SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION: A DISTRACTION OR MOTIVATION?

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ABSTRACT
It is important to assess students' perceptions of social media tools and how these tools are used for learning. The purpose of this study is to provide information on student use of social media in order to assess how the perceived the impact of social media in relation to learning. Also, to determine whether using social media tools was perceived by students as a distraction from learning and to equally examine whether using social media tools for learning did intimidate students especially, those students who were not savvy in the use of social media tools. The idea is to provide information to instructors on the perceived impact of using social media for learning purposes so that they could develop strategy to deal with any concerns that might emerge following the application of social media as learning tools during classroom instruction. The study examined students' perceptions of Facebook, Twitter and blogs as tools for learning in a classroom environment.
Keywords: social media, distraction, motivation, higher education, empirical study

INTRODUCTION

The traditional teaching methods usually focus on theory than practice; hence they are largely criticized by employers. Recently new technological gadgets and tools like social media reached for help to offer a new way to integrate theory and practice in teaching. Recording and uploading as well as downloading media to social platforms and promoting content access could lead interactive and cooperative learning environments. Social Media, especially Facebook in our case would reveal positive effects on students' learning experience and process and class environment, since students can put their practical knowledge in use, share, collect, and recall, collaborate and learn in learner centric environment.

Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) have affected all aspects of our lives, including and especially educational processes. Because of several reasons like dominance of traditional teaching methods and not well qualified teaching staff etc., technological advances have not been adequately applied into the educational settings. New educational technologies can help instructors to create more meaningful learning tasks in a better and innovative ways.

Social media has been studied for sharing learning experiences, research, academic events and getting the latest information by the users. However, using social media in learning and teaching process has not very well explored. Especially Facebook can help students' to transfer their knowledge into the practice. Although very important, educational systems in developing countries usually do not emphasize practical skills development and turning theoretical knowledge into practical skills.

In today's competitive environments where time and place losing their importance, employees are expected to communicate real time and form strong bounds and build stronger communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is remarkably pervasive and most would argue ubiquitous among college students (Doshi, 2011). Social media is called "social" for a reason (King, 2012); it enables group communication to be quick and concise. College students use social media sites at a higher rate than the general population because they have easier access to the internet (Jones, Johnson-Yale, Millermaier, & Perez, 2009). With Facebook, social networking is much more flexible and versatile because it had features to upload pictures, videos and calendar events (Tagtmeier, 2010). According to Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2006), Facebook had been found to strengthen communication using chat and bulletin boards to teach and administer courses. Lampe et al. (2006) argued that Facebook is used to download supplemental materials to support educational process.

On the other hand, Twitter allows text with various links, but then users have the ability to link their accounts to other services. For instance, when a class was using Twitter and used the hashtag, all members that were involved with that class could click on the hashtag and follow others who were tweeting about the same class

assignment. Twitter permits users to host book chat sessions; for example, an English professor could assign a novel to be read. The professor could tweet open-ended questions using a hashtag, thus precipitating a class discussion.

This was a good example of how the hashtag could be used; each student wrote open- ended questions to encourage posting and continuous collaboration on the materials or book being discussed. In addition, students and faculty could use the hashtag to clarify communication.

Social media is used in classrooms for posting daily assignments. For example, at the beginning of a class period, a professor could ask students to post comments or answers to questions on the board using Facebook, Twitter, or blog accounts for that class. After the class period, students could continue collaborating with one another using social media tools as they continued to discuss and post their views. Professors and students could see threads (meaning the professor posted a comment and all comments after the first post composed a thread and continued conversations for a longer period of time than the regular class period). The availability of the apps on the smart devices creates easy access to information and other students via social media. Rogers (2013) noted that over 60% of faculty that used social media maintained that it increased communication. Easy access to social media provides students with a variety of opportunities to articulate their concerns about their studies and receive feedback from instructors, thereby providing an opportunity that helps students to succeed. Students also benefits from the abundance of information that they receive and share. Devaney (2013) stated that social media tools could boost student engagement, link students to content experts and real-world examples of classroom lessons, and could help them establish an online body of work.

