Use of Social Network sites for teaching and managing knowledge in adult education

By

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Abstract

According to the recent study, a huge number of college and university academicians are found to be using social networking sites (SNSs) in their classroom (Dane, 2013). SNSs, previously developed for social interactions and discourse and enhancing knowledge sharing between the users, are now being used and practiced as powerful tools for creating, managing and practicing knowledge (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

It is important to note that there are many SNSs and each site requires its own unique application for the knowledge acquisition (Stanciu, Mihai, and Aleca, 2012). They are considered as one of the most effective means of supporting and enhancing learning experiences for students and their benefits are not exclusive to their implementation in instructional methodologies but their capabilities in providing wide-range of applications for teachers to administer knowledge acquisition process, organizational responsibilities, evaluations and feedback on performances make them an ideal choice for their usage as LMSs (Dalsgard, 2006).

For the purpose of this study, Facebook has been chosen as a case study to indicate its usage as a learning management system while to describe the application of SNSs for instructional purposes, Twitter, Linkedln and YouTube have been chosen.

Key Words: Social Networking Sites, ESP, LMS, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedln, YouTube, adult education.

1.0. Social network sites: Introduction & Definitions

People have been searching for means to establish connections, and associations with their desired ones but thanks to the information technology, these means have been materialized into the forms of social network sites (Boyd and Ellison, 2007. In the past, handshakes, word of mouth references and postal mails used to be the primary mediums of initiating, creating and maintaining personal and commercial relationships while in this Information technology era, social network site are used to establish, improve and maintain relationships (Ellison, Lampe, and Steinfield, 2009).

Social network sites act as tools to establish links among users who possess similar hobbies, principles, lineage to particular factions based on personal and professional affiliations and so on (Mason, 2008).. Social network sites do not only bring users closer on a shared online platform but enable them to search and converse with desired people. The researchers unanimously agree that majority of the web 2.0 applications belong to different types of social networking websites (Meeker, 2011).

The social network site can be described as an online facility to enable people to establish unrestricted or partially unrestricted outlines related to their personal and professional information on an online website or shared IT platform (Su, 2011). They also assist their users to keep in touch with other people with whom they would like to establish a connection with and enable people to see and check information about other people who are registered on the same online platform (Golders, et.al.,2007). These connections that users of social networking site make with other users on online services differ greatly with each other in terms of types and classifications.

It is important to note that in many researches, "social networking site" and social network site" as the two terminologies to depict these particular types of online services are used but most of the researchers agree to use "social network site" to define these online services because of the fact that the word "networking" indicates a connection commencement among people who are not known to each other (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Therefore, by examining closely the utility and core principles of these online services, it can be observed that bringing two or more unknown people together on an online platform to establish a connection is certainly one of the functions of these websites but their scope of services contains much more than this (Next-Media, 2010). Likewise any communication devices or applications, social network site are used to establish contacts and connections, both for personal and commercial purposes, but similar to any communicative application, social network site are also prone to many risks, issues and challenges. With the increasing number of social network site in today's world, the risks associated with the security of the users' details are unavoidable and becoming a regular occurring phenomenon (Zafar, 2015).

1.1. Users of Social Network Sites

Generally, users of social network sites have some motives and purposes for which they engage in establishing online connection with others. These motives and purposes can be formed due to the need of continuing and/ or improving active connections or long distance associations with people (Mirani, 2011). Users can initiate to establish & retain connections so that they could stay in touch with people of similar hobbies and affiliations. Needless to say that social network sites function as tools to establish connections, communication and collaboration that their users require and/or engage with in their daily lives (Griffith and Liyanage, 2008). It has been observed that the notion of social network existed as far back as the early 19th century and it was primarily use to depict complicated group of human affiliations and connections among different associates of organizations from different cultures and backgrounds (Kumar, et al.,2013). Several social network models and theories, that were formed in the mid of the 19th century, aimed to investigate relationships, and bonds

among people of social systems. In simple words, a social network can be described as a chart to depict all the connections and relationships among its members. Among the users of these social network sites, the tendency to develop connections can greatly vary and may largely depend on their needs and motives of participation on these sites (Shirase, 2012).

