Research Article

The Impact of Social Media on the Interaction Between Students and Teachers at the University of Halabja

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Article Info

Abstract

The aim of this article is to investigate the role of web 2.0 tools and social media applications in the relationship between undergraduate students and university lecturers. The researchers used the quantitative approach to design the methodology of the research. The sample of the study was 85 students from the departments of (Social Sciences, Arabic Language, and English Language) in the second year, third year, and fourth year at the college of basic education at the University of Halabja for the academic year 2020-2021. The questionnaire was used to collect the data from the participants. The result of the study demonstrated that there was a significant influence on the relationship between the students and the lecturers in using social media applications. Students showed that they use social media every day and it has a positive impact on their interaction with the lecturers.

1. Introduction

In the modern era, the emergence of technology and social media experienced a speedy change in terms of the relationship between individuals, particularly between teachers and students (Saeed, Ismael, et al., 2022). Various technological tools have been employed in the teaching and learning of any languages. For instance, teachers in the United States who used the grammar-translation approach relied on the black-board. Later, the overhead projector evolved from the chalkboard. The audio recording has been employed in the audio-lingual approach. In the 1970s and 1980s, repetition exercises were typically required in language classes at universities during mandatory sessions in the audio lab. The audio-lingual approach was

on its way out by the end of the 1970s (Ghafor, 2015). Social networking and other Web 2.0 technologies have never grown so quickly. As users create material, exchange images, decide which posts to like, or engage in gameplay, social media technology has become an indispensable aspect of everyday life (Saeed, Hussein, et al., 2022). The prevalence of social media is most seen in universities, where technology is revolutionizing how students interact, cooperate, and study (Tess, 2013).

Higher education has traditionally been viewed as a teacher-centered environment, with students acting as passive knowledge consumers. Contrarily, the more recently social media usage of the students is commonly characterized as being reliant on user-generated content. Even while they wish and anticipate a larger usage of social media in educational contexts, not all students who enroll in higher education do so with the expectation of experiencing a less teacher-centered framework. They claim that the teacher-centered structure would decrease, chances for collaborative learning would expand, and students would be more engaged if educational institutions could understand the foundations of social media users rather than imposing rules and norms (Neier & Zayer, 2015).

The importance of this research is to present the level of relationship between undergraduate students and university lecturers through communication networks. It further shows the role and effect of communication networks on the level of students, and it demonstrates the benefits of these networks on the relationship between them. Furthermore, it depicts the academic level of the students toward their interaction of using social media applications with their lecturers.

The present study tries to identify the modern changes that have had a complete impact on social life. The most effective role is through various communication networks, and the problem of the research is further to show the role and effects of this network on relationships, which is intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of the relationships between students and teachers.

2. Literature Review

According to research, there may be a conflict between using social media for educational, personal, and professional purposes inside and outside of educational institutions. In general, one can think of educational activities as those related to curriculum or learning and private activities as those related to one's personal life. The subsequent sections discuss the research on web 2.0 tools and social media and university.

2.1. Web 2.0 tools

The notion Web 2.0 tools refers to the post-dotcom bubble internet, which places a strong focus on social networking, user-generated content, and cloud computing. The 2.0 designation is used to denote a new, enhanced version by making an analogy with standard computer program naming rules. The phrase was first used in 2004 by publisher Tim O'Reilly to refer to a series of Web conferences. The elements of Web 2.0 grew commonplace and lost their novelty in the 2010s, which caused the term's popularity to decline (Hosch, 2017).

The way the participants access, engage with, produce, and exchange data and information has changed as a result of developing technologies, particularly those referred to as Web 2.0 technologies. The rise of online technologies like weblogs (blogs), wikis, and social networking sites (SNS), as well as new mobile capabilities for connecting these online technologies, are responsible for this transformation (Mustafa, & Hama Saeed, 2023). These cutting-edge technologies might have a big influence on schooling. Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are an example of a Web 2.0 technology that has the potential to improve education and the communication between learners and teachers. With the assistance of these technologies, individuals may establish personal online profiles, network with others, and communicate with loved ones and those who share their interests (Hsu et. al., 2014).

