Social Networks from Higher Education Students’ Perspective

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Abstract
In recent years, emerging social network sites are reshaping the ways that people communicate, interact, collaborate, work and even learn. Based on the idea that social networks can be a powerful and effective tool for instructors and students, this study was conducted to reveal students’ perceptions about social networks from different perspectives. Hence, students’ thoughts on this topic were solicited via open-ended questions posed through an online survey which was announced via several social networks. The findings indicated that the sharing of materials and personal thoughts, the increase in the flow of knowledge, and online communication and interaction were perceived by students as the characteristic features for knowledge acquisition and socialization in online environments. Furthermore, socialization and interaction, the reinforcement of social links and communication, alongside information sharing and the gaining of knowledge were listed as the main benefits of using social network sites. It can be concluded that the new generation likes to communicate in social environments and that they also value the information they gain during this process. Thus, this environment should be considered as a learning environment in order to improve the quality in the communication process of our students. Hence, use of these environments should be integrated into the curriculum, especially for teacher education programs.

Keywords: Social networks; higher education.