

Social Media Usage Among Iraqi Medical Students

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Abstract

Background

Social media is “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, that allows the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.” Social media can have significant impact on the studying pattern and academic performance of the students, so the aim of this study is to assess the use of different types of social media among medical students and to assess subjectively the benefits of the students from these sites.

Methods

This study is a cross sectional retrospective study, conducted among medical students at college of medicine\ university of Baghdad in 2019 as an online survey (Including questions about age, gender, stage and validated questions about the using of social media) for duration of 3 months among 250 participant. Data was entered and analyzed by using SPSS version 24.

Results

The greater portion of participants were social media users for more than 3 hours daily. There is no significant association between students' benefit from different social media sites. Majority claimed that social media sites are beneficial for their study. Results have shown that those who use social media more frequently were not significantly worried about the potential of social media abuse.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of time and benefit of social media sites among sample of medical students. Such knowledge may be useful to guide medical educators to better utilize social media in their instructional state.

Keywords: Social media, Medical student, Education

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1. Introduction

1.1 Definition :

Social media is “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. Social media sites support electronic conversations ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾

1.2. There are seven broad categories:

1. Social Networking Sites: It is a platform where people manage their social circles and interact with each other. The most popular examples of this category are Facebook and LinkedIn. ⁽⁵⁾

2. Blogging: It is a platform in which discussion revolves around one topic and this is getting very popular lately. This is further subdivided into two classes: Blogging & Microblogging [5]

3. Media Sharing: Media sharing is becoming necessity of the recent times where people need to exchange videos, audios or pictures. ⁽⁵⁾ audios and files. Live stream and many more are notable examples of this class.

4. Voice over IP Software Application: This category is losing popularity. Skype and yahoo messenger are the main brands of the classification.

5. Document Sharing: This is the platform from where you share the documents like Presentations, word processing, spreadsheets or other files with other users. Important websites are Slide share and Google Drive.

6. Social News: This is the platform where you find all the news related to Social media. Important reference website is Digg.

7. Social Bookmarking: Management of bookmarks and then voting for them is interesting aspect of social bookmarking. Significant player of this category is Delicious.

1.3 The usage of online social media (OSMS):

such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram is increasing among students ⁽⁶⁾⁽⁷⁾. Students use social media to share learning resources, collaborate and post content online, manage and coordinate schedules, gain motivation for studies, participate in peer education, socialize and enjoy a sense of community belonging, communicate with their instructors, gratify themselves and get entertainment ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾. Numerous studies have demonstrated that through using OSMS, students achieve better academic performance. ⁽¹⁰⁾⁽¹¹⁾ On the other hand, unwarranted use of social media may negatively influence students' academic performance. ⁽¹²⁾⁽¹³⁾⁽¹⁴⁾ Consensus on whether the use of online social media among students improves academic performance of user students or not is yet to be investigated. ⁽¹⁵⁾⁽¹⁶⁾ The purpose of this study was, therefore, to assess the benefits of online social media usage on the student academic performance among medical students in Baghdad university; specifically to assess the time spent on social media and the purposes of it [students who spend significantly more time for study or to another purposes which is non-academic].

2. Methods

This study, which is retrospective cross sectional, was conducted as an online survey for duration of 3 months. A pre-designed

questionnaire form was used for the data collection. The questionnaire is attached down in the appendix.

Inclusion criteria included all medical students in Baghdad University College of medicine with exclusion of the sixth grade students. Data was entered and analysed by using SPSS version 24.

The survey was conducted among 250 participants, we included only 211 participants and 39 were excluded because they refused to participate or they did not complete all the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics in terms of mean, median, mode, proportion t-test, chi-square and one way was used for analysis with two side 95% confidence level which mean p-value less than 0.05 to be statistically significant.

3.Results

The mean age of the participants in this study is 20.8 with Standard deviation of 1.78, minimum age is 18 and maximum age is 26. Table (1) shows that most of the participants are females in the second stage followed by fourth stage, fifth stage and lastly the first stage. The mean age of the participants when they started using social media was 15.27 with Standard deviation (SD) of 2.58, with range of (8-25).

Results showed a significant association between the gender and the using of devices with p- value = 0.017, as male were likely to use laptop more than females. No significant association was found between gender and the duration of time spent on social media, their opinion regarding the usefulness of social media as assistance in the study and the age when they started to use social media. Results had shown no significant association between the usefulness of social media for educational values and type of social media, device used, and the time spent on these media. Majority showed fear from social media abuse, although those who use social media more frequently were not significantly more worried about the potential of social media abuse. Table (2,3) are showing their responses according to their gender and stage subsequently. The most common application used among student is the Instagram and the most common device used is the cell phone. Table (2) is showing females were more likely to use social media sites like Instagram, except Facebook as males used it more frequently with a p-value=0.004.

Table 1: shows the stages' distribution according to the gender.

		Gender		Total
		Male Count	Female Count	
Stage	First stage	10	15	25
	Second stage	24	60	84
	Third stage	15	14	29
	Fourth stage	18	20	38
	Fifth stage	16	19	35
Totals		93	118	211

Table 2: showing the participants' answers according to the gender.