Technology-based instructional resources also evolve with time. Web 2.0 technologies for education are multiplying with each passing year. Knowing the tools is not enough to select a tool that best suits the needs of the instructor and corresponds with the subject area and grade level given the vast array of tools available, each suited for a certain purpose (Hershkovitz & Forkosh-Baruch, 2013).

2.2. Social Media and University

Higher education has always been seen as teacher-centered setting, with students serving as passive absorbers of information. The students' more recent usage of social media, in contrast, is frequently described as being dependent on user-generated material. Not all students attend higher education with the intention of seeing a less teacher-centered structure, even when students desire and expect a greater usage of social media in educational contexts. They contend that if educational institutions could grasp the fundamentals of social media users rather than imposing rules and guidelines, the teacher-centered structure would weaken, opportunities for collaborative learning would increase, and students would be more involved (Josefsson et al., 2016).

Social media is considered as a more practical means of communication between the institution and its constituents, including present students, parents, community members, prospective students, and alumni, at a time when colleges are competing increasingly to draw and keep the finest students. According to recent studies, a sizable portion of prospective students would consult social media, particularly Facebook, while attempting to make a decision on which college or university to attend in (Peruta & Shields, 2017).

Social networking websites enable users to connect with each other based on common traits, hobbies, or activities. On a profile page, which lists the user's connections, commonly referred to as "friends", users can add personal details and images. These websites offer several options for users to communicate with one another, including wall postings, comments, private messaging, images, and the ability to tag photos with the names of people in them. Even in 2007, 94% of the first students claimed to spend time on social networking websites on a weekly basis (Mastrodicasa & Metellus, 2013). Through the use of the internet and telecommunication devices, information and communications technology have provided the modern world with social networking sites, which are interactive networks. The Internet allows for network expansion and the expansion of communication opportunities with a global audience. The new media enjoy an unparalleled level of appeal because of its participatory atmosphere. Additionally, the social networking sites' rapid spread makes them unmatched in the history of the media business (Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2011).

Social media in the 21st century has passed a series of changes regarding the relationship between individuals and institutions. Social networks are the same in terms of involving social media in their daily lives, and social communication devices allow users to use them. Thus, social media includes all the networks that are related to the creation of relationships, receiving, and exchanging information among individuals, as well as bringing the distance within the community members closer together. Currently, except as a professional community subject, it is an important source of scientific learning and the exchange of scientific information between teachers and students (Hsu, Ching, & Grabowski, 2014).

According to Mondahl and Razmerita (2014), after the advent of communication networks and social changes accelerated throughout the life of societies; therefore, the influence of magazines, radio and television gradually decreased, and the influence of social media increased rapidly (Hussein, 2022).. Due to the widespread interaction between the individuals in the society, they eliminated the boundaries of time

and space among people. Ease of use and low cost helped to play many different roles in human life, as well as in the fields of commerce and economy and even the transmission of culture through film and drama. The act of social relationships has its own characteristics which are general and social. Furthermore, it has some characteristics which attracts the individuals and creates relationships between individuals.

Tay and Allen (2011) state that social networks on the internet have become an incredibly widespread global phenomenon. Social media, or communication networks in general, have become part of the lives of individuals in societies around the world. It has also led to the creation of relationships between different nations and people around the world in a way that has reached the mixture of identity, culture, and information between them, especially among young people. Thus, the relationships between individuals increase in this way, even in teaching, which has been very useful in increasing interaction between teachers and students because of constant communication. It will affect their scientific level and awareness of the tasks. There are many positive aspects, but that does not mean that there are no drawbacks on it (Rutter et. al., 2016).

According to Hershkovitz and Forkosh-Baruch (2013) the development of student's intellectual, social, and emotional skills depends heavily on their interactions with their teachers, which can have an impact on the social and academic environment in classrooms and institutions. Regarding the interactions between students and teachers, they pointed out that, in addition to individual characteristics, three other factors—perceptions and beliefs, information-exchange mechanisms, and external influences—shape interactions between students and teachers. With the rise of social networking websites in the modern digital era, these elements are particularly important.

