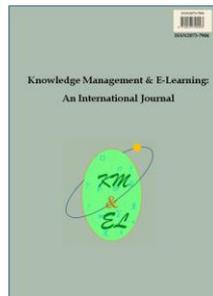

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Use of social networking sites: Facebook group as a learning management system

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Abstract: Social networking sites (SNSs) are becoming popular day by day in academia as well as in business organizations around the world. Facebook as the largest and fastest networking sites, is one of the important SNSs that can play an important role in different academic disciplines. The aim of this study is to investigate the use of SNSs by the undergraduate students of International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). The specific objectives are: (i) to explore the frequency of using SNSs by the undergraduates; (ii) to identify the purpose of using SNSs; (iii) to examine the perceptions of undergraduates for using SNSs as an academic tool; and (iv) finally, to propose Facebook group as a learning management system (LMS) of IIUM. A structured survey questionnaire was distributed among 500 undergraduate students of IIUM and 351 responses were received. The results report that Facebook and Google+ are preferred SNSs. Sharing information with friends, getting connected with people for different level, making new friends, and passing time are the main reasons for using SNSs. This study also proposes a six-step procedure for using Facebook group as a LMS.

Keywords: Social networking sites; Facebook; Learning management system; Undergraduate

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1. Introduction

With the rise of online communities, communication has shifted from face-to-face models of interaction to a more digital approach for maintaining and establishing relationships (Moorman & Bowker, 2011). Social networking sites (SNSs) are the websites that allow users to maintain social relationship by viewing, visiting, and sharing their list of social connections with other members (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). SNSs are made possible by web 2.0 applications, that mainly deliver software as continually-changed services, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an ‘architecture of participation’, to deliver rich user experiences (O’Reily, 2006). According to Al-Daihani (2010), SNSs provide user-created content platform applications allowing the users to contribute their knowledge in different formats like text, data, video, and audio. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Second Life, Delicious, Blogs, Wikis—these are just a few of the social networking options available on the internet today (Dickson & Holley, 2010) that are used by various groups to stay in touch with friends and colleagues. Special SNSs have emerged targeting specific user groups, especially professionals (Vascellaro, 2007).

This study focuses on the use of SNSs by the undergraduate students of International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM). IIUM, also known as *Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia* (UIAM), is a publicly funded university in Malaysia. The university is sponsored by eight governments from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The university was established in 23 May 1983, initiated to become a leading international centre of educational excellence which seeks to restore the dynamic and progressive role of the Muslim Ummah in all branches of knowledge and intellectual discourse (The Star Online, 2007). Islamic values are indoctrinated into all disciplines. The university offers bachelor, master's degree and PhD courses at its 13 faculties, also

known as *kulliyyah*. IIUM started its academic activities with 153 students in 1983. It enrolls approximately 3,000 students in every year. As of 2012, there are approximately 15,625 undergraduate and 3,200 postgraduate students, including international students from 125 countries in the world. Since 1987, there are 60,785 graduates and postgraduates who have successfully completed their studies at the IIUM. Out of this, 53,241 were from Malaysia while 7,530 were international students (IIUM, 2012).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews relevant literature; Section 3-4 describes the objectives, research questions, and methodology of the study; Section 5 presents the results and discussion; Section 6 offers the proposal for using Facebook group as a LMS; Section 7 describes policy and responsibility of using Facebook; finally, this paper concludes with a brief summary in Section 8.

2. Literature review

2.1. Social networking sites

SNSs like MySpace, Facebook, Bebo and others connect individuals and build a close-knit relationship with each other (Mahajan, 2009). SNSs allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). SNSs refer to the formation of a community on the internet, which facilitates the users to interact or share views for a common purpose. Early SNSs which appeared at the end of 20th century focused on bring people together through chatting and sharing personal information and ideas around the topic via personal homepage (Mahajan, 2009). In the beginning of the 21st century, three SNSs namely Friendster, MySpace, and Bebo emerged and became the most popular sites in the world. In 2006, Facebook opened its membership for the college students and became the largest and fastest networking site in the world. According to Social Networking Service (2013) there are over 200 SNSs catering to different languages and countries in the world. The popularity of SNSs varies from country to country. MySpace is more popular in the U. S. A, Friendster in the Pacific Islands, Orkut in Brazil and India, Mixi in Japan, and Bebo in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia. Today, Facebook is very popular all over the world and very recently Google+ is also getting popularity. Fig. 1 indicates the gradual development of SNSs worldwide.

