Challenges of Facebook integration in high education classrooms, case study Republic of Macedonia

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Abstract

Currently, the Internet has become a part of the everyday life of human beings. The way of communication between people has changed and social networks are dominating in the lives of everyone. One of the most used social networks is Facebook, but besides that it is used for communication and entertainment, Facebook can also be used for learning. Therefore, the main issue of this paper is the use of Facebook for educational approaches by students and teachers. Case studies are the challenges of integration of Facebook in High Education in the municipality of Kumanovo in the Republic of Macedonia in 2016. Special emphasis is devoted in usage of Facebook in schools as the main questions were whether students use Facebook to ask for help for assignments or any material, and do teachers use Facebook to post assignments and to communicate with students. To understand this, there are conducted two questionnaires, one to students and one to teachers and interviews with school principals, and finally responses of people who participated have been analysed. The result is that by joining Facebook in education, students are more motivated to learn, Facebook helps students to learn by sharing knowledge with each other and by using Facebook at school, teachers will find it easier to inform students.

Keywords: social network, facebook, communication, high education, classroom.

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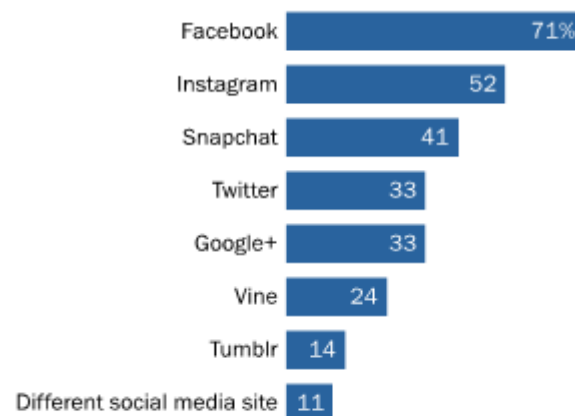
1. Introduction

The Internet has changed the world. Open access to the Internet has revolutionized the way individuals communicate and collaborate, entrepreneurs and corporations conduct business, and governments and citizens interact. At the same time, the Internet has created an open revolutionary model for its development and governance including all stakeholders. The internet development was supported so critically in creating an open process. Fundamentally, the Internet is a "network of networks", whose protocols are designed to allow networks to interact. At first, these networks represented various academic, government and research communities, whose members needed to work together to develop common standards and manage shared resources (Internet Society Global Internet Report, 2014) According to Computer Hope (2013) as a social website, alternatively referred to as a virtual community or profile site, a social network is a website that brings people together to talk, share ideas and interests, or make new friends. This type of collaboration and sharing is known as social media. Unlike traditional media that is typically created by no more than ten people, social media sites' content is created by hundreds or even millions of different people (Computer Hope, 2013).

According to Lenhart (2015) Facebook is the most popular and frequently used social media platform among teens, half of teens use Instagram, and nearly as many use Snapchat.

Figure 1. Percentage of teenagers who use social networks

% of all teens 13 to 17 who use ...

Facebook	71%
Instagram	52
Snapchat	41
Twitter	33
Google+	33
Vine	24
Tumblr	14
Different social media site	11

In the recent years the integration of technology and computers in teaching and learning is increasingly becoming an integral part of the educational system. This trend has begun to expand in primary and secondary education, but is currently more pronounced at the university level. This does not mean that teaching and learning as a social process in general, tends to be replaced effectively by technology. But, on the contrary, technology can serve the educational process in different ways. Technology is ubiquitous touching almost every part of our lives, our communities, our homes. However, most schools are lagging far behind when it comes to integrating technology into classroom learning.

