



USES AND OBSTACLES OF SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA IN THE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of social and digital media in education, emphasizing the dual nature of opportunities and challenges it presents. As digital tools and platforms become increasingly embedded in educational practices, it is essential to comprehend their implications, including accessibility, digital literacy, and privacy concerns. The research aims to dissect the complexities educators encounter in adopting these technologies and to illuminate the transformative potential of media in enhancing educational practices and professional development. By identifying and analyzing the obstacles and innovations linked to digital media adoption, this paper provides valuable insights into the evolving educational landscape.

KEYWORDS : Digital Media, Education, Social media

INTRODUCTION

The integration of social and digital media within the field of education presents a dynamic landscape characterized by both opportunities and significant challenges. As educators increasingly incorporate digital tools and platforms to enhance teaching and learning experiences, understanding the implications of these technologies becomes essential. The evolving nature of media necessitates an examination of the barriers that educators face, such as issues of accessibility, digital literacy, and privacy concerns. Concurrently, it is crucial to explore how these media can transform educational practices and facilitate professional development. This paper seeks to investigate the complexities arising from the adoption of social and digital media in teacher education, providing insights into the challenges and barriers, while also highlighting the potential for innovative transformations within the educational sphere.

The influence of social and digital media on teacher education has been a prominent subject of academic discourse and professional discussions for several years, reflecting its critical role in modern educational practices. With rapid technological advancements and the widespread proliferation of diverse social media platforms, the modalities of communication, information dissemination, and learning processes have undergone a substantial and profound transformation, reshaping the educational landscape. Consequently, teacher education programs have not been immune to this pivotal shift, which has led to a growing trend and an increasing emphasis on incorporating social and digital media tools and strategies into the teacher education curriculum to enhance teaching efficacy and engagement. This integration is perceived as essential in equipping future educators with the necessary digital literacy skills and competencies required to navigate and thrive in a technologically advanced educational environment. Moreover, the incorporation of social media in teacher education facilitates innovative teaching practices, encourages collaborative learning, and provides access to a global community of educators for resource sharing and professional development. As these digital platforms continue to evolve, they offer unprecedented opportunities and challenges for educators, necessitating ongoing research and adaptation in teacher education methodologies.

Significance

Incorporating social media and digital platforms into teacher education offers numerous advantages; however, several challenges must be acknowledged when navigating this modern educational landscape. A primary concern that educators face is the potential for distractions, as platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can become addictive, leading

students to be tempted to browse them during instructional time rather than focusing on their coursework. Another issue that arises is the disparity in access to digital resources, as not all students have access to the necessary technologies or reliable internet connectivity, which may result in inequalities within the classroom and hinder teachers' ability to integrate digital media into their lessons effectively and equitably. Lastly, the matter of privacy and security is crucial, as social media platforms are susceptible to breaches, necessitating that educators exercise heightened caution regarding the nature and extent of the information they disclose online.

Social Media

Social media plays a crucial role in facilitating the organization of individuals into a wide array of distinct groups, such as small rural communities or neighborhood associations, where people can come together based on shared interests or geographic proximity. Digital media offers the flexibility to be accessed in person, especially in structured environments like workplaces, universities, and high schools, although its predominant usage and interaction take place in the online sphere. There is an overwhelming abundance of resources available on the internet, making it a treasure trove of information and opportunities for exploration. Millions of individuals are eagerly seeking to connect with like-minded peers and share their firsthand knowledge and experiences about a variety of topics, which include but are not limited to education, cooking, golfing, gardening, forming friendships, establishing professional networks, and seeking employment opportunities. Engaging in business-to-business marketing is another crucial aspect, and many even join groups dedicated to supporting culinary movements, reflecting the diverse interests of users. The subjects explored through these digital platforms are as diverse and intriguing as the rich and complex history of our universe.

All media technologies related to communication, such as the internet and computers, are collectively known as "digital media." Social media has become a valuable resource for learning, connection, entertainment, friendships, and exploration. Nearly every facet of human life, including education, business, government, interpersonal relationships, and social interactions, is poised to undergo significant transformation. People utilize new technologies like the internet, cell phones, and laptops to stay informed about current events and entertainment. Media has become an essential component of everyday life. Social media now plays a vital role in modern culture, serving five main functions: influencing, educating, informing, entertaining, and providing a marketplace for products and services. In today's fast-paced society, social media is indispensable, as without it, society would remain unaware of both domestic and

international developments.