2.2. Use of SNSs in different disciplines

SNSs are being used by different disciplines for its growing popularity in the world. It is used in business (Nimetz, 2007), biotechnology firms (Liebeskind, Oliver, Zucker, & Brewer, 1996), health care (Hendrix, Chiarella, Hasman, Murphy, & Zafron, 2009), library and information profession (Ayu & Abrizah, 2011; Breeding, 2010; Burkhardt, 2010; Breeding, 2007), criminal investigation (Frank, Cheng, & Pun, 2011). SNSs are being used by business organizations to keep their employees connected as well as for advertising (Mahajan, 2009). It is used in business for creation of brand awareness, online reputation management tool, recruiting, learns about new technologies and competitors, and as a lead gen tool to intercept potential prospects (Nimetz, 2007). According to Liebeskind (Liebeskind, Oliver, Zucker, & Brewer, 1996), biotechnology firms are using SNSs to share scientific knowledge. SNSs are also used by healthcare professionals to

manage institutional knowledge as well as to disseminate peer to peer knowledge. A new trend is emerging with SNS created to help its members with various physical and mental ailments (Social Network Service, 2013). Information professionals are also using SNSs as a tool for marketing of library services, creating awareness, building customer relationship, provide useful links to information, share photos and information about various events, share the opinions or expertise of staff members, to support just-in-time reference. (Siddike, 2012; Ayu & Abrizah, 2011; Phillips, 2011; Dickson & Holley, 2010; Gall, 2012; Connell, 2009; Glazer, 2009; Landis, 2007; Miller & Jensen, 2007; Mathews, 2006). It is also seen that SNSs help people to share and access political information during elections in the U. S. A. (Kennedy, 2013). SNSs are increasingly being used in legal and criminal investigation as well (Frank, Cheng, & Pun, 2011). Very recently, SNSs are being also used for the revolution in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya (Wilson & Dunn, 2011).

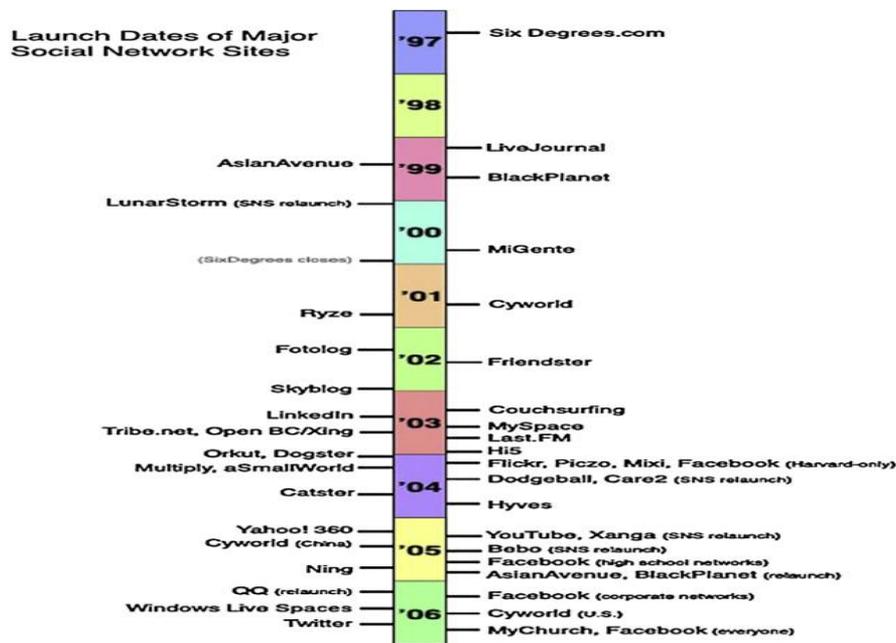


Fig. 1. Gradual development of SNSs. Adapted from Boyd and Ellison (2007)

2.3. Use of SNSs in education

The enormous creation of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the internet, and the resulting deluge of information on societies and cultures have brought about a shift in the global education system. This shift has focused on the use and application of techniques and tools of ICTs in the teaching and learning process (Islam, 2012). With the growing popularity of SNSs, numerous research have been conducted regarding use of SNSs in education (Mtenga, Benard, & Dettu, 2013; Chartrand, 2012; Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012; Jahan & Ahmed, 2012; Wang, Woo, Qeuk, Yang, & Liu, 2012; Madhusudhan, 2012; Pemberton, 2011; Pollara & Zhu, 2011; Rambe, 2011; Grainne, 2010; Arnold & Paulus, 2010; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009). Earlier literatures were the justification of possibilities of SNSs in education (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) or networking with students (Mathews, 2006) or students-teachers relationships

(Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007). Most of the recent research have been focused on students' perceptions of using SNSs and its applicability of using as an academic tool (Mtega, Benard, & Dettu, 2013; Jahan & Ahmed, 2012; Madhusudhan, 2012; Isa, Rozaimiee, Hassan, & Tahir, 2012; Hamat, Embi, & Hassan, 2012) or formal learning tool (Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012) or social learning tool (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009) or experiential learning tool (Arnold & Paulus, 2010) or a learning management system (Wang et al., 2012) or a language learning tool (Chartrand, 2012; Brick, 2011) or relationship building tool (Rambe, 2011).

From the point of view of using Facebook as a platform for delivering content and maintaining interactions among the students and between the students and the instructors, there are quite a number of studies (Kurtz, 2013; Ritter & Delen, 2013; Meishar-Tal, Kurtz, & Pieterse, 2012; Omar, Embi, & Yunus, 2012; Wang et al., 2012; Cain & PolICASTRI, 2011; Loving & Ochoa, 2011; Estus, 2010; Baran, 2010). Kurtz (2013) described Facebook group as a communication environment that can be used as a viral space for discussion and sharing knowledge. Similarly, Meishar-Tal, Kurtz, and Pieterse (2012) and Wang et al. (2012) discussed Facebook group can be used as a learning management system for sharing contents and maintaining relationships among students and between the students and the teachers. In addition, Cain and PolICASTRI (2011) showed Facebook can be used as an informal learning environment for presenting contemporary topics and thoughts of guest experts not affiliated with a college or school, thereby exposing students to relevant real world issues. Baran (2010) also mentioned that Facebook can be used as a formal teaching and learning tool. Furthermore, Loving and Ochoa (2011) experimented the use of social networking site Facebook as an online course management software solution for their research methodology class at the University of Florida.

In Malaysian perspective of using Facebook in learning and education, the most pertinent and current works have been conducted by Omar, Embi, and Yunus (2012), Hamat, Embi, and Hassan (2012), Zaidieh (2012), Isa, Rozaimiee, Hassan, and Tahir (2012) and Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010). Most of the researchers investigated the use of SNSs among the Malaysian university students and found Facebook as their favorite SNSs (Hamat, Embi, & Hassan, 2012; Isa, Rozaimiee, Hassan, & Tahir, 2012). They concluded that Facebook can be used as formal and informal learning tool in Malaysian higher educational institutions. Thus, Zaidieh (2012) summarized some challenges (privacy, real friendship, taking up time and miscommunication) and opportunities (flexibility, repeatable, convenience and accessibility) to use SNSs as educational tools. Omar, Embi, and Yunus (2012) conducted a study on English as a second (ESL) language learners' interaction in an online discussion via Facebook. They investigated ESL learners' participation in an information-sharing task conducted via Facebook groups and their feedback on the use of Facebook groups as the platform for information-sharing activity. Their thematic analysis revealed that the use of Facebook as a platform for the information-sharing task received very positive feedback and suggested that it would be a promising virtual tool and environment to promote interaction in English learning. Similarly, Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010) investigated that university students believed Facebook could be utilized as an online environment to facilitate the learning of English language. But there are still lack of studies in the perspective of using SNSs as an academic tool and how it can be used for a LMS. Therefore, to bridge the gap in the literature, this study focuses on how undergraduate students of IIUM use SNSs as an academic tool and how Facebook group can be used as a LMS in IIUM.

3. Research objectives and questions

The aim of this study is to investigate the use of SNSs by the undergraduate students of IIUM. The specific objectives are to:

- i. explore the frequency of using SNSs by the undergraduates of IIUM;
- ii. identify the purpose of using SNSs by the undergraduates of IIUM;
- iii. examine the perceptions of undergraduates for using SNSs as an academic tool;
- iv. offer a proposal for Facebook group as a LMS of IIUM.

In pursuing the above research objectives, the following research questions (RQs) have been formulated that will guide the study:

- RQ1: What are the SNSs used by the undergraduate students of IIUM?
RQ2: What are the frequencies of using SNSs by the undergraduates of IIUM?
RQ3: For which purposes undergraduates of IIUM use SNSs?
RQ4: How undergraduates view the use of SNSs as an academic tool?
RQ5: How Facebook group can be used as a LMS of IIUM?