2. Facebook in teaching

In the field of education, technology does not have a secondary role in the sole process of the transfer of knowledge especially because technology is becoming more and more integrated into the lives of students of all ages and groups. The special part of this technology is the use of Facebook as an educational tool. Being originally designed for college students in the United States in 2004, Facebook was created as a social networking website. Facebook later expanded to various areas of education. Facebook allows any user to create a profile, update it with personal information such as home address, mobile phone number, interesting religious views and also allows people to form groups and posting photos (Ngoyi, Siuluta, Muwamba, Banda, Hatilimab & Ngoyi, 2015). A Facebook

is also used as an educational tool due to the fact that it is independent of time and place, so students and lecturers can send information even when they are not in the classroom or lecture amphitheater.

3. Facebook as a technological learning tool

A story about the Facebook in the classroom: "In my British Literary History course last winter semester, my professor created a class Facebook group which we all joined. We'd finish our reading for class and then get online and write a paragraph about what we'd read, focusing our comments on the specific course aims that my professor had created for the class. We would then go to class where my professor would note the ways in which we'd covered the material well and he'd teach anything we missed as well as anything else he wanted us to know. This way of conducting class was effective because:

- We were socially motivated to complete the reading and contribute to the online discussion.
- We didn't spend class time going over that which we already understood.
- We were able to benefit from insights from peers who generally don't participate in class discussion.
- We all learned to focus the vast amount of reading required for such a course to the specific course aims of our professor.
- Through contributions from our classmates, we understood how each distinct text related to the others and to the class focus, and so on.

We shouldn't discount Facebook when it has proven to be a worthwhile classroom tool. I should also note that a class Facebook group doesn't require the professor or students to "friend" each other to participate." So by Kelly Walsh Facebook is mainly used to help a discussion group, which can certainly be done through an LMS like Blackboard or Moodle or other different tools, but the good thing about Facebook is that many students are already familiar and comfortable with it - it is a "known entity" for them (Walsh, 2010).

4. How can schools use Facebook to build an online community?

According to David Hartstein there are some ways that schools can benefit from the creation of an effective presentation to Facebook.

- A Quick Note on Protecting Students - it is important to frame the discussion with a warning about protecting students. Before launching a Facebook Page, school leaders must ensure they have considered well enough the types of content they are going to share with the world.
- Share School News - Facebook is an excellent opportunity for a school to connect with families and share information rapidly. If a school is consistent in keeping the information updated and accurate, students and families will likely be willing to rely on the Facebook Page as a resource to find information about what is going on at school.
- Share Upcoming Events - A Facebook Page is an excellent opportunity for a school to post upcoming events using the Facebook Events app.
- Make School Announcements - Facebook is a great space for schools to make announcements to parents and students.
- Using Facebook to Attract Students - For schools that also focus on recruitment of students or enrolling students in a selection lottery, Facebook can be an excellent resource. First of all, a school can share the school aspects that make it appealing through photos and videos.
- Using Facebook to Attract Staff - Facebook is a logical place for schools to focus some of their efforts when recruiting talented teachers and school leaders (Hartstein, 2011)

5. The best practices for educators on Facebook by Junco

Junco states that there are tips on how to effectively use Facebook in the classroom.

- Use Facebook With a Focus – "Instead of telling your students, 'Hey, we are going to use Facebook for this course,'" Junco emphasizes that "it is important to frame Facebook use in a way that will make sense. For instance, you could say 'we are going to use a Facebook group in order to interact with each other, discuss course topics, and share links of interest".

- Friend With Caution - Regardless of whether the legislation was justified, there's a reason that Missouri banned social media friendships between teachers and students. In many cases it is not any more appropriate for teachers and students to hang out on the Internet after school than it is in reality. Not to mention that both parties can feel uncomfortable when social networks make their lives outside of the classroom accessible in a classroom context.

- Use a Facebook Group - In addition to using Facebook groups in his own classes, Junco has conducted research on how they can be incorporated into learning most effectively.

