences (Mazer, 2007). In addition, the Facebook website represents a sort of communication technology that creates a shift from traditional syllabus which positively enhances knowledge and skills in an effective manner (Rosado & Khuttum, 2013 and Piriyasilpa, 2010).

The results of the third question displayed the attitudes of the students towards the requirements of usability and satisfaction. The students in this research demonstrated high positive attitudes towards usability and satisfaction which indicates that the knowledge and skills of literature, linguistics and education is satisfactory and appeals to the requirements and standards by students. This result is supported by studies such as the study by Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr (2012) who found out that Facebook has a significant potential to facilitate communication and increase student participation, collaboration, information sharing, and critical thinking. Another study by Lenhart et al (2012) referred to the ability of Facebook to create, post, link and comment on the knowledge and skills provided. Other studies by Ractham, Kaewkitipong and Firpo (2012) displayed that Facebook enhanced participation and promoted a positive learning environment among students.

7. Recommendations

The findings suggest that Facebook can be a useful tool that could provide students with adequate knowledge and skills in both literature and linguistics. This is apparent in the high positive attitudes by students. Students were able to use the knowledge and skills and were satisfied with the content presented in the Facebook, which might be considered a good supplementary material to curriculum. The issue of the low attitudes towards the inadequacy of the content of education needs further investigation because this branch of knowledge is highly applicable to most of the students in their future professions. In addition, the attitudes of instructors may also be investigated. On the other hand, it would be interesting to investigate the effect of using Blackboard in order to make a comparison between this research and using other tools in other learning management systems (LMS). This might reveal further implications to enhance the learning process. Moreover, more interest needs to be given to the content of the Facebook, particularly the content of the courses of education that could make integration between the outcomes of this branch of knowledge and the needs of the labour market in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, this research might be used in other universities for more investigation and implications.

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