With social media becoming so common for classroom use, faculty listed two top concerns (Rogers, 2013). The primary concern was that social media used as a learning tool affected the completion of the assignments and the distraction it caused for students. However, previous researchers suggested that social media tools were viewed as distracting and therefore hampered learning (Devaney, 2013). The current research examined these perceptions and usage of social media among students.

Education and Social Media

The use of blogs had completely changed the characteristics of communication, thus giving leeway for more dialogue, discussion and debate, emphasizing Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism. Blogs helped the students work together, engaging in writing and assembling one thought after another, thus enhancing the learning process of social collaboration. Vygotsky (1978) believed in constructivist theory, which supported collaboration between teachers and students as well as among students themselves; the use of blogs seemed to promote such collaboration. When blogs were used in a higher education classroom, it created a contractual learning environment, which supported knowledge development through engagement, reflection, and collaboration—thus, the importance of the perception of students using social media in a higher education learning environment. Ferdig and Trammell (2004), contended that blogs "[were] useful teaching and learning tools because they provided space for students to reflect and publish their thoughts and understandings and that since blogs could be commented on, they provide opportunities for feedback and potential scaffolding of new ideas" (p. 2). Blogs could successfully be merged into several classes where students and professors communicated with each other throughout the semester.

Facebook becomes more important when discussing active learning (Chickering & Gamison, 1991). Active learning involved collaboration through teamwork and discussion with peers. One advantage of Facebook was that it allowed for communication between students and faculty to be quick and easy (Bosch, 2009). Facebook not only helped with the classroom collaboration, but it also helped with students integrating into the higher education learning environment (Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2010). Facebook had been used frequently in the learning environment for the exchange of course related files and information such as the class syllabus, lecture notes, and worksheets. The most compelling data showed that 56 % of students reported that they used Facebook often for purposes of exchanging course- related information. Only 30% rarely used Facebook, and 14% never used Facebook in such ways (Antoniou, Theodoropoulos, Christopoulou & Lepouras, 2014). At that time, Facebook engaged approximately 80 to 90% of college and university students (Educause, 2007).

In March 2006, Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Bliz Stone and Evan Williams launched the Twitter social media website (Johnson, 2013). Twitter was a social media tool that was intended to keep friends and colleagues informed of current information throughout the day. However, after launching, Twitter was widely used for instant feedback, thus becoming a social media tool for communication. Over time, Twitter had become an integrated part of higher education, opening a new surge of communication between faculty and students (Bista, 2014). Posts on Twitter, known as tweets, consisted of only 140 characters; with these characters, users could

monitor feeds that were organized in news bulletins. These news bulletins were constantly streaming and updated on any smart device where social media could be accessed. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) found that increased engagement through Twitter empowered students, thus translating into retention, course enjoyment, and student achievement. With Twitter, students achieved the ability to write quickly and concisely. Students also used Twitter as a backchannel (listening in class as the professors lectured and responding with tweets) for collaboration between classes and with faculty asking questions, brainstorming and focusing on in class and out of class discussion (Bista, 2015). A study at Michigan State (Lyle, 2012) revealed that students who engaged on interaction with their peers using Twitter reported higher and better grades.

According to Lyle (2012), "Twitteracy, Tweeting [was] viewed as a new literary practice" (p. 2). In the report of the Michigan State study, the author (Lyle) further acknowledged that the "literary practice" described faculty who actively engaged students with Twitter. Ultimately, the classes were more interesting, and the students received higher grades. With Twitter, the students' perception was as though the connection with faculty and others within the class was real, and learning was not just for the sake of learning. Chickering and Gamson (1987) suggested seven principles that enhanced student engagement with Twitter and other social media tools used in higher education. The principles were: (1) student and faculty contact; (2) cooperation among students; (3) active learning; (4) prompt feedback; (5) emphasizing time on tasks; (6) communicating high expectations; and (7) respecting others. With these steps, the faculty built a Twitter account for the class and, thus, the entire class' communication was enhanced.