- Use a Facebook Page - Because Facebook pages are open to the public and anybody can subscribe to their content, they are typically used differently than Facebook groups in educational settings. They often become interactive resources rather than a setting for intimate discussion. (Kessler, 2011)

6. Some entertainment ways to use Facebook on your lesson plans and teaching

6.1. Create Fictitious Profiles or Fan Pages

Who among us did not have to do a biography report on a famous author or historical figure? Think about how much more fun that project would have been if you could have created a Facebook fan page or profile for that person instead. Teachers of all subjects can use this idea to help their students learn more about significant figures in a certain field. Students can create complete pages for their figures, including biographical information, "Likes", photos, and even status updates to show they have a thorough understanding of the material.

6.2. Conduct Surveys or Opinion Polls

Classes that study social studies, media, film, religion, politics, and more can make good use of the social connections on Facebook to conduct surveys and opinion polls for research. Want to study family traditions? Conduct a poll amongst friends. Want to discuss cultural beliefs? Host a survey on the network. The Facebook Questions feature allows you to do this. Of course, some surveys or polls may be limited based on how many people students are able to reach through the network.

6.3. Create a Group specific to your course/class

A Facebook group is a great way to leverage the power and popularity of this application to distribute learning content and create a central place for communication for a course or class.

Tap into information about specific topics

Chances are there are some groups and pages out there that are focused on issues relevant to your course. Type the name of your academic subject in Facebook's search window and you will automatically get a list of related content. For example, type "Algebra" and you will get Wikipedia's definition, but you will also get a handful of pages with related focuses such as books, 'Interest', Groups, and more.

6.4. Teach students to differentiate real news from hype and hysteria

In many ways, Facebook is like a giant phone game. People sometimes hear about news, events, and products on Facebook first. Of course, rumors have a way of going viral before misinformation is corrected, and there is a challenge here to be able to differentiate legitimate information from assumptions, gossip, hype, etc. There is an opportunity to leverage this in a critical thinking context. For example, students can search other sources to validate information they come across in Facebook. The way news spreads on Facebook also offers a unique opportunity for study by students of journalism or mass media. Facebook offers many opportunities for use in the classroom. However, its applications may not always be obvious, and some creative thinking is required. (Walsh, 2012)
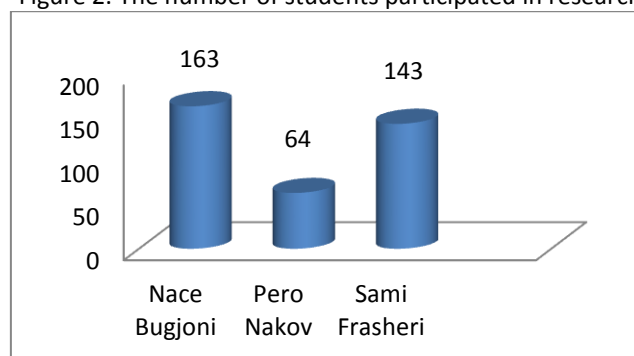
7. Results

In the context of this topic a research about how many students and teachers use Facebook for educational issues was conducted. According to the quantitative method, there was realized a survey including two questionnaires, one receiving responses from students and the other from teachers in the secondary schools in the municipality of Kumanovo. On the other hand, based on the qualitative method, was carried out an interview attended by directors of secondary schools in the municipality of Kumanovo, Albanian language classes.

7.1 Questionnaire realized by students of secondary schools in the municipality of Kumanovo
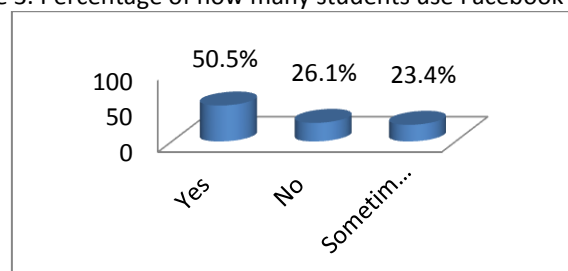
In February 2016, in the research organized for students, have participated 368 students from a total of 2740 secondary schoolers in the municipality of Kumanovo classes in Albanian language. This number includes the students from economic high school "Pero Nakov", technical high school "Nace Bugjoni" and secondary school "Sami Frasheri".

