ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN E-LEARNING

Abstract

E-learning can be explained as the dissemination of modern technology and different applications to support students, scholars and all types of learners the process of learning. The process of teaching has been changed drastically in the past few years, with the advancements in technology and the traditional methods of teaching has been replaced by modern teaching methods. Social media platforms include software, digital videos, images, web pages, databases, digital audio and E-books which can be fabricated, viewed, refitted, communicated, preserved on digital electronics devices according to the requirement of the user. The use of social networks and internet is rising as compared to the past few years and is now becoming one of the most powerful tools where people exchange knowledge and multimedia content which can be communicated between groups of people with common features. Major roles are being played by the teachers, learners and learning resources in any type of acquired social networking e-learning system. After the pandemic it has now become more difficult for every one of us to imagine learning without internet and social networks as they provide us with the vast knowledge. However, in the entrepreneurial education sector the role of social media is recognizable. The form of technologies and resources that are being used in various e-learning platforms relate well with the argument that students must take the full responsibility of their learning by engaging with their teachers and other students. Information technology provides us with the appropriate tools in order to enhance the virtual interactions between teachers and learners. This paper mainly focus on the emerging trends of e-learning via social media platforms and different IT media used for learning.

Keywords: Social Media, E-learning, IT Tools.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Being dynamic in nature the use of social media and information technology (IT) is now developing its ways in which firms and individuals interact and exchange information (Benitez and Walczuch, 2012; Amrit et al., 2015; Ngai et al., 2015; Soto et al., 2016). This change has explained us that why the estimated global IT investments have now reached to 3.5 trillion dollars in 2017 (Gartner, 2016). The way of teaching and interacting with students is also changing with the expansion of Internet and its services (Brower, 2003). In the era of dynamism and ever-changing environments, digital environment is the one which is prone to changes and, educational institutions and scholars should seek how IT resources should be used and how to take advantage from these resources in order to make better reformations in learning and satisfaction process of students.

The effectiveness of e-learning platforms in achieving the objective of learning solely depends upon the incorporation of customized IT tools, products, and different strategies of increasing the distribution of the information through various platforms such as university e-learning blackboards and many more. Through modernization in information and Technology, learning organizations are now developing systems for information management, applications of object-oriented learning, and the recreation of virtual classrooms for better e-learning experience.

For maximum use of IT tools in education can be made when one can use the traditional education technology and social media applications simultaneously. Traditional education techniques that are being used since time immemorial are being preferred which are customarily used, but are less interactive than that of modern technological platforms and most important they are course-specific platforms and some of the examples of them are; MOOC, Moodle based teaching platform, e-mail, website instructors and many more. Social media applications usually refer to the social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which are now widely used and are now becoming pretty interactive and popular among students, being more specific, Facebook and Instagram have connected people closer than ever. The popularity of different social media platforms helps learners interact with instructors better. It allows learners to discuss content about the course, share ideas, and create peer groups to do activities.

E-learning professionals mostly rely upon the social media platforms to share their course materials, delivering learning practices and for communicating with the learners. Besides this, social media platforms are one of the best sources that can help learners to interact with instructors to frequently ask questions and clear doubts. IT resources can also be used to improvise the face-to-face traditional practices of learning lectures and one to one teaching methodology. Modern teaching technologies can also help the students to bridge with the course any time any place as per the convenience for which the best example is Moodle-based teaching platforms where anyone can take classes wherever they want and whenever they want. The prime focus of IT resources in education is to facilitate the process of communication and the dispersion of material between instructors and students.

Social media applications can also affect teaching activities as some of the scholars have also highlighted the negative influence of social media on teaching and learning activities. As many of the students don't like privacy invasion and mostly are unwilling to

share their thoughts and ideas with instructors over social media applications (Gonzalez et al., 2015). Social media applications can sometimes be very much time consuming and may even create distractions through advertisements, warnings, suggestions, or games, which creates diversions and can also lead to attention deficit disorder, which can ultimately affect student's academic performance (Gonzalez et al., 2016). These distractions many times can even be problematic if are regularly used in the classes.

II. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

As we say, modern-day problems have got modern solutions for learners to excel better. It helps learners to consume information online and improves familiarity with the subject. Therefore, incorporating social media in teaching and learning processes is definitely a game-changer. The positive impact on the learners is the access to video lectures, and quizzes, and participation in group discussions. By doing it, learners will be able to stay interested in the subject. They will also get the flexibility of learning from anywhere at any time in need. Here are some of the important reasons that say how social media is essential for e-learning today:

1. **It makes learners stay connected :** Staying connected with your peer group of learners gives a sense of belongingness and comfort. You can create a Facebook group community to share your thoughts and ideas about the courses. All this will help you find answers for your queries and understand the concepts even better. The presence of study groups and online communities not only makes you connected but keeps you motivated as it helps learners to have face-to-face contact with their instructors and helps to keep the enthusiasm lively. Students can use social media to build strong networks and maintain healthy connections.

2. **It gives student-centric approach:** Social media helps you to have more flexible Interactions. Learners can post their present challenges or ask peer learners and instructors questions. A person who has a solution for particular issues or questions can respond instantly. However, most learners agree that interacting in Facebook groups is more convenient than live discussions. As you know, in the classroom, people won't get much time to discuss their doubts regarding the courses. But social media offers more flexibility when it comes to interaction between learners and instructors.

3. **Social media helps to share crucial information:** Another important benefit of leveraging social media in e-learning is that it gives you an easy and quick way to contact people. For example, if a learner or instructor wants to share their updates on certain topics, they can create a Facebook post or Instagram story. This will not consume more than a few minutes; also instructors can use Facebook live or Instagram live. And share the educational content with learners and respond to their doubts in real-time.

4. **Social media is easy-to-access:** Many people find social media as the best source for e-learning purposes due to its convenience. Learner can easily access the course material using their smartphones, PCs, and tablets, etc. Everything is simple as it allows instructors to connect with learners' queries on time. All this can be done without logging

into a specific platform with the ease of technology in education. The simple step to stay updated on courses is to enable their notifications! This is very beneficial for learners as they can view the comments of other people and get insights into their ideas. Hence, social media can improve the overall communication between learners and instructors.

III. SOCIAL MEDIA AS A LEARNING PLATFORM

Social media is an arrangement of systems which is formed by individuals, communities, companies and organizations with may have indistinguishable interests, attitudes, values, lifestyles, visions and friendships in the field of e-learning. And these structures can be used in multiple ways and by applying number of tools. And the most regularly and widely used social media platforms are:

1. **Facebook:** Open and closed groups can easily be formed by the demonstrator where the information can be shared easily in the form of different ideas, quizzes, questionnaires, materials and methods, visuals, or even an entire page on a specific course or module can also be shared. Attendees are liberalized to talk about the different course-related problems and concerned issues, and can even raise questions they may have, and can also post mutually or publically any informative and interesting information or any general thought process and ideas that they want to share with others.

2. **Twitter:** Twitter is mainly used as a backchannel as compared to other e-learning platforms. It is used for creating connections with different learning communities or even smaller classrooms which are being created for the discussion on any specific topic, informative event, for sharing highlights, making statements, uploading videos and pictures, etc. All trainers firstly, have to create an account and then can communicate using #hashtag with their students/followers.

3. **Linkedin:** This is purely a professional, but a social networking platform, which have proved itself to be an immensely useful platform for e-learning. Nowadays, there are numerous discussions where groups from different parts of the world or even in various languages, trainers, educators and influencers communicate their ideas, views, problems, and to do tips for the development of the users. It has a much higher values as compared to other previous social media platforms, as the learners and the participants can actually notice everyone's professional profile and all the achievements, sometimes it can also be used to determine the status of the discussion leader, organizer, or expert. If one is interested in e-learning and Instructional Designing it can highly motivates one to the Instructional Design & E-Learning Professionals' LinkedIn Group.

4. **Google plus:** It is one of the uprising platforms of social media which is used for learning. Google plus communities is basically used as a learning platform and one of the prime advantages of google plus is that students are more focused and, both students and coordinators and teachers are less distressed as compared to other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

5. **Youtube:** YouTube is the most widely used resource for e-learning. Firstly, it is free and secondly, this platform can be used to support a class on any topic or discipline, where viewers can rate and like the quality of the videos and the content provided, as well as one can comment on a particular video. The videos which are being uploaded can be the part

of a curriculum where instructors can broadcast their entire tutorials or just even teasers to captivate the audience they want where the content can easily be provided. Despite of giving us so many privileges IT and social media cannot replace the tradition methods of teaching and here are some pros and cons of it.

