

## THE IMPACT OF SMARTPHONE IN SOCIETY

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to evaluate and assess the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) for academic purposes. This paper provides a background of the reason for its use, type of SNS used and benefits gain from using SNS in academic environment. It is important to understand the practice and impacts of SNS in educational setting in order to generate creative education environment as well as enhance it.

**Keywords:** social media, social networking site, Web 2.0, learning environment

### INTRODUCTION

In this era of technological advances, Social Networking Sites (SNS) or also well-known as social media have been used by millions of people from all over the world to communicate online, interact and share interests. They have been popular and frequently used especially among young-adult generations. A survey was conducted in 2012 and they revealed that young adults are most likely to use SNS compared to other population (Hamade, 2013). SNS has gain the highest participation from population age 18-29, second highest is 30-49 and least participation from population age 50 and over (Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

SNS can be used for study, work, personal-related issues and for leisure. Other than that, people can also share their interests with others such as food, sports, music and travel. Facebook for instance, has a feature of virtual groups which is based on mutual interests. Facebook users can join the group to discover what likes they have mutually by visiting their profiles (Ellison et al., 2007). Its users also can invite their friends to “like” a particular page that is similar to their hobbies or likes.

Through SNS, users can create their own profiles by filing up personal information and make them visible to others (Haythornthwaite, 2005). Users also can change their privacy settings from public to friends only.

“Web 2.0” also relates to SNS concept. It refers to the technologies that have characteristics of being interactive and user-centered. For example, Wikipedia allows user-generated content to be created and generated. According to Hamade (2013), many users frequently visits SNS due to its capability of facilitating online sharing, creating community online and assisting people to learn in a simple way.

According to Singh & Gill (2012), SNS has been utilized in academic community as we can share and exchange information quickly in a real time. In the USA and Europe country, SNS is increasingly attract the academics and researchers' interest (Hamade, 2013). Kumar (2012) conducted a study at Sikkim University and found that SNS has been used by students for academic purposes. The most used SNS by the students is Facebook and the least one is Twitter. Several studies also revealed that majority of the students used Facebook for communicating and knowledge sharing (Lack et al., 2009; Pempek et al., 2009). This phenomenon has become part of our lives. Therefore, Facebook is the most recognized and preferred SNS among Internet users. Other than Facebook, students also utilize Ning to communicate and collaborate with peers (Brady et al., 2010).

SNS provides different functionalities. Therefore, students can choose which sites suit to their needs. They can build their own online learning environment (See, 2014). They can create, choose and manage resource by themselves (Rubin, 2010; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010). For instance, they can do discussion forums for the purpose of completing their assignments. This kind of learning is also known as PLE (Personal Learning Environment).

Nicholas et al. (2010) reported that the main medium of access in academic environment was in electronic format. Researchers also use SNS to access scholarly materials while conducting their research (Niu et al., 2010; Ponte & Simon 2011). Most researchers use Web 2.0 tools to edit and disseminate their research (Ponte & Simon, 2011).

Although the use of SNS in education is increasing, only a small amount of research has been conducted to investigate the use of SNS in universities in the region of Asia-Pacific (See, 2014). Because students are now exposed heavily to the use of technology, we can adapt the use of SNS in education in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order to adapt the use of SNS in learning environment, students should have technology skills to experience effective and efficient learning.

## ISSUES

In this paper, there are several issues identified regarding the use of SNS for academic purposes. Based on the articles of the previous study, some of the issues are:

- Most students are being passive where they just read comments/news rather than post them.
- Facebook is used heavily by majority of students, followed by Twitter, Youtube, Orkut and Google+.
- Average time spent online is an hour.
- Information professionals and academic institutions should play an important role in educating students to deal with SNS.

- The awareness regarding privacy and security issues to protect identities should be raised.
- Different individual has different language proficiency, academic proficiency and computer skills.
- SNS can be very supportive in teaching and learning activities.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to provide answers to the objectives:

- What is the reason for using social networking sites for academic purposes?
- What type of social networking sites used?
- How do using social networking sites for academic purposes give benefits to students?

