

# A Study on Perceived Importance of Use of Social Media in Education among B-School Students in Coimbatore District

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## Abstract

*The technology plays a major role in today's competitive world. Learning is continuous processes that enable anyone develop their knowledge and skill. Adopting technology has become a part of student learning process. It facilitates the faculty and students to develop better outcome. The adoption and use of technology has varied criteria and the students use it to nurture their talents in many possible ways. This study is intended to investigate the use of social media in education among the MBA students for enhancing more learning. The researchers developed structured a questionnaire and collected data. This questionnaire has about 15 variables belonging to different sets of uses of social media by a student. These variables were measured along the standard measurement scale (Five-point scale of Likert) ranging from "5" = very important to "1"= not at all important. The researchers have analysed the data by using simple descriptive analysis. The results are presented in tables and diagrams with suitable interpretations.*

**Keywords:** Social media, Perceived value, Perceived importance, Education

## 1. Introduction

With all the changes in the technology, the world is moving around to the better use of technology in all spheres of human life. The business today operates with apparent use of technology to build relationship. Every individual is thriving to make more relationship to utilize the opportunities that can bring benefits to their life. The need and necessity of the digital usage has increased rapidly. The developing countries like India started adopting this trend very quickly.

Accordinging the study conducted by Ernst and Young in 2013 it was revealed that the organizations today are very optimistic about the role of social media in their organizations. The organizations today have realized that it plays a crucial role in generating insights and engaging with market place on a continued basis. Social media has helped organizations to create their own communities of fans, customers, and prospects. The study revealed that in the future, organizations hope to focus more on social media and are looking forward greater adoption within their organizations.

Internet capabilities and applications have evolved a larger space in the use of technology by any individual. The tools and technologies that are adopted in the education is facilitating to cater the increasing use of interactive, highly accessible, affordable, and specialized relationship among users. The concept of "Web 2.0" (O'Reilly 2005) is a resultant variable of all these activities stated above. This concept made the evolution of social media possible. Web 2.0 is sometimes referred to as the "read/write Web" and the social Web. It is a broad term used comprehensively to refer to technologies that enable users to consume, contribute, share, and augment content online, often in the context of social media (Tuten 2008).

According to Tracy Tuten and Melanie Marks (2012), social media are the online means of communication, conveyance, and collaboration among interconnected and interdependent networks. These capabilities are affecting many areas of life, including how businesses are run, how individuals behave, and even how students learn.

## **2. Objectives**

The previous studies have stated that the use of social media tools is not widespread in the college classroom. However, the applicability of social media tools is better enhanced by the students. The concept of out of class room learning is becoming more popular and the new generation learners in management education have necessity to gain more exposure and experience in using the technology based learning. Social media is a primary access to majority of the students today for their personal and professional developments. In this regard, this study is intended to investigate the use of social media in education among the MBA students for enhancing more learning.

## **3. Methodology**

The present study is descriptive in nature and convenience sampling method is used. There are more than 70 institutions in Coimbatore district offering MBA programme and an average of 60 students pursuing the course in each institution. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire from 150 respondents who are presently pursuing their MBA programme from the b-schools in the Coimbatore district. This questionnaire has about 15 variables belonging to different sets of uses of social media by a student. The variables are Course Management, Social Networks, Discussion Forums, Instant Messaging, Media Sharing Sites, Online Lectures with Audio/ Video, Content Creation Tools, Collaborative Documents, Social Bookmarking, Wikis, Online Meetings, Games, Blogs and Microblogs, Social News, and E-Portfolios. These variables were measured along the standard measurement scale (Five-point scale of Likert) ranging from "5" = very important to "1" = not at all important. The researchers have analysed the data by using simple descriptive analysis. The results are presented in tables and diagrams with suitable interpretations.

#### **4. Use of social media in education**

There are many researchers studied about the increasing importance of social media in various fields. The academic researchers have anticipated an increasing importance and its role in student-learning process. Armstrong and Franklin (2008) revealed the important role of social media in education. It was identified that there are certain social media tools students primarily use in their day-to-day life. The list of tools includes blogs, wikis, social networks, media-sharing sites, and media production services. There are several possible benefits associated with using the tools as educational technologies. According to Hargadon (2010), there is a significant shift in the use of technology, particularly social media. The upgradation of constant continued developments and the necessity of learning practices, users starting exploring the social media to interact and some extent to produce their own contents. This shift is vitalized from the user to just read, receive, and research.

In recent days, larger the young population is using the social media tools. Prensky (2001), in his study described about the students as 'digital natives'. This means that those who have never known a world without semantic Web sites, blogs, and virtual digital worlds. There is a natural shift to the maximum of social media technology for enhancing more knowledge. Thus, their cultural and communication experiences have largely revolved around digital tools and access to digital resources.