Social network sites contain very sophisticated technological configurations which allow them to hold noticeable profiles of users and once users start interacting with then site, they can look through those profiles to find the ones with whom they tend to establish connection. The users' profiles enable users to write about them and provide the bases for potential connections to be established (Sunden, 2003). Once users have joined the desired site, they are required to provide personal and professional information which then can be inserted into the online forms that lead to the creation of profiles. Most of the sites require general background information including age, education, experience, location, hobbies, and other related information about the users to create profiles. The other requirement for creating a successful profile is to have a profile photo that is required to be uploaded on to these sites' systems. These photos can be cropped as per the need and requirement of the users (Ellison, 2007). In addition to this, most of the sites also provide an option of adding multimedia text or choices to enhance users' profiles through various online services, while others like Facebook allows their users to attach applications to improve their profiles.

One of the unique characteristics of social network sites is that apart from enabling their users to establish connections with unknown users, they also provide them a choice of being socially active and making their online presence noticeable so that others can establish connections with them (Stern and Taylor, 2007). To establish connections online with the help of social network site is easy and require minimal time and efforts but it is important to understand that the main idea behind social network site is not to let users interact with other unknown users on the same site instead these sites' primary objective is to facilitate and establish connections among people who have something in common with someone else that is not yet known to either of them (Haythornthwaite, 2005).

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By examining some of the biggest social network sites, it can be observed that most of the users do not interact with others, who are outside of their social network, to exchange information and develop professional or social connects but large numbers of users tend to communicate and interact among their known contacts (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

1.2 Statistics on the use of Social Networking Sites

The current market leaders in social network industry are Facebook, YouTube,Twitter, and Reddit, and they account for more than 60% of the total usage of social network sites all over the world.
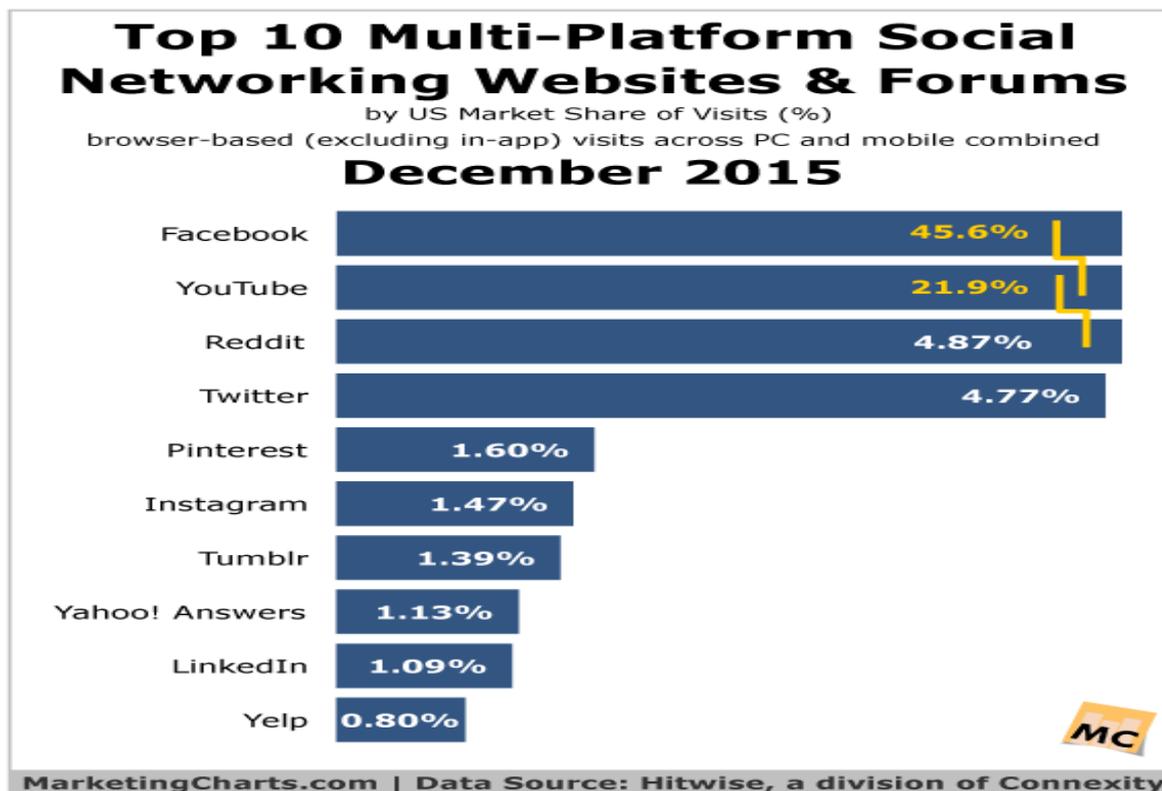
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Figure 1: Usage of Social network sites (Marketingcharts, 2016)