Facebook, Twitter, and blogs offered opportunities for collaboration whereby students exchange ideas. Students also shared information about class activities and supported one another. Once the collaboration took place, the learning process was enriched. With Twitter, the same scenario related except that students would follow their threads and see who replied. The same concept applied with blogs, but the journal entries were longer than the 140 characters that were allowed with Twitter. Facebook, Twitter, and blogs allowed for instant response; the theories supported the notion that knowledge was a state that was attainable through reasoning or experiences (Siemens, 2004).

Connectivism and Social Media

Connectivism provides insight into learning skills and tasks needed for learners to flourish in a digital era or the era where social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) is the learning tool of choice. Siemens (2004) advocates that the four components of connectivism that link social media as a learning tool include:

- Learning and knowledge in diversity of opinions
- Nurturing and maintaining connections learning
- Ability to connect ideas and concepts
- Currency (providing opportunity for up-to-date knowledge

Using these four components of connectivism with Facebook, Twitter, and blogs as learning tools, students are able to be connected and receive information from one and another. For example, in a political science class with the main topic being the presidential election, each student thought differently. They could share knowledge, poll predictions, and debate summaries on their social media feeds. These thoughts were coming from a diverse learning community. With this method of the learning process, each student was connected and understood each person's opinions. These principles allowed up-to-date knowledge to be transferred at the stroke of a fingertip with threads, a quick tweet, or a comment on a blog posting.

Connectivism as a learning theory could illustrate how social media is used to provide data for students to learn and share information in a higher education learning environment. Siemens (2014) maintained that connectivism presented a model of learning that recognized the tectonic shifts in society where learning was no longer an internal, individualistic activity. Educational tended to be slow to recognize new learning tools and how environmental changes with respect to new theories and technologies (Facebook, Twitter and blogs). Connectivism provides insight into how learning could flourish in a digital era or the era where social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) is available (Siemens, 2014).

Another learning theory that coincided with Vygotsky's (1962) social learning was Lave and Wenger's (1990) Situated Learning Theory. The basic concept of this theory was that abstract knowledge that was usually obtained in the classroom was harder to retain.

Researchers Lave and Wenger (1990) explained that: "information and facts that are hard to retain when they were drilled out of any meaningful context and are learned much more effortlessly when learners are acquiring them as a game or through social media such as blogs. Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter allow

learners, once they have moved beyond personal connection, to embrace a community where they can learn from each other. Social interaction played a significant role in the learning process. The contextual understanding thus gained not only allows them to understand concepts better but also helps them learn from peers about how to apply them" (Origin Learning, 2015, para. 7).

Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) emphasized that social interaction was a critical component of situated learning. These researchers insisted that learning both inside and outside the classroom, advanced through collaboration using social media tools, constructed and built knowledge. Brown et al. (1989) maintained that when using social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) learning was inadvertent rather that deliberate.

Knowles (1975) developed the theory of andragogy and maintained that adults believed in self-direction. He also contended that adult learners did better when they participated in learning and understanding the immediate use of knowledge they would acquire. Self-directed learning was a concept meaning individuals took the initiative with or without help to be responsible for their learning needs. Students took control of how much they learned and the methods that were used for learning. The students used learning strategies, which consisted of communicating and implementing tactics that included collaboration, which reinforced ideas and small groups that discussed new and old class materials. Social media tools and networking provided a learning environment that enhanced adult learners. With these strategies, self-directed learning opened opportunities for social media in the higher learning environment. Ericken (1984) stated that students did not learn by just sitting in the classroom; students learned by interacting with others.

Academic Achievement and Social Media

Facebook, Twitter and blogs have become parts of students' everyday lives. The easy access of such websites might contribute to distractions during class learning, thus causing low productivity (James, 2012). The continuous access of these sites makes it difficult for students to shift from social mode to learning mode (James, 2012). For the most part, social media sites with constant accessibility could cause lack of sleep, and the need to check the sites during class times could lead to distraction from studies (James, 2012). Therefore, constant access to these social media sites might lead to a dip in academic performance, which might lead to frustration. Additional distractions happen when a quick Tweet became a long running open discussion, and a quick check of a Facebook post turned into hours of checking one post after another. Therefore, valuable study time or working on class projects is lost (James, 2012).