Figure 2. The number of students participated in research

Despite the fact that 60.6% of students use Facebook, 50.5% use Facebook for learning, 23.4% sometimes and 26.1% never use Facebook for educational issues
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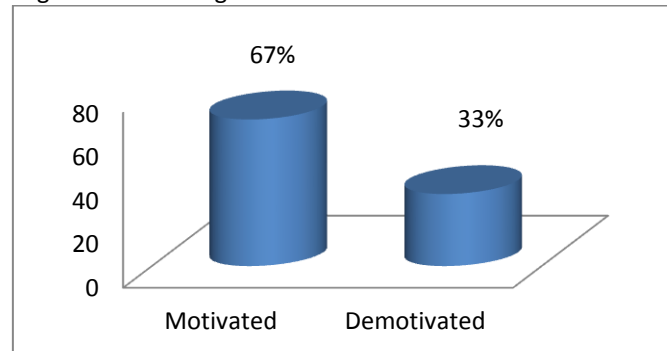Figure 3. Percentage of how many students use Facebook to learn

As discussed above, through Facebook students can seek help for assignments that they do not understand, but in the questionnaire they said that only 40.8% require assistance for assignments on Facebook, 21.3% sometimes and 36.1% were expressed "no", which means that they do not use Facebook to ask for help for assignments.

The use of Facebook in education can have positive and negative effect. 57.1% of students think that Facebook usage has a positive effect because:

- *"Of the communication that group Facebook allows, i.e. communication with colleagues, where you can converse, to share ideas and help each other."*
- *"Because I can learn something"*
- *"I think it plays a great role in the distribution of information to each student"* etc.,
and 42.9% think it has a negative effect because:
- *"I think it has a negative impact as a result of the fact that it does not develop human education but may only help students to be informed about what happens to people in their district and in the world. As well as conversations between each other"*
- *"Because students may forget their lessons from staying on Facebook"*
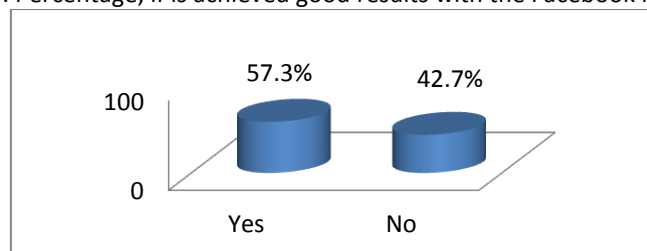- *"Because it can deconcentrate you from learning and you cannot learn".*

Using Facebook by teachers in class for educational issues can have an impact on students by creating fun time while giving away traditional methods. Whether students feel more motivated when Facebook is being used by their teachers, can be found out through students' responses, among which 67.1% said they feel motivated and 32.9% feel demotivated.

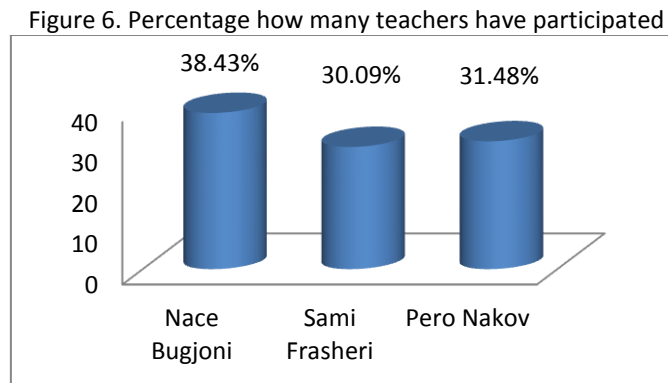Figure 4. Percentage of students motivated and demotivated

By using Facebook, teachers can also post assignments for students in any group, which is a good idea if the teacher has not had the opportunity to show assignments in class, but only 39.4% of students responded that teachers post assignments, sometimes 19.6% and 41% never. By integrating Facebook in education students can achieve better results. The majority of students, 57.3%, stated that the integration of Facebook in education could help achieve better results and 42.7% said no.