Needless to say, Facebook, with having an on average total monthly active users' base of 1.39 billion (Facebook, 2015), is considered as the most popular and largest social network site. Facebook does not only enable its users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, communicate via typing messages or voice call, stay in contact with the desired people but it also offers its users to create marketplace, groups, events, pages for private and commercial purposes (Dean,2014).

Besides, Twitter is also one of the most popular social network sites. With an active monthly user base of 284 million (Twitter, 2015), Twitter is a site that is growing at a fast pace. Users can tweet about the area of their interests within the word limit of 140 characters (Kwak et.al., 2010). It also provides an option of following other users to receive updates. Since it is a micro blogging site so the idea behind is to enable its users to exchange communication in the shortest way possible. Linkedln is the social network site that is geared toward business purposes. It allows its users to engage in establishing connections based on professional networking. It has more than 187 million monthly active users in 200 countries around the world (Linkedln blog, 2015). One social network site, labelled as the second largest search engine holding site, holds more than 1 billion active monthly users, and contains over a billion videos is called You Tube. You Tube is a free video sharing website that offers varied range of options and choices to its users ranging from posting, and/o own or others' videos, creating reviews, comments, advertisements and so on. Suffice it to say that You Tube is one of the most popular sites on the internet. Following figure shows the active users of various social media platforms:
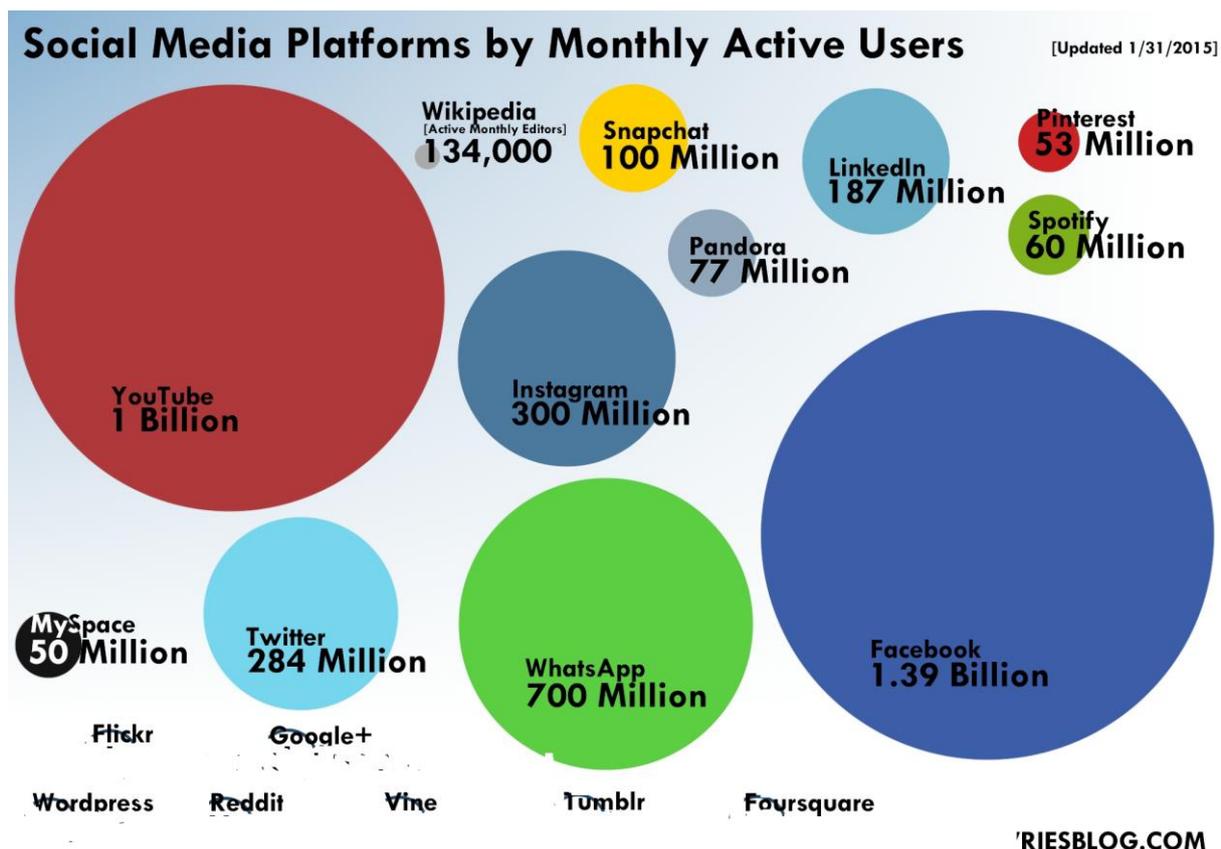
Figure 2: Monthly active users of Social network sites (DeVries, 2015)