Astin (1984) maintained that students who reached their academic goals set aside time and put forth effort on their assignments to reach those goals. Getting suitable grades or finishing the academic journey was an important goal. Therefore, the amount of time students spent studying was critical (Astin, 1984). Spending time on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other social media sites lessened the allotted time to focus on academic activities. Thus, grades suffered, and the academic journey was longer.

In 2009, a Stanford University experimental and observational study provided evidence that students who multi-task were poor in many cognitive tasks (Ophir, Nass, & Wagner, 2009). The study was a trait multitasking index design with intentionally distracting elements. This study was conducted in five parts: a media use questionnaire, an index of three sets of cognitive experiments (part I, II, and III) and a final set of questionnaires administered online. On average, during the administering of the test, the multitaskers (the ones that were using Facebook, Twitter and studying all at the same time) responded 77 seconds slower in identifying patterns than the lower multitaskers, the ones that were using a blog and studying (Ophir et al., 2009). The study suggested that the heavy media multitaskers were distracted by the multiple streams of media they consumed (Ophir et al., 2009). Ophir, Nass, and Wagner (2009) maintained that during the study, multitaskers were asked to recall parts of a long-term memory test, they (the multitaskers) often falsely identified the elements. These findings strengthened the argument that multitasking and using social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and blogs) in higher education caused distraction (Ophir et al., 2009). These authors (Ophir, Nass, and Wagner) believed that the research was almost unanimous that those students who chronically multi-task showed an enormous range of deficits.

Juncos's (2012) study at EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) found that 73% of students texted daily, another 99% owned laptops and 90% used social media. Facebook was the most popular site used—averaging 97%. Rosen, Carrier, and Cheever (2013) pointed that 97% of the students who used Facebook had extremely lower grades. Rosen et al. (2013) noted that the students who accessed Facebook while studying had lower GPAs than those who did not access Facebook. Rosen et al. (2013) argued that network living or too much social media while learning could result to learning distraction. This research (Rosen et al., 2013) predicted that the impact of social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, and blogs) would drive students to instantaneous gratification. According to Rosen et al. (2013), students preferred quick choices and exhibit no patience. Some

of the studies reviewed indicated that social media could result to distraction in learning in higher education. It appeared the questions of distraction and intimidation for students remained unclear, thus highlighting the importance of this study.

METHOD

The study was based on a survey design, which was a self-reporting method of data collection (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). The survey design enabled the researcher to collect data to assess students' perceptions of social media tools as learning devices during classroom instruction.

Two basic MIS classes housed in the School of Business from a Sakarya University in Turkey were selected to participate in the current study. These two classes were chosen because their instructors used Facebook, Twitter and blogs to facilitate instruction during normal classroom activity. Therefore, the two classes were purposefully selected and were suitable for this study because the students who registered in these two classes had experience using Facebook, Twitter and blogs to support their learning in a normal learning environment. The total number of students enrolled in the two classes was 114. However, only 109 students completed the questionnaire. The return rate was 95.61%. As a result, the population of the study was made up of 109 students who completed the survey. The instructors in charge of the two classes that were involved in the study gave the researcher access to their classrooms for the purposes of data collection. Student participation was voluntary.

FINDINGS

Data collected for this study were analyzed using a variety of descriptive statistics, which included frequencies, percentages and median scores. A Mann Whitney U-test, a nonparametric counterpart of the t-test was used to examine if differences existed between male and female students in their perception of social media tools (Facebook, Twitter and blogs). Kruskal Wallis H tests, the nonparametric counterparts to the (Analysis of Variance) ANOVA tests, were employed to assess if differences existed among the participants in their responses to various questionnaire items based on age.

Participants were almost equally weighted in terms of gender, 51.38% of respondents identified themselves as males and 48.62% identified themselves as females. All the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25. Majority of the participants (89.91%) was between 18 and 20 years of age.