Social Media Tools

There is a plethora of simple widely used social networking tools accessible. They are;

i) Facebook

Facebook, a digital networking platform and website, was established in February 2004 and is operated by Facebook, Inc. It was founded in the United States by Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. As of February 2012, Facebook boasted over 845 million active users. The platform serves as a medium for information exchange. Facebook provides educators with an efficient method to disseminate knowledge to students without the need for physical travel.

ii) Twitter

Twitter is a widely appreciated social networking platform and microblogging service that allows users to send and read entries of up to 140 characters, known as tweets. Conceived by Jack Dorsey in March 2006, it commenced operations in July of the same year. It has been described as the Internet's version of SMS. Twitter facilitates connections between individuals based on shared interests, enabling them to exchange ideas and engage in discussions. Additionally, it allows users to stay informed about people, businesses, and developments.

iii) LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social networking site with a focus on professional engagement. Established in December 2002 and launched in May 2003, LinkedIn is commonly utilized for professional networking. While numerous educational social networks exist on the internet, LinkedIn may be favored by certain administrators and faculty members as an online platform for business communication. In addition to providing valuable benefits to individuals working in academic institutions, LinkedIn offers some of the most robust social network privacy options available.

Teaching Through Social Media

Educating through social media involves the dissemination of knowledge to students by leveraging social media platforms for discipline-specific, topic-specific, and context-specific instruction. This approach typically encompasses communication, note-taking, and an emphasis on the practical applications of new media technology. By integrating social media and utilizing web-based media technologies, educators can enhance their methods of teaching, counseling, mentoring, and collaborating with students and colleagues. This integration allows educators to apply techniques that enrich the educational experience for their students.

The integration of social media into the educational process serves as a vital instrument. It enables students to engage with instructors and classmates beyond the confines of the traditional classroom setting. Furthermore, it empowers students to manage their own learning journey in a manner that suits them optimally. Engaging in reading, viewing, investigating, researching, interacting, sharing, storing, communicating, collaborating, discussing, commenting, and conveying personal knowledge and experiences are among the myriad ways through which learners can acquire knowledge. Through utilizing social media in education, students gain access to a wide range of learning materials and can study from any location at any time, irrespective of geographical constraints.

Challenges and Reforms of Social Media into Education

Social media offers numerous advantages for teacher education; however, it also presents a series of concerns and challenges, necessitating potential reforms.

Digital Literacy: A primary concern with the integration of social media in teacher education is the inadequate digital literacy among teacher candidates. Educators may lack a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and risks associated with social media use. To mitigate this issue, teacher education programs should incorporate digital literacy training for their candidates.

Privacy and Security: Concerns regarding privacy and security breaches are prevalent with social media use. It is essential for teacher candidates to be educated on safeguarding their privacy and security online. Moreover, teacher education programs should establish explicit policies concerning social media usage.

Time Management: Social media can be time-intensive and may detract from other critical components of teacher education. It is important for teacher candidates to learn effective time management skills and to utilize social media as a tool to enrich their educational experiences.

Pedagogy and Ethics: The use of social media within educational settings raises pedagogical and ethical questions. Teacher education programs should address these by providing educators with guidelines and best practices for incorporating social media in classroom scenarios.

Equity and Accessibility: The use of social media can amplify existing disparities in access to technology and digital media literacy. Teacher education programs should aim to provide all candidates with access to the necessary technology and training to effectively use social media.

Professionalism: Social media usage by teachers can raise issues of professionalism. Inappropriate actions, such as engaging in online disputes, sharing offensive or insensitive content, or disseminating confidential information, can adversely affect the profession and damage the school's reputation. To tackle this challenge, teacher education programs should provide guidance on professional conduct in social media usage. To reform social media use in teacher education, several potential solutions exist. Teacher education programs should integrate digital literacy training along with pedagogy and ethics instruction into their curricula. Programs should also develop clear policies and guidelines for social media use and ensure equal access to technology and training for all teacher candidates. Lastly, ongoing professional development and support should be offered to ensure teachers remain informed about the latest trends and best practices in social media use.

CONCLUSION

The integration of social and digital media within education is indispensable, offering transformative potential alongside challenges that warrant careful consideration. This study underscores the dual nature of digital media as both a powerful tool for innovation and an area fraught with complexities such as digital literacy, accessibility, privacy, and professional conduct. To harness the full potential of these technologies, education programs must address these challenges through comprehensive reforms. Incorporating digital literacy, ethics, and pedagogy training into curricula, alongside establishing clear usage policies and ensuring equitable access to technology, is essential. Only through these strategic efforts can educators fully realize the benefits of digital media, fostering a more dynamic, inclusive, and effective educational environment. Future research should continue to explore these evolving dynamics, ensuring that educators are equipped to navigate and thrive in an increasingly digital educational landscape.

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