Social Networks as a Tool for E-Collaborative Learning and its Effects on Knowledge Acquisition and Satisfaction Among Al-Aqsa University Students

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to identify the effectiveness of social networks as a tool for E-collaborative learning on knowledge acquisition among the students of the Faculty of Education at Al-Aqsa University and satisfaction towards it. To answer the study questions, the developmental research methodology and a one experimental group design with Pre-Post Tests was selected. So, the researchers developed: List of content Analysis of “Evaluation & Measurement” Course, Social networks strategy design as E-collaborative learning tool using Elgazzar (2012) ISD model, two approved research tools (knowledge acquisition and satisfaction). Participants were 33 students of the Faculty of Education at Al-Aqsa University. The study concluded that: 1. There are significant differences at level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the two means of pre-post scores of the Acquisition of knowledge and favor to the post test 2. There are significant differences at level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the two means of pre-post scores of the total score and the dimensions of the satisfaction and favor to the post test.

KEYWORDS

Acquisition Knowledge, Al-Aqsa University, E-Collaboration Learning, ICT, Social Networks, Strategy Design, Student Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offers a lot of alternatives which enable the use of social media in education. It provides free space which enable the students to procedure the interactive dialog within the so-called (virtual communities) where synergies and integration take place between outcomes of technology information, communication, and learning theories, such as social networking.

Social Networks

Social network sites are web-based services that allow users to create a public or semi-public profile within a limited system, select a list of other users with whom they are within a connection, view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison,
2008). In an attempt to define social media. Dabbagh and Reo (2011) suggested that, the term “social media or networking” refers to networked tools that provide the social facets on web as: a medium of communication, collaboration, and inventive expression.

The current role of social networks, in our opinion, is not limited to friendly communication and the exchange of political and social debates but goes to beyond that. Many companies use these networks to support their products and to connect with the targeted audiences. It is also used by governments in order to publish data and information, and receive opinions and comments from members of a community. On the academic side, the faculty members at Arab universities use these sites in order to communicate with students which create an interactive learning environment where a student is not just a recipient of negative knowledge being taught by a teacher in the classroom but as an actor involved in the process.

However, there are a lot of applications that provided by social media services, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Blogs. The purpose of these social media is used for various purposes in higher education, for enhancing learning through providing both teachers and students with electronic academic support services which include mentoring, feedback and other facilities (AL-Rahmi & Othman, 2013). Nevertheless, to decide the most prevalent social media application, the researchers returned to (https://www.globalwebindex.net) and the result was in favor of Facebook which includes (700) million users.

**Facebook**

Facebook is a virtual environment called social networking site where users can gather to share knowledge (information, photos, voices, and movies) and discuss ideas (Wang, Woo, & Quek, 2012; Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Facebook is not initially designed for pedagogical uses. However, it may offer a major ability for improving teaching and learning, because students spend a lot of time using Facebook every day (Mazman & Usluel, 2010). Students point of view considers a social media as one of the key means used in facilitating learning beside face-to-face conversation and using of the learning & content management systems. (Hrastinski & Aghae, 2012). In addition, Facebook is used most regularly to keep in touch with others and to check frequently friends’ actions (Clayton, Nagurney & Smith, 2013). Furthermore, the researchers asserted that there is a necessity for achieving more effective collaborative and cooperative learning which is best made through easy communication via learning communities.

**Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning, according to Dennen (2000), is a method of learning that uses social interaction for building knowledge. In trying to define collaborative learning, Mahdi (2012) suggested that web based collaborative learning is participatory interaction system that occur through of partnerships (cognitive, social, emotional) among the educated within the working groups and under guide of trainer via Web environment, based on Web2.0 tools such as wiki, blogs, social networks and forums, etc. to do a common goal (generate knowledge, application of knowledge). Furthermore, Mahdi (2012) presented another model for explaining knowledge building and acquisition in the web environments: (1) Knowledge capture process (individual or a collective) from the different sources of learning. (2) The process of Knowledge production: the learner restores production and shares the Knowledge that received from the various sources based on: (personality style, culture, and knowledge structure), and then present the ideas to the members’ group individually. (3) The process of Knowledge organizing: by the dialogue and debates between the member’s group about the ideas presented, to find a common
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