Perception of Learning Tools

The findings revealed that students were less positive about using Facebook as a learning tool. Also majority of the participants did not perceive that Facebook did provide opportunity for them to be resourceful when they used it (Facebook) for learning. The results indicated that most students did not believe that Facebook had helped them to engage in the learning activities during instruction. Overall, students did not seem enthusiastic about using Facebook for learning.

Table 1: Facebook as a Learning Tool

	Questionnaire Items	% Strongly Disagree (n)	% Disagree (n)	% Undecided (n)	% Agree (n)	% Strongly Agree (n)
1	I enjoy using Facebook for educational purposes.	15.79% 15	33.68% 32	22.11% 21	25.26% 24	3.16% 3
2.	I am resourceful when I use Facebook for learning because I can engage with other students.	11.58% 11	33.68% 32	30.53% 29	22.11% 21	2.11% 2
3.	I believe teachers should use Facebook in the classroom to expand learning materials.	13.98% 13	35.48% 33	35.48% 33	13.98% 13	1.08% 1
4	My instructor uses Facebook in the classroom.	42.55% 40	44.68% 42	11.70% 11	1.06% 1	0.00% 0
5	My instructor does not use Facebook effectively for teaching.	11.58% 11	15.79% 15	45.26% 43	22.11% 21	5.26% 5

6	Using Facebook in the classroom is not enjoyable.	8.42% 8	20.00% 19	46.32% 44	22.11% 21	3.16% 3
7	Using Facebook in the classroom makes the information presented reflect life experiences.	9.47% 9	20.00% 19	40.00% 38	26.32% 25	4.21% 4
8	Facebook helps student to engage in classroom activities.	14.74% 14	25.26% 24	34.74% 33	22.11% 21	3.16% 3
9	Facebook does not promote collaborative learning among students.	6.32% 6	25.26% 24	36.84% 35	24.21% 23	7.37% 7

The results showed that most students did not enjoy using Twitter for educational purposes and most of the students did not perceive that using Twitter during instruction made learning a fun activity. The average score for students' perception of Twitter as a learning tool was 2.79. The result showed that the participants were undecided in their perception of Twitter as a learning tool. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Twitter as a Learning Tool

	Questionnaire Items	**% Strongly Disagree (n)**	**% Disagree (n)**	**% Undecided (n)**	**% Agree (n)**	**% Strongly Agree (n)**
1	I enjoy using Twitter for educational purposes.	18.48% 17	28.26% 26	27.17% 25	22.83% 21	3.26% 3
2	I am resourceful when I use Twitter for learning because I can engage with other students in a collaborative way.	19.78% 18	19.78% 18	30.77% 28	26.37% 24	3.30% 3
3	I believe teachers should use Twitter in the classroom to expand the learning materials.	19.78% 18	20.88% 19	34.07% 31	20.88% 19	4.40% 4
4	My instructor does not use Twitter for teaching	10.11% 9	6.74% 6	30.34% 27	39.33% 35	13.48% 12
5	Using Twitter in the classroom does not make learning to be a fun activity.	9.89% 9	17.58% 16	45.05% 41	23.08% 21	4.40% 4
6.	I enjoy using Twitter to brainstorm while completing classroom assignments.	16.30% 15	21.74% 20	39.13% 36	20.65% 19	2.17% 2
7	Using Twitter in the classroom makes the information presented reflect life experiences.	15.22% 14	21.74% 20	32.61% 30	28.26% 26	2.17% 2
8	Twitter helps to makes learning engaging for students because it helps to promote classroom participation.	16.30% 15	18.48% 17	34.78% 32	28.26% 26	2.17% 2
9	Twitter does not promote collaborative learning among students.	8.70% 8	17.39% 16	40.22% 37	29.35% 27	4.35% 4

Students were undecided in their perception of blogs as perceived learning tools. Majority of the participants selected the neutral degree on the scale. On the other hand, number of disagreeing students were more than agree and disagree populations as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Blogs as Learning Tools

