Conceptualizing a Model for Adoption of Online Social Networks as a Learning Tool

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Online Social Networks (OSNs) are being used by most students, and more educational institutes are adopting OSNs in facilitating the learning activities. However, before implementation a new technology, the identification and measurement of factors affecting users' acceptance of the new technology is critical to predict the success or failure of that technology. This research work provides a theoretical and conceptual model based on Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and an online survey of 26 undergraduate students were collected for the preliminary data to assess the proposed model. The results of this study have significant implications and considerable value for higher educational institutes to devise better strategies for adoption of OSNs as a learning tool.

Keywords: Online Social Networks, Technology Acceptance Model, Perceived Enjoyment, Social Influence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internet technologies has changed the way people interact, communicate and collaborate.¹ ² These features introduced by web 2.0 can improve the learning experience in cases where there is a clear understanding on how to use them.³ In web 1.0 there was only one way to interact with internet content, where the websites owners have only the ability to publish content, whereas internet surfers have only the ability to read websites content. Instead of this, Online Social Networks (OSNs) is now being updated by the activities of its regular users. Internet users browse OSNs to share content and connect with others, follow and create groups of similar related interested people.⁴

Nowadays lecturers and students in higher education institutes are attracted by the features offered by OSNs.⁵ Lecturers and students all over the world are depending more on OSNs to engage with content, for peer learning and to have enjoyable and interactive learning environment.⁵ Universities use OSNs as a tool for grouping students where students and faculties can share learning materials and express their learning experience.⁶ Some universities

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use OSNs like Facebook as a learning management system to provide course announcements, make learning materials available to students to download and facilitate the process of discussion among students.⁷ Online social network is "people centric", interactive and support social collaboration. Therefore, most students are attracted by the features of OSNs for the purpose of communicating and interacting for both social and educational connectivity.⁸⁻¹⁰,⁴⁶ OSNs can be used to facilitate and enhance learning.¹¹ Since new generation of students are born in today’s digital world,³ it is suggested that if lecturers want to strengthen their relation with students they should adapt their ways of teaching to the students’ lifestyles. The lecturers also should improve from the traditional way of teaching, where students are