4. Research methodology

A quantitative research approach was used for this study. The study was carried out using a survey method based on a pre-structured questionnaire. A well-structured questionnaire was distributed among 500 undergraduate students of IIUM. The questionnaire was distributed in IIUM Library and in different faculties of IIUM. The questionnaire was comprised of two parts: First part contains the background information of respondents and the second one consists of use of SNSs, frequency of SNSs use, purpose of using SNSs, likelihood of students for participation of SNSs for academic activities, opinions of students on SNSs as an academic tool, and finally the barriers of using SNSs. The survey began in June 2012 and continued to August 2012. A 7-point Likert type scale was used for students' perceptions and preferences concerning multiple aspects of social networking as an academic tool. 351 responses were received, for a response rate 72.20%. The collected data have been analyzed and interpreted by using SPSS 20.0 for descriptive analysis of data.

5. Results and discussions

5.1. Demographic information of respondents

Table 1 indicates the sample of 351 respondents used for data analysis. The sample comprised of 45.29% males and 54.71% females. Participant's age was ranged from 18 years to 27 years with an average of 21 years. The majorities (67.52%) of the participants were Malaysian and the remaining 32.48% were international students. In total, 72.28% of the respondents were from first year, followed by 13.68% second year, 5.99% third year, and only 2.56% from fourth year. Both 43.89% respondents were from faculty of Laws and Economics and Management Sciences, followed by faculty of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (20.51%), and Information & Communication Technology (1.71%).

Table 1
Demographic profile of the respondents (n=351)

Variables		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	159	45.29
	Female	192	54.71
Nationality	Malaysian	237	67.52
	International	114	32.48
Disciplines	Laws	153	43.59
	Economics and Management Sciences	120	43.19
	Islamic Revealed Knowledge & Human Sciences	72	20.51
	Information & Communication Technology	6	1.71
	First Year	253	72.28
Year of Students	Second Year	48	13.68
	Third Year	21	5.99
	Forth Year	29	2.56

5.2. Use of SNSs

According to Internet World Stats (2013), as of December 31, 2011, there are 17,723,000 internet users in Malaysia which penetrates 60.7% of the total (29,179,952) populations. Fig. 2 shows that 86.32% of the respondents use SNSs, while 13.68% of the participants are not using SNSs.

As of December 31, 2012, there are 13,589,520 Facebook users in Malaysia (Internet World Stats, 2013). Different students use different SNSs as their own social networking tools. Fig. 3 depicts that most of the respondents use Facebook (97.02%), followed by Google+ (70.29%), Twitter (54.45%), Flickr (16.83%), MySpace (11.88%), Ebay (5.94%), Friendster (4.95%), Meebo (3.96%), and Hi5 (2.97%). It is interesting that almost half of the respondents (51.48%) indicated that Facebook is their favorite SNSs. 22.77% of the participants reported that Google+ is their favorite SNSs followed by Twitter (19.80%), and Blogspot (3.96%). Only 1.98% students mentioned that Flickr as their favorite SNSs. It is to be mentioned that SNSs are becoming increasingly more popular among university students due to its wider communication tools such as, mobile connectivity, blogs, and photo/video sharing with many platforms cross referencing each other if the user so desires. This includes posting a comment on Twitter and having it appears on a blog or Facebook page and vice versa.

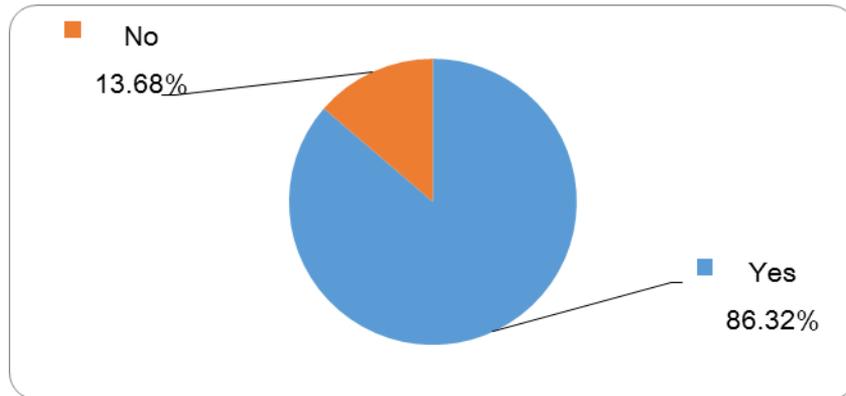


Fig. 2. Use of SNSs (n=351)

