THE EFFECT OF USING TWITTER IN ACHIEVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS TOWARD IT AT THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDENTS AT SHAQRA UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: *Social media technologies and networks have become common tools of communication in today's society. The increased use of these tool and technologies is largely fueled by the rapid technological advancements in the past few decades, especially the Internet. The rapid technological advancements have in turn contributed to increased globalization through which people from different parts of the world can communicate easily without geographical barriers. Some of the most commonly used social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. As social media technologies are used for communication, they are also incorporated in the higher education field and have significant impacts (Aifan, 2016). Twitter usage in higher education has increased in the Arab World, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and impacted student achievements. This paper will examine Twitter use in the education of university students in Saudi Arabia and its impact on student achievement.*

BACKGROUND ON SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN SAUDI'S HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD

Social media technologies are increasingly used in the higher education field and have numerous effects on student achievement (Aifan, 2016). Higher learning institutions and students have started experimenting with new measures for incorporating social media in academic functions in these settings. Social media networks like Facebook and Twitter are used to exchange ideas, opinions, and views on different issues relating to the society and education. For instance, Mrs. Hayat Alguraibi of King Abdul-Aziz University created a Facebook page with her Social Studies students to exchange ideas and opinions regarding various social issues in the Saudi society. Some social media technologies are utilized in the higher education field or university education for reflection, sharing learning experiences, and to create educational online communities for students.

Universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are adopting and utilizing social media technologies for academic and learning purposes as part of their measures to support student learning and improve outcomes/achievements. These academic institutions are utilizing the technologies because students in the current educational environment are frontrunners of change. Students are exposed to technology at an early stage in their lives, which changes their habits and expectations. Through adopting social media technologies in the educational environment, universities capitalize on these new students' habits and expectations to support their learning and help improve outcomes/achievement. However, Saudi universities face the need to identify the most suitable and relevant social media tools that can be beneficial to

students in learning environments. After identification, these tools should be adopted effectively in the learning environment to enhance teaching practices and in turn improve achievement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Twitter Use in Education of Saudi's University Students

According to Malki (2015), Twitter is widely used by teachers in the Arab World, particularly in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The use of this social networking site by teachers in this region is fueled by the fact that it provides a platform for information, people, and knowledge. Teachers and students use Twitter to share content i.e. ideas and opinions and develop meaningful relationships with others in order to enhance their learning. Twitter provides a portal through which users such as teachers and students can share their ideas and opinions and respond to other people's comments on a specific issue or subject area (Li & Bernhoff, 2008).

In the initial years of its use in Saudi Arabia, Twitter was largely seen as a fun media site that was designed to be used by family members and friends to share small packages of information. However, throughout the years, Twitter has developed to become a full-blown professional communication channel, which has led to its adoption in the academic environment including the field of higher education. The increased use of Twitter in education of university students in Saudi Arabia is because of its development to become an invaluable asset that enables teachers and students to work collaboratively in the learning process. In this case, teachers and students provide different inputs and obtain wider exposure during learning (Li & Bernhoff, 2008).

As an educational and communication tool, Twitter has a significant role in the modern professional life of teachers. This vital role is attributable to Twitter's capability to provide information regarding latest trends in contemporary education. Through this, teachers have access to latest global standards for teaching techniques that help improve the learning process and environment as well as student outcomes. The vital role played by Twitter in today's learning environment is evidenced by the recent announcement by the Saudi government that made this social media network an official communication channel between deans, teachers, and students (Malki, 2015).

Creating Discussion Platforms

According to Malki (2015), Twitter usage in the education of university students in Saudi Arabia has involved creating platforms for discussion. In this case, teachers identify a topic of discussion based on the learning material or course. Once the topic is identified, they initiate a discussion on Twitter and provide a different way for students to be more involved in the learning process rather than simply reading the study matter in the classroom. In addition to discussing the subject area or topic initiated by the teacher, students explore more content relating to their academics and discuss it on Twitter. These platforms of discussion on Twitter provide an opportunity for teachers to engage the student more in their learning and cover course material in a detailed and comprehensive manner (Kutbi, 2015). For students, the discussions via Twitter help in getting the most from the course material and getting a sense of the opinions and ideas of their colleagues regarding the course material and learning process.

Establishing Relationships

Twitter is used in the education of university students in Saudi Arabia through

establishing relationships that help enhance learning and student achievement. These relationships are usually created through the development of intentional learning environments through which teachers can easily interact with students (Kutbi, 2015). Given its role in communication, Twitter provides a platform through which students develop a significant base of acquaintances and colleagues who provide different ideas and opinions regarding a subject area or topic. Through this communication channel, students have access to different teachers and academicians based on their area of interest. Teachers capitalize on these intentional learning environments to build beneficial relationships with students through constant communication and interactions on course material (Li & Bernhoff, 2008; Aifan, 2016). Additionally, Twitter is used to help students from different classes to connect in order to easily engage in virtual discussions that promote learning.