A large body of research has been conducted on the role of social media on the relationship between undergraduate students and university lecturers (Salih et al., 2022). Ghafor (2015) carried out research, and the aim was to acknowledge the students' attitude toward using the website and internet applications that are used in the learning processes. Modern technological tools have a great effect on changing the direction of interaction between the students and teachers in the process of language teaching. With the emergence of technology and social media into the realms of human life, the researchers used a survey questionnaire to collect the data about the topic of the present study. The research sample was 156 students from the department of English language at college of education, Halabja. After collecting the forms, the researchers

codified the questions, and they used the statistical method to analyze the questions. They figured out that the students use internet and the social media applications, particularly the tools which are provided by their lecturers for educational purposes.

Talaue et al. (2018) conducted a study to evaluate the way using social media has affected a group of college students' academic performance. The writers of this paper discuss the actual effects of young people's regular social media contact. An accurate profile of the problem was obtained using a descriptive research design. The study's respondents are 60 Business Administration and Management Information System students who are frequent users of social media. It was carried out in the school year 2017–2018's summer semester. The researchers figured out that social media sites have occupied most of the students' spare time and have become an essential part of their daily lives. There are undoubtedly resources in social networks that might help them grow their academic knowledge.

Faraj and Jafr (2020) conducted a study to identify the relationship and effect of social media on students' academic performance at the university of Halabja. The aim of their research was to find out the positive and negative influence of social media and technological tools that have consequences on the result of undergraduate students in line with their educational performances. The researchers collected data using questionnaires from 320 students at the college of education of Halabja University. They reached the conclusion that students utilize social media applications widely while studying for their academic courses. They further demonstrated that social media tools have a great share of importance in students' lives. The students use social media tools to have a stronger relationship with their teachers outside the university context.

3. Methodology

In this empirical research, the descriptive approach using quantitative method was employed. The researchers employed a survey questionnaire to collect the data. The number of participants, in total, were 85 students from the departments of (Social Sciences, Arabic Language, and English Language) from the second year, third year, and fourth year at the college of basic education at the University of Halabja for the academic year 2020-2021. The questionnaire survey was distributed among students equally; however, due to the larger number of female students, they had more opportunities to participate in the study which was 75 percent. On the other hand, male students participated only 25 percent. The age of participants was

between 20 to 25 years as they were college students. Concerning the ethical consideration, the researchers obtained approval from the college of basic education in the university in which they conducted the study, and further, the students agreed to take part in the study.

4. Result and Discussion

The result of the study showed that there was a significant impact on the use of social media in the relationship between undergraduate students and the university lecturers. The statistics about the gender, the departments, and academic level of the participant has been demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. The number, the gender, department, and academic level of the participants

Gender		Department		Academic Level	
Male	22	English Language	30	First year	5
Female	63	Arabic Language	17	Second year	50
		Social Sciences	38	Third year	18
				Fourth year	12
Total	85		85		85

As it is shown in the above table, the female students had a higher range of participation which is 63 students comparing to their male counterparts with 22 students. The researchers put their focus on three different departments to investigate the role of the social media. The English language, Arabic language, and Social Sciences departments were the setting of the researchers to conduct the study. The students from Social Sciences scored the highest rate of participation which is 38 students whereas the Arabic department had the lowest number of participants in the research which is 17 students. As for the academic levels, students from all four different levels took part in the study. The largest number of students 50 students from the second year were engaged in the research. On the contrary, first year students had the least number of participants which were only 5 students.

Regarding the use of social network, it is shown that the students used social networks in their daily lives at the rate of 100%. Some examples of social media applications are Facebook, Instagram, Viber, Messenger, etc. In terms of student-teacher friendship on social networks, 67.1% of the students showed the fact that the relationship between students and teachers is at a good level. Regarding the awareness of

the students toward social activities and the usage of social networks, 69.4% of the students are aware of the activities, writings, and private and public lives of their teachers through social networks. On the other hand, 30.6 of the participants are unaware of their teachers' social activities. There is a fact that sometimes teachers can assist students through scientific publications and academic activities via social media applications.