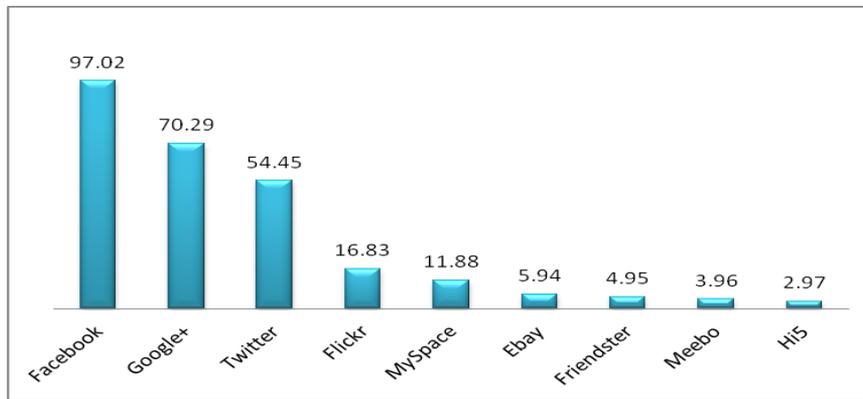


Fig. 3. Name of SNSs (Multiple choices, n=303)

5.3. Duration of SNSs use

SNSs have become a part of university students’ lives as it helps them build their online social connections with others (Madhusudhan, 2012). Boyd and Ellison (2007) reported that SNSs allow users to create a public or private profile to interact with people in their network to share information, pictures, blog entries, and music clips. Fig. 4 shows the membership period of SNSs use. It indicates that 40.6% of the respondents were using SNSs for more than five years. A fairly large group of students (35.6%) mentioned that they were using SNSs for 3-5 years. A significant number of students (21.80%) were using them for 1-5 years. Only a few respondents (2.0%) indicated that they were using SNSs for 6 month to one year.

5.4. Frequency of using SNSs

Different students use various SNSs and there are variations in the frequency at which they visited SNSs. Some of them visited these sites a few times a day and some others occasionally. Fig. 5 shows that most of the respondents (71.30%) visited SNSs a few times every day, 12.90% visited at least once a day, 11.90% visited a few times a week.

Only few participants (4.0%) reported they visited SNSs at least once a week. The results indicate that use of SNSs has become a part of students' daily life. These findings justify the result of the studies conducted by Madhusudhan (2012), Barkhuus and Tashiro (2010), and Shaheen (2008) where they showed that the majority of university students use SNSs daily.

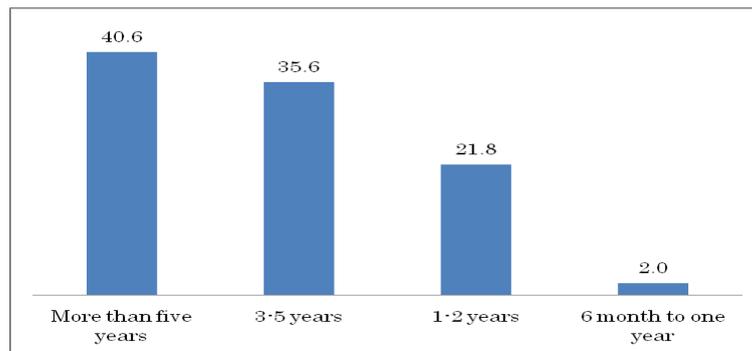


Fig. 4. Length of membership of SNSs (n=303)

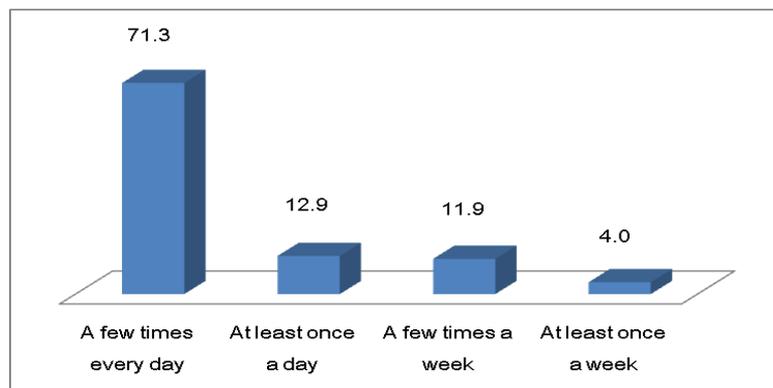


Fig. 5. Frequency of SNSs use (n=303)

