

Thriving Social Network for Communication on eLearning: Exploring Gender Differences in Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to survey online students' attitudes towards communication for eLearning on social network sites. This online survey resulted in 896 valid responses. The statistics for interpreting were percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test independent and one-way ANOVA. The average score of the attitude towards using eLearning on social network site was positive (4.23 out of 6, $SD=1.10$). The findings confirmed that the most popular among social network sites was Facebook. It also found a statistically significant difference between genders' attitude, where by the female attitude scored higher than male, and both being positive. The highest attitude earned from the survey concluding students believed that social networks support eLearning potential (4.31 out of 6, $SD=1.30$). There was a statistically significant difference in attitude for participants who had varied experiences using eLearning. Participants who were experienced in both formal and informal eLearning showed a higher attitude towards eLearning on social network sites as opposed to participants who used informal eLearning only.

Keywords

Attitude, Communication, eLearning, Facebook, Learning Management Systems (LMS), Social Network

1. INTRODUCTION

The research focuses on how to improve quality of eLearning especially the approach of a better eLearning design in terms of effective communication in the era of social media is in great demand. This research aimed to investigate online students' attitude towards eLearning delivery on social network sites via an online survey. One of the main reason support this is a disruptive technology era that influence education institutions to consider broadening effective ways to delivery online courses to teenager students. In practice, eLearning in the 21st century is one of the main modes that most university students familiar and prefer [3, 6] which should be accessible effectively via any "channels" or applications users prefer. Social network sites become a common channel of communication given its potential and effective technology. From a learning perspective eLearning through social network sites can be a preferred mode of education anywhere and

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anytime as well as providing supportive learning in a virtual environment that has the capacity to deliver content seamlessly. Traditional eLearning normally occurs through traditional Learning Management Systems (LMSs) which is separated platform from users' online activities or daily channel. Even the traditional LMSs expanded their supports to cover responsive web design that can be viewed on mobile devices but this function might not encourage students to stay connect with eLearning information.

An opportunity to communicate with peers and instructors on social network sites is more flexible and user-friendly, while formal LMSs are an isolated system which is content-centred rather than student-centred [6]. Many eLearning courses integrate social networks sites as a part of eLearning systems given the increasing number of users on social network sites. Thus, it is crucial to examine students' attitude towards eLearning on social network sites given the increasing prevalence of social networking sites among users. A disruptive technology was first coined by Clayton in 1997 [8]. Disruptive technology was introduced and defined as in parallel category with sustaining technology [8]. The form of disruptive innovation referred to any new products that displace industry or create invention such as typewriters were replaced by the personal computer (PC) and then influenced the way that people communicate in the Internet era later [8]. The principle of disruptive innovation depended on positive concepts in terms of improving quality products to even better and, more accessible goods that were more affordable and aimed at a mass market [4]. Disruptive technology represents parallels with future education products as an influential to catalyst equitable access to high-quality education that reduced costs and offer personalized education systems [4]. Social networking is another classical case which already disrupted SMS, Fax, telephone, email, event planning and online chatting. Social networking is increasingly used as common personal interaction and communicating on the telephone and facsimiles has fallen by the way: or "disrupted."

Social network sites is one of the disruptive technologies which has a major impact on the way people and particular students and teachers communicate especially for digital learning or eLearning environment as people already access social network sites constantly [6, 9, 33]. In 2010 the demise of the printed Oxford dictionary was a decision by the publisher since given the superior online business model that was demanded by customers [15]. Disruptive technology in digital learning is a non-traditional-solution that induced many opportunities for new ways within eLearning beyond online traditional education [33]. It was predicted that disruption can occur in any kind of business which includes eLearning and an effective way to prepare is to pay attention to students' online behaviour to guide the implementation of changes based on the virtual practices adopted by students [18]. Unfortunately, the traditional LMS was claimed to be a "just in case service" or a course catalogue for formal education [6]. The demand of new learning architecture needs to be developed such as a concept of instructional design which will then be transformed to