		Gender	
		Male Count	Female Count
Which of the following social media do you use more than the others	Facebook	26	19
	Instagram	25	61
	YouTube	10	24
	Telegram	20	24
	Twitter	2	0
How long do you spend on social media during a typical day	1-2 hours	17	19
	3-4 hours	34	58
	+4 hours	32	51
The using of the social media for chatting	High	18	15
	Moderate	39	66
	Low	26	47
Are you worried about the potential abuse of social Media	Yes	50	81
	No	33	47
	May be	0	0
Which device do you use more for social media	Cell phones	71	114
	Tablet	7	14
	Laptop	5	0
Do you think that the social media help you in your study	Yes	50	80
	No	12	9
	May be	21	39

Table 3: Showing their response according to the stage.

		Stage				
		First stage	Second stage	Third stage	Fourth stage	Fifth stage
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Which of the following social media do you use more than the others	Facebook	2	12	5	11	15
	Instagram	13	42	13	9	9
	YouTube	3	13	4	9	5
	Telegram	7	16	7	9	5
	Twitter	0	1	0	0	1
How long do you spend on social media during a typical day	1-2 hours	4	13	4	7	8
	3-4 hours	10	34	16	14	18
	+4 hours	11	37	9	17	9
The using of the social media for chatting	High	5	9	7	6	6
	Moderate	13	39	16	22	15
	Low	7	36	6	10	14
Are you worried about the potential abuse of social Media	Yes	13	58	16	20	24
	No	12	26	13	18	11
	May be	0	0	0	0	0
Which device do you use more for social media	cell phones	23	72	27	30	33
	Tablet	2	9	1	7	2
	Laptop	0	3	1	1	0
Do you think that the social media help you in your study	Yes	18	52	18	24	18
	No	0	9	3	3	6
	May be	7	23	8	11	11

4-Discussion & Conclusion

As the usage of social media greatly increased during the last period and became important part for different aspects including communications, advertising, shopping, and teaching, this study is an attempt to contribute to our understanding about college student's usage of social media and its effects. This study was conducted as an online survey since it is directed toward social media users and this method of survey dissemination provides a better and wide access to the user of these media. Recent

studies have shown that more than 90% of the young adults are social media users.⁽¹⁷⁾ In this study, most respondents were females as the major bulk of Baghdad medical college is females. Some studies showed that female are more likely to use social media than males and some studies showed that no significant difference between both genders.⁽¹⁷⁾⁽¹⁸⁾ We need to note that students spent more time on social media in the current study (3-4) hours than the previous studies that ranged between 52 minute and 1.5 hours per day.⁽¹⁹⁾⁽²⁰⁾⁽²¹⁾ This may have a negative impact upon students' academic

performance. Some studies found that students using social media to communicate with their colleagues and for learning and many students rely on social media to get access to the knowledge in free and easy way. ⁽²²⁾ Although Instagram app was the most popular site in the current study, studies from UK, US, Malaysia, Turkey and Bangladesh found that Facebook is the most popular site among college student. ⁽²³⁾ ⁽²⁴⁾ In general, Instagram is not a useful application for studying (according to the authors' opinion, and it is not an educational source in the college where the study was held), this this may significantly affecting students' performance. The majority claimed about their fear from social media abuse, this is a particular problem indeed, especially in medical college students and different measures should be taken to modulate the students behaviour. Main limitations of this study are the small sample size and recall bias, as participants were asked to estimate their usage of social media and duration based on their memory which may be the source for bias that need to be addressed in the subsequent studies. In conclusion, the greater portion of students spent about more than 3 hours daily, with the majority claiming that social media sites aided them in their study.

Recommendations

1. We recommend evaluating the usage of social media on different colleges, not only medical college and identifying the potential advantages and disadvantages.

2. It is very important to overcome the negative impact of social media on students. How can we alleviate the negative aspects of social media while improving upon the positive ones?

Moderating students' access to social media is one excellent method.

Most of the negative aspects could be overcome by reducing the amount of time spent on social networks sites. Paying attention to their academic progress and addressing any issues would be beneficial.

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Appendix**questionnaire:****(Using of social media among Iraqi medical students).**

Our survey designed to assesses the effect of using the social media among medical students.

1. Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

2. Age.

(-----)

3. Stage (you finished).

- a) First stage
- b) Second stage
- c) Third stage
- d) Fourth stage
- e) Fifth

4. which of the following social media do you use more than the the others .

- a) Facebook
- b) Instagram
- c) Telegram
- d) Twitter
- e) YouTube

5. How long do you spend on social media during a typical day .

- a) None
- b) 1-2 hours.

c) 3-4 hours

d) +4 hours

6. The using of the social media for chatting *

- a) Low
- b) Moderate
- c) High

7. Are you worried about the potential abuse of social Media *

- a) Yes
- b) No

8. At which age you started using social media.

(-----)

9. Which device do you use more for social media *

- a) Cell phone
- b) Laptop
- c) Tablet (ipad)

10. do you think that the social media help you in your study *

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe

The link for the questionnaire provided was <http://slideshare.net/anysstomei/social-media-as-educational-tool>