5.5. Purpose of using SNSs

Different kinds of SNSs are increasingly used by individuals of all ages but are especially popular among young people and college students. Due to high use of SNSs among these two groups, many organizations or universities are using these new social web platforms to reach out student populations (Farkas, 2007a, 2007b; Mathews, 2006, 2007). SNSs have a wide variety of uses and purposes like online profiles, uploading photos, publishing, group discussion, comments, and private messaging (Madhusudhan, 2012). Table 2 shows the general purposes of using SNSs by the undergraduate students of IIUM. For examining the general purposes in which respondents usually use their favorite SNS, mean and standard deviation were calculated by using 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1- being lowest use to 7-highest use. The results showed that the general purposes of using SNSs included: sharing information with friends ($M=4.96$, $SD=1.72$), getting connected with people of different level ($M=3.89$, $SD=2.05$), for passing time ($M=3.89$, $SD=2.15$), making new friends ($M=3.65$, $SD=1.83$), using for academic purpose ($M=3.59$, $SD=1.91$), just looking around ($M=3.48$, $SD=2.07$), and

writing blogs or diary ($M=3.39, SD=2.17$). The least use of SNSs by the respondents was for the purpose of looking job opportunities.

Table 2
General purpose of using SNSs (n=303)

General purposes of using SNSs	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sharing information with friends	303	1.00	7.00	4.96	1.72
Getting connected with people of different level	303	1.00	7.00	3.89	2.05
For passing time	303	1.00	7.00	3.89	2.15
Making new friends	303	1.00	7.00	3.65	1.83
Using for academic purpose	303	1.00	7.00	3.59	1.91
Just looking around	303	1.00	7.00	3.48	2.07
Writing blogs or diary	303	1.00	7.00	3.39	2.17
Looking for job opportunities	303	1.00	7.00	3.09	1.99
Valid N (listwise)	303				

Table 3
Use of SNSs for academic purposes (n=303)

Use of SNSs for academic purposes	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Viewing course schedule	303	1.00	7.00	4.31	1.94
Accessing course notes and other materials	303	1.00	7.00	4.08	1.91
Communication with other students in the course	303	1.00	7.00	4.00	1.84
Using online discussion tools that include only other students	303	1.00	7.00	3.61	1.89
Joining a SNS group for students in the courses	303	1.00	7.00	3.43	1.89
Communication with course teachers	303	1.00	7.00	3.25	1.85
Suing course relating SNS quizzes, exams and tests	303	1.00	7.00	3.08	1.65
Using online discussions tools that included both teachers and students	303	1.00	7.00	3.05	1.71
Valid N (listwise)	303				

Respondents were asked to indicate their likelihood of participation in course-related social networking activities on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging 1-lowest participation to 7-highest participation. Table 3 shows that students use SNSs for viewing course schedule, accessing course notes and other materials, and communication with other students in the class. In general, the mean score 4 and above indicate that students are likely to participate in most of the activities. However, ratings of the likelihood of

participation were lowest for using SNSs to participate in course-related online discussions tools that included both teachers and students; quizzes, exams and tests; communication with course teachers and students. The reason may be that use of SNSs for academic purposes still not clear to many students. Also, teachers-students relationship may another reason for not using SNSs as academic purposes. In addition, many teachers do not allow students to communicate with them through SNSs.

5.6. Use of SNSs as academic tool

SNSs could be used in education and learning (Jahan & Ahmed, 2012). Table 4 indicates the level of agreement of students for using SNSs as an academic tool. Here, scale reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's Alpha. The total Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.718. As Nunnally (1978) and DeVellis (2003) suggest alpha value of $>.7$ to be good reliability for items. The mean score above 4 indicates that respondents are highly agreed that SNSs can be useful in any course, improve communication between students and teachers, can help students for collaboration in higher education courses. Students show positive attitudes for using SNSs as an academic tool for education and learning. The results also show the lowest rating for items related to negative effects of using SNSs for academic purposes. It also yields that very few students were interested to creating separate accounts for using SNSs in their courses.

