The Role of Social Media Competencies in Effective Teaching and Teacher Performance

Irameet Kaur, The Northcap University, Gurgaon, India
Charu Shri, The Northcap University, Gurgaon, India
K. M. Mital, The Northcap University, Gurgaon, India

ABSTRACT

The “Digital India” is leading to mass harnessing of the power of social media in every industry including the academic fraternity. The vast reach of social media is now being captured by academicians worldwide and educators are actively adopting various social media tools for personal and professional use. However, with the multitude of available approaches and pedagogical ways, it becomes a challenge to select the most appropriate one for teaching related activities. The paper attempts to identify and analyse the social media competencies and their effect on the knowledge, skill and attitude to produce superior performance by teachers. The statistical technique of Structural Equation Modelling has been applied to develop a model. It was inferred that social media competencies have a significant impact on the core competencies of teachers to achieve superior performance. The results suggest that the use of social media should be encouraged and appropriate strategies should be devised for its usage to make learning more interesting and informative.

Keywords: Competencies, Social Media Competencies, Teacher Performance, Teaching Competencies, Teaching Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

The “Digital India” wave has swept the entire India and the Indians worldwide alike. Our country is a young nation, having the fastest growing Internet-using population in the world and it is another of the “Modi effects” that the power of social media is now being harnessed by virtually every industry in India. The potential of using social media has also been realised by the academicians and professionals who are closely associated with this field. The vast reachability of social media is now being captured by academicians in the higher education sector.
worldwide. Majority of the users use social media in an informal way to maintain friendships and benefit from mutual interests. However, it has the potential to be used for supporting and enhancing teaching and learning activities. Besides enabling teachers to share information and develop relations, it also hosts several learning styles inside and outside the classroom (Celep, Konakh and Kuyumeu, 2014). Like minded groups or individuals can interact and exchange information which is of their interest. Social media is also being used by students as a tool that assists them in their academic studies and team based work. Moreover, it is also serving as an easy and readily available platform for interaction between the educators and students. It can be used to form study groups, research groups, projects, distance education and online information about events in the academic sector. They facilitate in developing better communication channels between a teacher and a student, improve communication abilities, widening the participation and cooperation based learning. It provides as a medium where teachers can utilize their personal as well as professional abilities to enhance teaching effectiveness and their own development.

Recent study by Celep, Konakh and Kuyumeu (2014) in US reveals that social media is mainly used for knowledge sharing and content related activities like educational videos and puzzles. However, Indian Universities are now realising the importance of online presence in the digital age. Sociovarsity has conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of Indian Universities using social media to obtain a social IQ index. The survey reveals that 86% of the Indian users use social media sites with 39% in the age group 25-34 years. Facebook emerged out to be the most popular site followed by Google +, Twitter and LinkedIn. The social media is now widely being used both outside and inside the classroom to communicate and foster relationships in the academic environment (Pearson, 2010; Seaman and Tinti-Kane, 2013). It is becoming increasingly important for the educators of today to develop specific competencies which enable them to use social media effectively and efficiently, for incorporating the technology in pedagogically meaningful ways. The educators are actively joining various social media networks and adopting a variety of information sharing tools for personal and professional use. However, with the multitude of available approaches, tools, sites and pedagogical ways, it becomes a challenge to select the most appropriate one for teaching and related activities. The teachers therefore need to continually develop and upgrade their social media competencies. Being competent in social media usage is not only beneficial for pedagogical reasons, but also for their overall performance and growth. The relevance of social media in teaching has been a topic of wide discussion and research. However, scant research has been reported for identifying the social media competencies required to become an effective teacher. The papers attempts to identify and analyse the social media competencies and their effect on the core competencies of teachers – knowledge, skill and attitude to produced superior performance outcomes. The statistical technique of Structural Equation Modelling has been applied to achieve the same and the interpretations and implications have been discussed in the end.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN TEACHING

There has been ample discussion on the relevance of digitalization and social media in education. Many authors have suggested that use of social media can be pedagogically beneficial (McLoughlin and Lee, 2007, 2008, 2010) along with a cognitive environment, collaboration and networking. It has also been indicated that effective social media usage can help foster engagement levels between student-student, student-teacher and student-content (Junco, Heiberger and Loken, 2011; Blaschke, Porto and Kurtz, 2010) besides promoting cognitive, creative and critical thinking skills. Social media also promotes independent learning and opportunity to manage own
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