It is clear that there is positive as well as negative impacts of everything in everyone's life, and one of that includes our daily routine of using social networking. The practical application of social media has both the advantages as well as the disadvantages and is a matter of concern and discussion. The engagement of general public in e-learning platforms has increased drastically over the past few years since, social media is spread across all generations and professions including people from all ages and is commonly used all over the world. Social media platforms help the users to connect with others users via different channels and enables them to build a clique. It is more about constructing relationships than simply declaring or posting and not interacting with others. It's now certainly changing the modes by which one can communicate with others.

The main advantages of social media in e-learning includes.

- Social media has authorized the individuals to become more vigorous in content formation. Anyone who have computer and an internet connection one can engage herself/himself in social media platforms and can also come up with their own writing skills, art, videos, photography and commentary skills, and also can help in conducting business online as digital marketing and e-commerce are one of the main areas where there is more consumption of internet. Using of online social media networks in the process of education is being reinforced by several educational, technological researchers, who have emphasized on the advantages of the use of technologies and internet which has brought the worldwide connectivity with the fastest feedback mechanism to us and providing us the opportunity of working globally. Positive empowerment of social media includes the linkage of the forces of automation and technology to the forces of globalization, political organisations and institutions, and even historical developments as, it affects democracy and creates changes socially by enabling others to have access of it. Social media platforms also provide us with a thorough theoretical, practical and methodological concepts in media and communication studies. It also helps us to register for recent researching skills in order to carry out research in various diversified disciplines. Social media platforms also help us in constructing up of reflective and well qualified graduates who can understand the diverseness of social, cultural, political and technological complexities of social media and who also helps to solve complex problems and get their solutions which helps in taking important decisions which are more logical in character.

- Despite of having so many advantages social media platform and IT resources also have several disadvantages which includes privacy concerns that arises by sharing location or getting into an uncertainty at work place because of sharing any inappropriate or indulging in too much with the public can also create some circumstances that might not be resolved. While, using a social media network all work is done on the same computers or mobile and other devices that may also create privacy issues if some other person is about to use the same device, sometimes

working on a stationary place and device may motivate too much sitting down in one place for too long. Continuous gazing the light coming from computers or mobile screen at night can negatively affects one's ability to get a proper night sleep and creates problems and hormonal issues. The quality of discussion while using social media platforms can be unpleasant because one cannot sense the emotions or interest of the other person conversing with us.

- The impact of plagiarism, copyright and masked identities is also one of the disadvantages of social media and IT platforms. Since, it is very easy to copy and reproduce using social media platforms, so the chances of plagiarism and copyright are more, which raises the questions on intellectual property rights and copyright laws. Digital technology has provided us with the wide scope of tools and techniques to obscure our identities. Studies have also revealed that people are now much more expecting to pretend that they are anti-social, rather than thinking about that the consequences of using social media. Bullying, trolling, stalking, threatening, and insulting behavior have increased drastically with relentless use of the internet. People imitates fake personas with the motive of scamming and defrauding.

6. **Addiction:** social media, computer games, messaging, and dating websites can be addictive. People become addicted to the games that they play in order to buy the next version. Websites also wants us to interact more and more so that they can get a good amount of advertising money. Social media users usually end up wasting huge amount of time and money. Moreover, the digital gadgets usually have a short lifespan and as the technology is advancing at a fast pace, devices and machines become obsolete hence, forcing people to get addicted to it and moving further to buy new gadgets and technology that might result in more budget access and befriend children.

IV. CONCLUSION

Information technology (IT) connects instructors and learners together. However, one may not be able to recognise their dependence on computers, internet, and online learning resources because of the incorporation of modern IT tools and techniques with traditional methods in current learning process scenario. Due to too much of dependence on IT Techniques and social media e-learning platforms future generations not know any other way of learning and interacting other than interacting with e-learning platforms. Social media is not just about making profit or creating goodwill for the institutions and organisations. Similarly, it is also not about stockholders making money and about corporate ownership. But it is all about normal people managing the world around selves and finding more creative new roads to bring their ideas together to aim at actually what they want. And e-learning platforms via social media is one of the most innovative platforms that the world could ever get. Though social media has both positive and negative impacts on society, yet one should know the importance of it in the present world's scenario. Everyone should be ready to follow this principle – "Don't use digital media to impress people, but use it to impact people in a positive way.

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