Promoting Increased Participation of Students

University teachers in Saudi Arabia use Twitter in educating their students by promoting enhanced participation in the learning process an activities. One of the most commonly used measures to enhance student participation in learning is initiating a topic of discussion relating to a particular topic and encouraging students to share their opinions and ideas (Li & Bernhoff, 2008). Secondly, teachers utilize online educational communities for increased interactions with students, which help in enhancing their (students) participation in the learning process. Through discussions and increased interactions, teachers effectively create more interest in the specific field of study among students (Aifan, 2016).

Writing Assignment

Saudi Arabia's university teachers have increasingly used Twitter as a writing assignment in order to enhance their learning. This social media platform provides a portal for students to identify merits of brevity as they complete simple writing assignments like short poems or narratives. These writing assignments carried out on Twitter help in improving students' writing skills and competencies and teach them valuable insights into their future jobs. For instance, sales and marketing students obtain knowledge on online marketing and branding through completing writing assignments on Twitter (Malki, 2015). They acquire the basic skills on online marketing that they can utilize in their future jobs.

Provision of a Collective Voice

Twitter is used in the education of university students in Saudi Arabia through providing a collective voice relating to the learning process and expectations. Teachers have increasingly used this portal to provide a collective voice that helps in streamlining the learning process and guiding students in the various learning activities. This collective voice serves as an important aspect of promoting and enhancing student achievement by directing the learning activities of students towards a common goal. As teachers and students enhance their interactions through Twitter, students easily understand the learning process and expectations of teachers, which acts as the foundation of all academic activities.

Impact of Twitter Use on Student Achievement in Saudi Universities

Alwagait, Shahzad & Alim (2014) states that Twitter has been found to have both positive and negative impacts on student achievement. The positive and negative impact of Twitter on student achievement in Saudi universities is dependent on various factors including whether it was used excessively and whether it was used for educational purposes. In essence, when Twitter is no used excessively and primarily for academic purposes, it has positive impacts on

enhancing student achievement. However, when this social media portal is used excessively including for non-academic purposes, it has negative impacts on student achievement within Saudi Arabia's university education setting. For instance, in a study that explored the link between social media usage and GPA score in Saudi universities, social media technologies like Twitter were found to have both positive and negative effects on student achievement (Alwagait, Shahzad & Alim, 2014).

Aifan (2016) argues that social media usage in Saudi universities change the educational and learning culture. This change emerges from the fact that social media alters the learning practices of Saudi university students and the instructional strategies employed by teachers. Aifan (2016) found that the positive impact of Twitter usage on university students in Saudi Arabia is supporting students' learning and improving teaching practices. Isnaini & Rakhmawati (2016) seemingly differ by arguing that the negative impact of social media usage on the learning environment is that it minimizes active participation of the learner. Shahzad, Alwagait & Alim (2014) concurs by stating that social media usage has been found to have no relationship with the academic performance of university students in Saudi Arabia.

Research Question

This study seeks to examine the impact of the use of Twitter in the education of university students in Saudi Arabia given that Saudi's government has recognized Twitter as an official communication channel in the field of higher education. The researcher has identified a research question that will guide this study as follows:
- ✓ What is the effect of using Shaqra University students twitter to increase achievement?
- ✓ What are the perceptions and attitudes University Shaqra of students to education using Twitter ?

Research Objectives

There are several research objectives that the researcher seeks to accomplish upon completion of this study. The first objective of this study is to identify how Twitter has impacted university students in Saudi Arabia given its increase use in the higher education field. Secondly, the researcher seeks to examine the link between the use of Twitter and academic performance among Saudi's university students. Third, this study seeks to fill the gap in existing literature on the usage of Twitter in the higher educational setting. Most of the existing studies and literature examine the impact of social media usage on the educational environment, especially academic performance. However, these studies have not focused on one social media platform but are based on an overall analysis of the different social media platforms. Through focusing on Twitter, this study will focus on a single social media platform i.e. Twitter, which will help enhance understanding of how social media usage affects the academic setting. As well as for the positive development trends of students.

Significance of the Study

Based on the research objectives, the study is significant to help improve understanding of how technology can be effectively adopted in the learning environment to enhance student outcomes. Through examining the impact of Twitter use in the education of university students in Saudi Arabia, this research will highlight how technology is increasingly adopted in the higher educational setting and its associated impacts on student achievement. The findings of this study will help guide teaching practices in relation to the use of social media to enhance

teaching and support student learning. The impact of Twitter usage on academic performance will be highlighted through examining university students' belief and perception of social media influence on the learning process and learning outcomes. In essence, the study will generally demonstrate the impact of technology adoption in the education setting and how it can be used effectively to enhance student learning and outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study was a quantitative approach because of the nature of the issue under investigation. Quantitative research approaches are always utilized in studies that involve examining the link between two or more research variables or when testing hypothesis. The research issue is suitable for a quantitative research approach because it involves examining the relationship between Twitter usage and the academic performance of university students in Saudi Arabia. In this case, the quantitative study was carried out on a group of participants from Shaqra University in Saudi Arabia.