	Questionnaire Items	% Strongly Disagree (n)	% Disagree (n)	% Undecided (n)	% Agree (n)	% Strongly Agree (n)
1	I enjoy using Blogs for educational purposes.	11.36% 10	28.41% 25	32.95% 29	25.00% 22	2.27% 2
2	I am resourceful when I use Blogs for learning because I can engage with other students.	4.55% 4	25.00% 22	36.36% 32	28.41% 25	5.68% 5
3	I believe teachers should use Blogs in the classroom to expand learning materials.	5.68% 5	19.32% 17	43.18% 38	28.41% 25	3.41% 3
4	My teacher uses Blogs in their classrooms.	15.12% 13	30.23% 26	37.21% 32	16.28% 14	1.16% 1
5	My instructor does not use Blogs for teaching.	3.45% 3	11.49% 10	39.08% 34	32.18% 28	13.79% 12
6	I enjoy using Blogs to brainstorm while completing classroom assignments.	5.81% 5	20.93% 18	50.00% 43	22.09% 19	1.16% 1
7	Using Blogs in the classroom does not make learning a fun activity.	2.27% 2	23.86% 21	45.45% 40	20.45% 18	7.95% 7
8	Using Blogs in the classroom makes the information presented reflect life experiences.	3.41% 3	17.05% 15	50.00% 44	27.27% 24	2.27% 2
9	Blogs make learning engaging for students because it promotes active classroom participation	4.55% 4	17.05% 15	47.73% 42	28.41% 25	2.27% 2
10	Blogs do not promote collaborative learning among students.	6.98% 6	18.60% 16	52.33% 45	19.77% 17	2.33% 2

Perception of Learning Distraction

The results showed that some students disagreed, some were undecided that advertisement posted in the Facebook was viewed as a source of distraction. However, other students did agree that Facebook advertisement was perceived a distraction. On the other hand the mean score of students' perceptions of Facebook as a possible source of intimidation was 3.00, indicating that the students were undecided.

Table 4: Facebook as a Distraction Tool

	Questionnaire Items	% Strongly Disagree (n)	% Disagree (n)	% Undecided (n)	% Agree (n)	% Strongly Agree (n)
1	I am distracted by advertisements contained in Facebook when they pop up during classroom instruction.	7.55% 8	23.58% 25	31.13% 33	29.25% 31	8.49% 9
2	Using Facebook in the classroom is distracting.	5.66 6	20.75 22	32.08 34	30.19 32	11.32 12
3	I am not distracted when Facebook is used for classroom learning.	11.54 12	30.77 32	36.54 38	18.27 19	2.88 3
4	I use Facebook as a way to avoid participation in class activities.	8.49 9	27.36 29	32.08 34	25.47 27	6.60 7
5	I spend more time on Facebook	20.75	26.42	27.36	22.64	2.83

	than I do studying on weekly basis.	22	28	29	24	3
6	I am distracted from my studies when my Facebook friends create new updates (photos, status updates, etc.).	15.09 16	17.92 19	35.85 38	25.47 27	5.66 6
7	I do not feel distracted from the materials I receive from Facebook.	5.66 6	25.47 27	41.51 44	21.70 23	5.66 6

In general, the findings revealed that many students perceived that Twitter could not help students to concentrate in their studies while a far greater majority neither agreed nor disagreed on the perceived impact of Twitter during classroom instruction. The average score of students' perceptions of twitter as a possible source of distraction was 2.98, showing that the students were undecided.

Table 5: Twitter as a Distraction Tool

	Questionnaire Items	% Strongly Disagree (n)	% Disagree (n)	% Undecided (n)	% Agree (n)	% Strongly Agree (n)
1	I am distracted by advertisements contained in Twitter when they pop up during classroom instruction.	11.88% 12	20.79% 21	37.62% 38	23.76% 24	5.94% 6
2	Using Twitter in the classroom is distracting.	3.96 4	17.82 18	38.61 39	33.66 34	5.94 6
3	I am not distracted when Twitter is used for classroom learning.	11.00 11	22.01 24	50.00 50	13.00 13	2.00 2
4	I use Twitter as a way to avoid participation in class activities.	8.91 9	19.80 20	36.63 37	31.68 32	2.97 3
5	I spend more time on Twitter than I do studying on weekly basis.	23.76 24	17.82 18	36.63 37	16.83 17	4.95 5
6	I am distracted from my studies when my Twitter friends create new updates (photos, status updates, etc.).	14.14 14	22.22 22	33.33 33	27.27 27	3.03 3
7	I do not feel distracted from the materials I receive from Twitter.	8.25 9	22.01 24	41.28 45	15.59 17	4.58 5

The results showed that many students were not decided in their perception that blogs were perceived to distract students from learning. The average score of students' perceptions of blogs as possible sources of distraction was 2.72, revealing that the students were undecided.