Further to this, during 2010, there were lots of studies conducted on the use of social media among the students (Lenhart et al.; Smith and Caruso). From these studies, it was identified that the majority of the students use at least one social networking site; the students' frequency of use and adoptability is high; perhaps the active experiential learning was assumed by most of the students among those who use social media technology for education. Some of the studies focusing on the students' perception revealed that use of social media support to enhance student knowledge because they engage students, facilitate peer learning, enhance communication skills (Renner 2006; Barnes and Tynan 2007; Berlanga et al. 2007; Brown and Adler 2008; Drexler, Baralt, and Dawson 2008). Thus, social media tools offer marketing educators solutions to course management problems and opportunities to meet course objectives. Ultimately this would be result of the students engaging and interactive ways of acquiring knowledge.

In contrast to the above, there are several arguments stated the barriers in using the social media technology among the learners. According to a study reported by Buzzard et al. (2011) of instructors and students, a higher percentage of students and instructors found traditional digital tools to be more effective than social tools. Thus, there is necessity for the learners to determine if social tools are worth the investment for the engagement and learning outcomes potentially affected by the tools. As per Armstrong and Franklin (2008), though the technology usage has the barriers to overcome many practical issues, it is the need of the future. Social tools exist alongside other digital

educational technologies, including traditional tools such as web sites, email, and office software; and course/learning tools such as lectures, white boards, virtual classes, course management systems and so on.

The corporate world today is changing dynamically. The use of technology in any organisation is gaining more importance. The continued and instant learning becomes a key for any student those who are looking for the career development in the industry today. Hence, given the potential benefits of use of social media among the b-school students, particularly in the developing countries like India, there are limited numbers of studies on the relevant topic. The main purpose of this paper is to explore the use of social media for enhancing knowledge among MBA students in Coimbatore district.

##### **5. Perceived importance of using social media in education**

In a study reported by Buzzard et al. (2011) of instructors and students, a higher percentage of students and instructors found traditional digital tools to be more effective than social tools. In this study, the respondents were asked to indicate how important they felt it was for them to use social media tools in their work as management students. Responses used a five-point scale ranging from “not at all important” to “very important,” as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Perceived importance of use of social media in education**

Tool	% Not at All Important (1)	% Little Important (2)	% Moderate Important (3)	% Important (4)	% Very Important (5)
Course Management	6.2	4.6	8.4	14.4	66.4
Social Networks	18.3	12.3	27.2	26.9	15.4
Discussion Forums	22.4	18.8	27.2	17.3	14.4
Instant Messaging	22.4	18.8	27.2	17.3	14.4
Media Sharing Sites	32.2	17.9	23.5	17.2	9.2
Online Lectures with Audio/ Video	33.3	22.5	22.7	13.5	8.0
Content Creation Tools	35.1	20.5	22.7	14.6	7.1
Collaborative Documents	46.4	27.8	16.2	6.6	2.9
Social Bookmarking	37.3	26.6	20.0	12.2	3.9
Wikis	40.1	23.4	20.2	12.4	3.9
Online Meetings	46.4	22.0	21.3	7.2	3.1
Games	45.5	24.9	20.0	6.8	2.7
Blogs and Microblogs	38.3	21.4	21.4	12.4	6.6
Social News	53.4	23.4	11.6	8.0	3.6
E-Portfolios	51.5	25.6	15.0	5.2	2.7

**Table 2: Overall mean and distribution of responses of use of social media**

Tool	Overall Mean	Standard Deviation
Course Management	4.28	1.18
Social Networks	3.29	1.31
Discussion Forums	3.01	1.33
Instant Messaging	2.40	1.34
Media Sharing Sites	2.38	1.28
Online Lectures with Audio/ Video	2.53	1.33
Content Creation Tools	2.27	1.26
Collaborative Documents	2.19	1.17
Social Bookmarking	2.17	1.19
Wikis	1.99	1.11
Online Meetings	1.96	1.08
Games	1.92	1.07
Blogs and Microblogs	1.82	1.12
Social News	1.64	1.04
E-Portfolios	1.14	0.97

Table 2 provides the mean responses related to perceived importance sorted from most important to least important, as well as the distribution of responses. The mean responses ranged from 1.14 (E-Portfolios) to 4.28 (course management). However, it should be noted that only three activities had a mean response greater than 3.0 viz., course management, social networks, and discussion forums. There were 6 activities for which the mean response fell in between “not at all important” (value of 1) and “little importance” (value of 2). There were 6 activities for which the mean response fell in between “little importance” (value of 2) and “moderate importance” (value of 3).

## 6. Conclusion

The results revealed that the use of social tools such as wikis, online meetings, games, blogs and microblogs, social news and e-portfolios is relatively low. On the contrary, particularly compared to the use of course management, social networking, and discussion forums have perceived high value. Results also suggest that the critical learning variables such as online lectures, content creation, and collaborative documents have perceived a moderate level of importance and usefulness. Based on the literatures available this is consistent (Buzzard et al., 2011). The earlier studies on the use of social media among educators have also perceived the same kind of value. This study proves that most students using social media tools utilize the tools for discussions as well. However, the social networking is their priority. There is high amount of perception among the students in Coimbatore district as they use the social media tool for their

course management. More research is needed on the relative value of social tools compared to other educational technologies and how best to apply the tools to enhance learning outcomes and accomplish course objectives. Also, the perception of students among other streams can also be studied for a comparative analysis. The study can be expanded to understand the relative importance of the social medial tools compared to personal use of the same.

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