Table 4
Use of SNSs as an academic tool (n=303)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I think SNSs can be useful in my courses	303	1.00	7.00	4.38	1.82
I think SNSs can improve communication between students and instructors	303	1.00	7.00	4.34	1.78
I think SNSs can improve communication among students in a course	303	1.00	7.00	4.43	1.81
I think SNSs can be used to help students collaboration in higher education courses	303	1.00	7.00	4.45	1.84
I do not want to use SNSs in any of my courses	303	1.00	7.00	3.33	1.95
I think SNSs would be a distraction in higher education courses	303	1.00	7.00	3.95	1.79
I would create a separate account in SNSs for use in my courses	303	1.00	7.00	3.87	1.83
Valid N (listwise)	303				

5.7. Barriers of using SNSs

Students were asked to indicate the barriers for those who do not use SNSs. Table 5 reveals the barriers of using SNSs. Half of the non-users of SNSs indicate that they are not interested of suing SNSs. Some non-users caused that they joined but they do not

have time to enjoy of using SNSs. Some them also excused that they do not have time for using SNSs and very few non-users showed others causes for not using SNSs.

Table 5
Barriers of using SNSs (n=48)

Barriers of using SNSs	Frequency	Percentage
I am not interested	24	50.00
I joined once but I do not enjoy	9	18.80
I do not have time	9	18.80
I do not Know how to use	3	6.30
Others	3	6.30

6. Proposal for using Facebook group as a LMS

SNSs have the potential for teaching and learning because of its unique built-in functions that offer pedagogical, social and technological affordances (Wang et al., 2012). In this section, we are proposing Facebook group that can be used as a LMS in any courses for any faculties of IIUM for putting up announcements, sharing educational resources, organizing weekly tutorials and conducting online discussions by a teacher of a specific course. Fig. 6 shows a six step process for using Facebook group as a LMS.

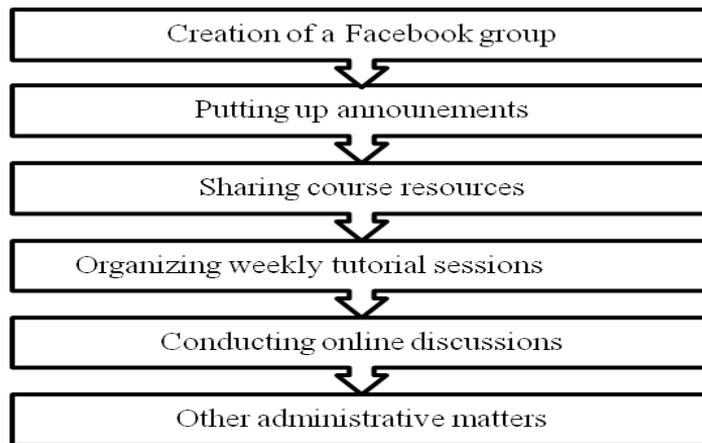


Fig. 6. Steps for using Facebook group as a LMS

6.1. Creation of a Facebook group

Initially, the tutor or teacher of a course can create a Facebook group before the starting of each course. The access mode of the Facebook will first set to “open to pubic” so that access does not require participants to be friends. After all students join the Facebook group, it will be closed so that it can be kept away from random access of other visitors. The activities carried out in the Facebook group include putting up announcements, sharing course resources, organizing weekly sessions and conducting online discussions.

6.2. Putting up announcements

In the second step, the wall in the Facebook group will be used to disseminate just-in-time information. The wall allows the publication of announcements, which includes documents, hyperlinks, pictures and videos. The wall will also allow participants to share resources and receive feedback from others. Another helpful feature of the wall will be that whenever a discussion topic or a document or a picture will be created in the Facebook group, it will automatically appear on the wall, which will make keeping track of the activities happen in the group convenient.

6.3. Sharing course resources

In this step, course materials will be available in any format such as a text file, a PPT presentation, or a PDF document. Earlier Facebook only worked with materials in either a picture or a video format. Now, any kind of files either text file as PPT presentation or word document or PDF document or a picture or a video format can be directly uploaded from Facebook group. In this step, a course teacher will upload the course materials in the Facebook group.

6.4. Organizing weekly tutorial sessions

The event function in the Facebook group will be used to organize weekly course materials. In each course, weekly materials will be uploaded to the event. Also, a profile picture of the event will be carefully chosen to represent the topic of the session. The access to the event will also set to “open” so that every student can easily access the page without a request. Another feature of the event will be that, once an event will be created, the event information will automatically be placed on the group wall. This will help to keep every participant well-informed on the happening of the course. An additional advantage of using the event to organize tutorial sessions will be that the tutor can easily monitor students’ participation as the names of the students who visit the event will be kept on the page automatically.