In addition to the above, there is a long list of of social network sites that are popular and widely used throughout the world. Some of the important ones are MySpace, Xing, Google+, Disqus, Tumblr, Pininterest, Instragram, Snapchat and so on (Milanovic, 2015). There are various other social network sites that target particular segment of users so that they can establish instant contacts with the ones sharing the similar interests, or hobbies. It is interesting to note that that the idea of social network has long been required, used and understood by the human beings of all times and eras.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Social Network sites and their use for language instruction

Studies and books about SNSs and their impact on students are causing researchers and academicians to have an increased interest in the way SNSs can be used to aid learners to learn languages (Newby, et. al.,2000). Numerous SNSs extend enticing choices for language teachers and these sites are gradually establishing their significance as the effective tools for language practice and discourse among the practitioners of computer assisted language learning (CALL) (Skog, 2005). The emergence of SNSs has prompted language instructors to carry out experiments aiming to explore the scope and potential benefits of using SNSs for language learning (Rembe, 2011). These experiments vary greatly in nature. On the one hand, a number of them tend to explore the way specific SNS's like Youtube and Facebook, are considered, used and practiced stimulating instructional content. On the other hand, other experiments tend to signify the way users interact and form online connections with others users to acquire language skills (Anderson, 2010).

According to one of the studies, majority of the learners depicted significant improvements in their language capabilities when they practiced the target language with other learners and users through SNSs (Dalton, 2009). However, it is important to note that the use of SNSs for language learning required meticulous examination and vigilance. The use of SNSs for language learning can prove to be productive for the desired language outcomes if it is supervised by both web and conventional instruction (Schmidt and Brown, 2004). By merging web and conventional instruction, educators can not only improve the knowledge acquisition process for learners but stimulate students' interests to engage in online interactive activities and practices that lead to positive language outcomes (Sitthirak, 2013).

One of the significant benefits of using SNSs for language acquisition is the availability of peer learning. One study has concluded that the help from the peers can offer significant advantages for second language knowledge acquisition (Ota, 2011). By cooperating with peers on SNSs, learners can create effective and efficient knowledge based activities, identify the areas of weaknesses, develop and examine suppositions made on limited knowledge to verify their authenticities, understand the practical application of the target language and co-develop the required knowledge of grammar, syntax, and phonetics (Swain and Lapkin). Moreover, another study reveals that collaborative peer assistance through the use of SNSs enable learners to acquire the problem-solving abilities with higher intelligence and conscious thoughts about the target language (Skon, Johnson and Johnson). This study further concludes that after analyzing the impact of target language learning on the mind, intelligence and learning, it is found that the collaborative peer assessment encourage greater language achievements for learners.

