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SOCIAL MEDIA DYNAMICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: FROM MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES

Shakirah Mohd Saad
Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah
shakirahmdsaad@uitm.edu.my

Rosliza Md Zani
Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah
rosliza568@uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This article explores the evolving role of social media in Higher Learning Institute (HEI), emphasizing its potential as a constructive tool and the challenges it poses. The rapid adoption of social media in academic activities raises concerns about governance and ethical issues. While social media facilitates communication and knowledge-sharing at no cost, the article acknowledges the need for vigilant oversight due to potential legal and ethical vulnerabilities. The dual nature of social media is examined, acknowledging its transformative impact on communication while highlighting the risks associated with mismanagement. The article stresses the importance of proactive monitoring to prevent potential damage to organizational reputations. To address these challenges, the article recommends educating staff on e-professionalism, implementing specific usage policies, and emphasizing ethical considerations. The conclusion advocates for strategic planning in higher education to maximize the benefits of social media while navigating its challenges effectively.

Keywords ; social media**,** Higher Learning Institute, communication, e-professionalism.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the discourse surrounding social media in higher education has gained significant traction, prompting reflections on its constructive potential and ethical challenges. Minister Fadhlina Sidek's reminder underscores the crucial role educators play in shaping the integrity and morality of Malaysian society, especially in light of social media controversies (Bernama, 2023). This article explores the implications of social media in higher learning institutions, acknowledging its transformative impact while addressing the need for proactive management to uphold professionalism and ethical standards.

Policy Framework and Institutional Dynamics

Over the years, the Ministry of Education has formulated policies and guidelines to address social media-related issues in academia (Academic Excellence Division, 2022). The increasing integration of social media platforms like Telegram, WhatsApp, and Twitter into academic activities demonstrates that difficulties still exist despite these efforts. Hence, the intersection of professional conduct and social media usage underscores the need for a robust governance framework (Ayres, 2013; Mustafa & Ahmad, 2016).

The dual nature of social media, characterised by its constructive potential and inherent risks, necessitates vigilant oversight to mitigate ethical dilemmas (Mncube & Mthethwa, 2022; Taylor et al., 2016). Scholars emphasise the importance of delineating responsibilities and establishing accountability structures to navigate the complexities of social media engagement within higher education settings (Taylor et al., 2016).

Constructive Engagement: Leveraging Social Media for Academic Enrichment

Social media platforms serve as invaluable tools for fostering communication and knowledge dissemination within higher education ecosystems (Ayres, 2013; Mustafa & Ahmad, 2016). The accessibility and versatility of social media facilitate meaningful interactions among stakeholders, transcending traditional boundaries.

Thus, acknowledging the transformative potential of social media, scholars advocate for proactive engagement to harness its benefits effectively (Al-Rahmi et al., 2014). The democratisation of information and the facilitation of collaborative learning underscores the instrumental role of social media in advancing educational objectives (Aase, 2010; Cain & Fink, 2010).

Ethical Challenges: Mitigating Risks and Safeguarding Reputation

Despite its merits, social media usage within higher education settings presents inherent risks, ranging from privacy breaches to reputational damage (Cain & Fink, 2010). Failure to uphold ethical standards and monitor online discourse may compromise institutional integrity and stakeholder trust (Ayres, 2013; Ramsay, 2010).

To address these challenges, proactive measures such as e-professionalism training and the establishment of clear usage policies are imperative (Ayres, 2013; Taylor et al., 2016). Moreover, ethical considerations should be embedded within organisational culture, fostering a climate of accountability and responsible digital citizenship (Mansouri et al., 2022).

Navigating the Path Forward: Strategies for Effective Social Media Management

In conclusion, effective social media management in higher education necessitates a strategic and multifaceted approach. Institutions must prioritise continuous education and awareness initiatives to promote responsible usage and mitigate risks (Kumar et al., 2023). Therefore, by integrating social media literacy into institutional frameworks and fostering a culture of ethical engagement, higher learning institutions can harness the transformative potential of social media while safeguarding their reputation and integrity.

In summary, navigating the dynamic landscape of social media requires a concerted effort to balance innovation with accountability, ensuring that these platforms serve as assets rather than liabilities in the higher education milieu.

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