CONCLUSIONS

The results did indicate that 25.26% of the students agreed that they used Facebook for educational reasons while 33.68 disagreed. The results equally revealed that only six (6.90%) students strongly agreed that Twitter helped to expand the learning materials. The understanding was that majority of the students were not enthusiastic about using social media as learning devices. The finding showed that there were no statistical significant differences between male and female students in their perception of social media (Facebook, Twitter and blogs) as tools for learning. These findings were consistent with the findings from the research carried out by

Efi and Andrew (2015) which revealed that no differences existed among students involved in their study based on gender. However, the study of Garber (2012) did show that females were more likely than males to use social media to communicate with "classmates," indicating that gender differences in social media usage outside the classroom might still impact classroom dynamics through community building extending beyond the physical walls of the classroom. Additionally, the results revealed that females actively participated in discussion forums than males, which might have important implications for determining gender differences in engagement levels while utilizing social media.

Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr (2010), revealed that blogs had declined among teens and young adults. As the group surveyed for this study was predominately young adults, this decline might explain the overall non-significant findings found among students. The findings of the present study indicated that only small number of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoy using blogs for educational purposes. The rationale could be that students preferred using shorter and quicker message formats through mobile device tools like Twitter or Facebook.

Although, the results of the present study did indicate that there was no statistical significance difference among the participants in their perception of social media tools for learning based on gender; however, Garber (2012) found that female bloggers tended to update their information more frequently than their male counterparts did. Women blog contents were more personally oriented in a journalistic style while men talked more about tangible items and purchases (cars and computers; (Herring & Paolillo, 2006).

Findings showed that gender difference existed for postings that were more reflective and personal, and not content or educationally based. The findings of the present study did not support the views expressed by Herring and Paolillo (2006) which revealed that there were no statistical significant differences among the students based on ethnicity about blog perceived learning intimidation and perceived learning distraction. Herring and Paolillo noted that the findings of their study did not support the work of Lenhart et al. (2010) who found that there were no differences among the participants based on ethnicity regarding students' perception of social media as learning tools.

This study provided insight to teachers who might desire to use social media in the classroom. For instance, one of the findings of the present study revealed that Twitter seemed to appeal to African American students. These students perceived that Twitter provided opportunity for collaborative learning and sharing of ideas and this could help improve the level of involvement among students during classroom instruction. As universities seek to increase their retention rates, it might be beneficial to consider the influence that twitter has with this ethnic group. However, as noted previously, Twitter was also viewed as a source distraction. As a result, it might be more pragmatic to utilize Twitter in a manner that was restricted to showing feed only from the classroom and for educational purposes, while ignoring feed from external influences such as news outlets, celebrity gossip, and updates from friends and family. Future studies might be used to examine why African American students tended to favor Twitter more than other ethnicities and why Twitter was preferred over other social media outlets. Having this knowledge might help developers of social media technology in designing application that would be engaging, while minimizing distractions to encourage collaborative and meaningful learning.

Another recommendation would be to examine how much of the classroom usage of social media was for actual academic learning as opposed to sharing personal information. It would important to focus on more meaningful connections instead of the surface level connections that were provided through common classroom social media use such as polling or fact accumulation through hashtag (Knight & Kaye, 2014). Future studies were recommended to replicate the framework of the present research to cover mores courses and expand the population to include online classes, where diverse age groups were likely to be found. Furthermore, future studies could also be conducted at multiple institutions, which could include private and public institutions. It was equally recommended that further study be done that could include more minority groups using qualitative research methodologies.

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