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this paper is to evaluate and assess the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) for academic purposes among students at Faculty of Information Management, Campus of Puncak Perdana in UiTM. Among the sub-objectives are:

- To find out the reason for using social networking sites for academic purposes.
- To find out the type of social networking sites used.
- To find out the benefits gain from using social networking sites for academic purposes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

Based on future data collection, we can find out what it would be for expected outcome. Most of data collection method used on previous study was questionnaire-based survey. The result found will be used to relate to the use of social networking sites (SNS) for academic purposes.

The first one is reason for using SNS for academic purposes. Based on the survey done, Singh (2015) found that students use SNS to find facts for learning and making discussion. Although the percentages of use for those purposes were not as much as other purposes, students were still using SNS for academic purposes. Based on survey done on undergraduate students in Malaysia, it was found that 87 out of 97 respondents use SNS for academic purpose (See, 2014). In academic activities, it was revealed that most students use SNS for project discussions and assignments, followed by document and information sharing and communicating. Students also use SNS such as Facebook

as supplements to learning management system (LMS). Besides that, it was found that researchers use SNS mainly for the purpose of disseminating their research (Nandez, 2013). The use of SNS in research activities also found being beneficial and valuable at every phase of the research workflow (Nicholas & Rowlands, 2011) Other than that, they also use SNS such as Academia.edu to follow others' activities, collaborate and share materials among them. According to Van Zyl (2009), he stated that users of SNS can see their expertise and knowledge through this platform.

The second one is type of SNS used by students. Out of 83 respondents, 80 students commonly use Facebook, for academic matter (See, 2014). Meanwhile in Kuwait University, students showed more interest in using Twitter than Facebook (Hamade, 2013). Blogs and wikis are also being used by researchers as supplements to the traditional forms of information (monographs, journal papers, etc.) (Nicholas & Rowlands, 2010).

The third one is the benefits of using SNS. Students prefer to use SNS in learning as it enables information to be shared. The total percentage of this benefit was the highest compared to other benefits perceived (See, 2014). The second highest was supports collaboration, followed by improved students' performance. Besides that, SNS can develop critical thinking, cooperation among team members, instruction-based learning and creativity among students which in turn, help them develop machine learning approaches (Cluett & Skene, 2007). Due to this situation, the use of technology which facilitates active learning and enhance teaching process has started been explored by educators in higher education institutions (Anderson, 2007; Eijkman, 2008; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010; Selwyn, 2010).

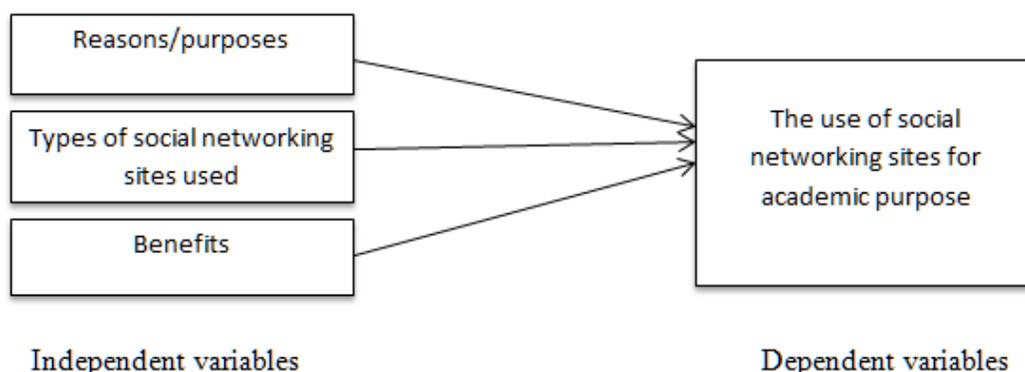


Figure 1. Research Framework.

Based on the research, we found that the three stated independent variables: reasons for using SNS for academic purposes, types of SNS used and benefits of using them influence the usage of SNS for academic purposes.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of SNS is growing rapidly in this era. SNS is becoming popular day by day as many people especially among students in higher education are heavily exposed to it. This indicates that they are aware of such applications and make use of it in their life for academic purpose and others. Therefore, educators should put many efforts as possible to integrate SNS into teaching and learning environment. Continuous use of SNS will give benefits to students also makes learning process easier.

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