6.5. Conducting online discussions

Two different ways of conducting online discussions will be explored. One way is to use the feedback space under the event function, and the other way is to use the default discussion function located on the Facebook group. It is found that using either way for discussions can support basic sharing of ideas but both have limitations. Facebook simply adds a response to the end of the discussion without taking into account if the response is referring to a particular post. Students have to deliberately repeat the previous posting in their present comments in order to make the connection between the two postings clearer.

6.6. Other administrative matters

The Facebook group will also be used to host an online survey that aimed to receive feedback on the design of each course. Like using Google Docs, the survey will be created by using a free third-party tool called KwikSurveys (<http://www.kwiksveys.com>; Dpver, UK). This tool will generate a link after designing

a survey. The link will be posted onto the wall of the Facebook group. In addition, a spreadsheet created by using Google Docs in the course will also be linked to the Facebook group to allow the students to choose their preferred timeslots for oral presentations.

7. Policy and responsibility of using Facebook

International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) is very delighted of its policy against observing the social network for content as a practice though it monitors the usage of internet access for adultery purposes. That policy has put the university in decent light not simply as a response to content industries that have demanded that University monitors in order to implement their intellectual property rights, but more essential as a statement about its role in higher education as research university. It is not mandatory to notice on the free speech. The university does not bother, because as research institution it prizes free inquiry, and free speech is a prerequisite to that exercise. Thus, for IIUM, free speech is a part of values as an important center for research, teaching and outreach internationally.

It is known that with freedom comes responsibility. Facebook is a glaring example of that maxim. IIUM is not going to monitor the posting of the students, administrators and academic and does not make suggestions about it, good or bad, either way. This is not because IIUM does not care, its officials care deeply about the students and their development. It is just that IIUM believe students of an age and maturity that it is time to learn about freedom and responsibility. It also means, however, that it is up to the student to set their own limits and create their own identity and to be responsible for the consequences, given that in the real world of rules, judicial discipline, employers with their own interests as well as other people who, like it or not, will make judgments about what they see.

Furthermore, no one is going to limit those people who are authorized view Facebook postings from seeing what students or officials post on-line. Internet is open for them those have their matriculation number and password. That authorization includes faculty and staff as well as alumni. In other words, on Facebook, students have absolutely no expectation of privacy.

With the freedom to post what students want comes the responsibility to do so in their interests not only for today, but also for who and what they want to be tomorrow. And also think of their personal safety. Cyberspace can have the effect of creating an illusion of intimacy that could prove dangerous for them in reality. They should use the manners and mores of behavior in physical space both in how they present themselves and how they interpret other people on-line as a guide.

Facebook, along with much of the Internet, is a great innovation that allows users to express their humanity and an opportunity to create new communities. As such it represents a forum in which one can make choices about their identity, at least insofar as one chooses to represent themselves publicly. That freedom does not suggest that one can do so with impunity, however. Because we live in a society in which expression is judged in legal, policy and even personal ways, it is important to remember the consequences of that expression no matter how ephemeral or fun in the moment it might seem to be.

8. Conclusions

The aim of the study was to explore the use of SNSs by the undergraduate students of IIUM. The results showed that most of the students use SNSs, while 13.68% of the participants are not using SNSs. The results also indicate that the most of the respondents use Facebook, followed by Google+, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace, Ebay, Friendster, Meebo, and Hi5. Almost half of the respondents indicated that Facebook was their favorite social networking sites. Regarding the frequency of using SNSs, most of the respondents (71.30%) visited SNSs a few times every day, 12.90% visited at least once a day, 11.90% visited a few times a week. Only few participants (4.0%) reported they visited SNSs at least once a week. The study also showed that different students use SNSs for different purposes including sharing information with friends, getting connected with people of different level, for passing time, making new friends, using for academic purpose, just looking around, and writing blogs or diary. Further, students showed positive attitudes for using SNSs as an academic tool for education and learning. They feel it important to explore the ways how they could use these sites for academic work, as their classmates and course teachers are also likely using these sites. Students also feel it significant to make use of these sites to connect and share necessary information with fellow classmates outside the classroom. In addition, the study proposes a six-step procedure for using Facebook group as a LMS for IIUM. Finally, it is suggested that the authority of IIUM formulates policy for using Facebook group as a LMS for purpose of interactive learning. Though the attitudes of students towards using of SNSs are mostly positive but their perceptions of academic applications of SNSs are still mixed. Further research is needed to implement Facebook group as a LMS to improve teaching and learning in IIUM.

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