The present study confirmed the findings about teachers' interaction in terms of sharing their feelings in special occasions such as reacting toward the happiness and sorrowness moments with students. Only 15% of the teachers participated by writing comments and private messages or speaking to them through phone calls. On the contrary, 55% of the teachers did not participate in the social activities of the students, such as commenting on their posts or reacting to them.

This is an important finding in the understanding of the student-teacher communication through private chat and writing letter to each other. About 42% of the students think that they exchange information with their teachers, and they interact with each other via chatting. Whereas 58% of the participants showed that the communication between the students and teachers is not in a satisfactory level. More than half of the students believed that they do not have communication with their teachers using social media applications.

Regarding the presentation of the social or psychological problems by the students for their teachers through private chat, (92%) of the students are not willing to discuss their problems with their teachers. On the other hand, (8%) of them do not mind sharing their private life or issues with their lecturers to find a solution for their matters. We speculate that this might be due to the personal characteristics of the students who be unwilling to share their personal life with others, particularly the university lecturers. There might be another understanding for this considerable difference which is students at university are closer to their friends than their teachers; however, they are close to each other in terms of age.

This may raise concerns about the relationship between the undergraduate students and the lecturers in the present study which it can be addressed by facing any problems while using social media networking, 96% of the participants stated that no issues occurred between them. Further, they continued to have relationship and reacted to each other by emojis, likes, writing comments, or chatting via Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc... On the contrary, 4% of the participants found it difficult to

continue to have connections with each other. They believed that they are not comfortable in this relation-ship with their teachers. This probably might be due to the personal differences of the participants; therefore, a very small portion of the participants scored against the relationship at the college of education in univer-sity of Halabja.

As for the level of social relationship between the students and teachers, the participants demonstrated that 33% of them believed social media applications have strengthened the connection with their teachers. On the other hand, 67% of the respondents take the view that social media networking does not have any impact on the relationship between the students and teachers, particularly outside the university. This re-flects the fact that their relations remain within a certain framework.

Concerning the students' responds whether they are friends with the teachers or not on the social media, 34% of the students showed that they have good friendship with their lecturers and they see each other's social media activities. Whereas 27% of the students do not feel happy when they make friends with their teachers. They believe it is a private life and neither of them should share it. Another group with the 38% of the participants thinks that it is a good thing to have friendship with their teachers on social media. This shows the fact that the existence of friendship between teachers and students on social media has special value to the students. They get benefit from each other's experience, which means that teachers can not only influence their thinking and behavior in the university, but also in social media. Currently, the relationship between students and teachers, not only in the university environment, but also outside the university and through social media has become stronger. Most students contact teachers directly through private letters and this shows that the cooperation between the two sides in social media is strong. Students feel happy when their teachers accept them as friends through social media networks. In addition, the stu-dents get benefit from the writings, social activities, and posts of their teachers, which are published via social media applications. The result of the study shows that the level of happiness and self-esteemed is significantly high which is in line with the research conducted by Faraj and Jafr (2020).

5. Conclusion

Eventually, the social media tools and web 2.0 technological applications have great influence on the relationship between the university teachers and undergraduate students. The participants had a great role in answering the questions that were asked by the researchers to investigate the impact of these social media

applications on the relationship between the two groups. The female students had a great portion of the participation which was 75% in the study more than the male students which was 25%. The impact of using social media tools was positive to a great extent in which more than 67.1% of the students were believed that their relationship is at a really good level. All of the students consented that they use social media tools on daily basis, and it has influence on their interactions with their teachers.

6. Limitation

The data gathered by the researchers cannot generalize the role of the social media between the undergraduate students and lecturers in the university environment. The research was limited to only three departments in the University of Halabja. Another limitation was that the number of the participants was not a big number to generalize the role of social media applications in the relationship between the students and the lecturers over the entire three departments.

For further studies, researchers can focus on a larger number of participants to reflect a more realistic result. Another recommendation is that more research should be conducted to investigate the impact of social media on relationship between teachers and students in university environment. Furthermore, more research needs to be employed on the role of social media in directing student's behaviors with their teachers. Moreover, research on the importance of social media on the learning processes should be done.

Declaration of Competing Interest: The authors declare they have no known competing interests.

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