Study Participants
Participants were voluntarily and anonymously invited to participate in this study through an electronic questionnaire with an invitation cover letter. The experiment took almost two months Following the invitations, a group of 82 students the research sample comprises (42 Experimental) and (Control 40) were randomly selected to participate in the study. They responded to the electronic questionnaire. It was also they studied book of (education technologies and communication),So the experimental group learn using Twitter but the second group to learn without Twitter.

Data Collection
The data collection process involved using an electronic questionnaire that was administered to the group of 82 participants at Shaqra University. As well as the achievement tests (pre -post test) . The electronic questionnaire comprises of four major categories i.e. the demographic and personal information of the student, Twitter usage details, and impact of Twitter on achievement. The demographic and personal information of the student included gender, age and year of study while Twitter usage details included kingfrequency of using Twitter in education. The impact of Twitter on learning outcomes included how it influences communication and collaboration between teachers and students and its contribution to student achievement. Section 2 and Section 3 of the questionnaire included a Likert-type scale to examine usage of Twitter in academics by teachers and students and its impact on learning outcomes. As for the achievement test has been applied to two groups students (42 Experimental) and (Control 40).

Data Analysis
The data or results obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics analyses (Mean). In this case, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the proportions and mean scores of the results obtained from the questionnaire. Additionally, the researcher utilized log-transformation methods to transform skewed data into normal distributions for this research. As well as to identify The difference between the (Mean) scores of the two groups experimental and control students in achievement test.

RESULTS

While a group of 82 students from Shaqra University were selected to participate in this study, the total number of those included in the final analysis was 65 students. 13 students were excluded from the study or final analysis because they did not complete the electronic questionnaire while 4 students reported that they do not utilize Twitter in their learning process for different reasons. This implies that 90.1% (n=65) use Twitter in their learning processes and for enhanced communication and collaboration with teachers.

On the issue of the impact of Twitter on learning and student achievement, 95% (n=61.7) of the study participants believed that this social media platform is beneficial in supporting their learning through enhanced communication and collaboration with teachers. However, 37% (n=24) of the students reported that Twitter can sometimes be distracting in the learning process.

With regards to the impact of Twitter on student achievement or learning outcomes, 83% (n=83.95) of the students reported that Twitter improved their outcomes and achievements. The rest of the participants reported that Twitter was beneficial Accordingly, it means that there is a trace of Twitter-on learning. Collection for the experimental group students. Those who reported improvement in outcomes and achievement following Twitter usage attributed the impact to the enhanced communication and collaboration with teachers and its help in supporting learning. Of all the students, 74% (n=48.1) stated that increased Twitter use in education contributed to better test scores. The better GPA scores were attributed to the fact that Twitter use has enhanced teaching and effectively supports learning.

DISCUSSION

The results of this current study showed that a high percentage of students believe that Twitter has a positive impact on learning outcomes and achievement since it helps in enhancing test scores. The better test scores emerge from the fact that Twitter enhances communication and collaboration between teachers and students, improves teaching/instructional strategies, and supports student learning. These findings refuted the results of Isnaini & Rakhamawati (2016) and Shahzad, Alwagait & Alim (2014) that there is no relationship between social media use and academic performance. On the contrary, these findings are consistent with studies that have found social media to have considerable impacts on student achievement or learning outcomes, especially with regards to enhancing academic performance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study provides significant insights regarding Twitter use in the education of university students in Saudi Arabia and its associated impacts on achievement, it has several limitations. The first limitation is that it was carried out on one university i.e. Shaqra University, which affects the generalization of its findings to all universities. Secondly, the study is limited on the premise that it only incorporates the views of students and does not include teachers' views on the issue under investigation. Third, the study does not examine institutional factors that promote Twitter usage in education and their influence on student

achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's limitations, future studies should be carried out to examine this research issue. First, future studies should examine the role of institutional factors in student achievement vis-à-vis increased Twitter usage in education. Secondly, there is need to examine the perceptions of teachers regarding Twitter use in education and its impact on the learning process and student achievement. Third, it is important to compare the impact of Twitter on student achievement of university students in comparison to other social media platforms.

In conclusion, Twitter is increasingly utilized in the higher education setting in Saudi Arabia, especially following its recognition by the government as an official communication channel in education. While the issue has attracted considerable attention, there are still gaps in existing literature on how social media, especially Twitter, impacts learning. The findings of this current study have shown a positive relationship between Twitter usage and academic performance. The increased use of Twitter in higher education contributes to better test scores and improved learning outcomes. However, further studies should be carried out to examine the role of institutional factors and teachers' perceptions regarding the research issue.

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