Figure 5. Percentage, if is achieved good results with the Facebook integration
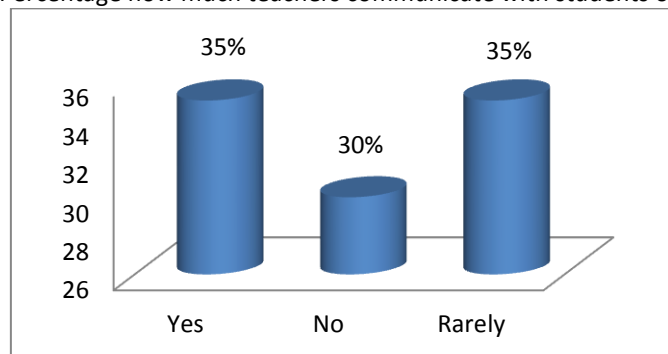
7.2 The questionnaire realized by high school teachers in the municipality of Kumanovo

In February 2016, in the research organized for teachers, have participated 40 teachers from a total of 216 secondary school teachers. Here are involved economic high school "Pero Nakov", secondary technical school "Nace Bugjoni" and the secondary school "Sami Frasheri".

Figure 6. Percentage how many teachers have participated

Communication between students and teachers is very important, but on the question how they communicate with students via Facebook 35% stated that they communicate with students, 35% communicate rarely and 30% do not communicate with students through Facebook.

Figure 7. Percentage how much teachers communicate with students on Facebook

The main issue was whether they use Facebook in class for educational issues. 72.5% said they did not use, 22.5% sometimes and 5% said yes.

Teachers will find the majority of today's young generation in Facebook. Although it is a website, if teachers use it in their classroom for different activities, it will not be difficult to engage their students. They can take advantage of this way of communication to share content that is relevant to their course by submitting ideas, suggestions and looking for to provide their valuable feedback. But as regards whether they post instructional material on Facebook for students, very few teachers i.e. only 15% said they post, 45% sometimes and 40% never.

Inclusion of Facebook in education can have positive or negative effect. According to 60% of teachers Facebook integration in education has a positive impact. Some of them said that:

- *"Facebook helps the students."*
- *"It helps in notifying students in relation to assignments and learning activities."*
- *"Because I notify students in which educational software they can find material for interactive learning."*

- *"Students have instant access to their phones in topics in the relevant field, a thing that enables them become deeply convinced of their belief in the benefits of social networks."*
  While 40% of the respondents said that the Facebook integration in education has a negative impact because:
- *"After accessing to Facebook, scope for learning will be skipped"*
- *"Once students misusing communication with others for other extracurricular issues"*
- *"I think it's a waste of time"*
- *"Students do not want lessons in social networks" and so on.*

But whether they will use Facebook in the future for teaching, only 17.5% said yes, 67.5% probably and 15% will not use.

7.3 Interviews conducted with high school directors in the Kumanovo municipality

Part of this interview have been three directors of secondary schools in the municipality of Kumanovo, classes in Albanian language, director of high school "Sami Frasheri" , Economic School "Pero Nakov" and the director of technical secondary school "Nace Bugjoni". According to school principals, who had similar thoughts, technology integration in their schools was not at an appropriate level. Inclusion of Facebook in teaching according to school principals was not a good idea because they thought that Facebook cannot help students to learn, because it may distract students, even if they use it for educational purposes. Instead of Facebook, school principals thought that it would be better to create a website where they can communicate and be informed about educational issues and in order to improve the quality of students, they said that it is definitely necessary to do a proper involvement of technology in the teaching process.

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