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The ubiquitous and user-friendly characteristics of SNSs allow students to get exposed to the real-life learning materials and communication by observing the way target language is used and practiced (Herring, 1996). They also provide numerous ways to practice the language skills that learners have acquired. One of the studies depicts that SNSs allow students to hold a conversation with target language speakers whose physical absence do not pose any obstacle in language learning and in some cases, the ease of contact and uninterrupted virtual presence of native target language speakers fetch significantly productive results for learners to develop the required communicative expertise (Goertler, 2009). Therefore, the use of SNSs' supported language discourse.

The use of SNSs in the fulfilment of the learners' interactions and communication wants requires lots of consideration because it is important to note that SNSs are not developed as tools for instructing or facilitating language learning instead their key objective is to enable their users to socialize and have regular interactions based on their interests, hobbies, affiliations etc. However, SNSs have a potential to motivate the learners for language learning because they can not only help them to learn the language but satisfy their social wants in order to maintain their interest and focus on SNSs backed learning (Ebersole, 2000). The satisfaction of social wants is an important factor to keep the learners stimulated and once this achieved that it can act as an additional support to improve students' eagerness and willingness for the target language knowledge acquisition (Kern, 1998).

There are numerous possibilities pertaining to the SNSs for motivating language learners to conceive and create personal learning content. Although enabling learners to be able to develop individual learning content was not the ideal choice of language educators in the past due to the economic reasons, now, thanks to the SNSs, this ides has become reality and a commonly used learning method of the language students to express creativity and freedom, two essential motivators for language learning (Thorne, 2010). Despite of its usefulness, there are a number of issues that need to be resolved before its successful application. For some learners, to be able to get used to with the particular use of SNSs in language learning requires lots of time and efforts. Even for those who are IT savvy but

unaware of the many ways the learning materials can be created, shared and practiced on SNSs.

In addition, the precautionary measures for the privacy and security of the learners' details are complex and/or vaguely comprehended (Ahn, Shehab, & Squicciarini, 2011). Suffice to say that there are a lot of learners, who are not comfortable with the language learning through SNSs while for others, it becomes rather impossible to keep abreast with the methods and shifts but according to the latest research, it is concluded that despite of numerous obstacles, students of foreign languages tend to perform better and generate positive results in language learning through SNSs because they are simple and easy to access and follow, and generally free to use (Chartrand, 2012). Motivational, instructional and elements related to moods, feelings and attitudes of learners are some of the convincing views to try out SNSs for language learning and language educators can effectively facilitate students' development and advancement in the target language.

According to the recent study, Facebook and Twitter encourage productive language learning and the use of these sites to achieve required capabilities and skills in the target language is common among the millennial learners (Thurairaj et al.,2012). It is observed that learners who are engaged with the language learning through SNSs depict higher satisfaction about the SNSs backed language learning activities and report increased-improvement to be able to interact in the in the target language (Yunis, Salehi and Chen, 2012). As per one of the researches, enabling language students to use Facebook and Twitter as the means for language learning inspire them to stay motivated and excited for language learning (Aydin, 2012). In addition to this, another study has pointed out that Facebook and Twitter are commonly used and practiced by learners for interacting in the English language (Felix, 2003).

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When it comes to the language learning specific activities on the SNSs, it is observed that irrespective of the nature or type of activities, they all cause productive and effective language acquisition (Munoz and Towner, 2009). Consequently, learners make significant progress in the acquisition of the target language, especially productive skills. More to the point, learners depict genuine enhancements in the target language capabilities with the help of favoured activities i.e. exchanging messages, sharing and posting videos, articles, podcasts, participating in discussion board, writing reviews, audio and video interactions with other users etc, on Twitter and Facebook (Eller, 2005). By involving in numerous activities on SNSs, learners tend to develop a large body of words by observing, writing, listening and watching online content. One of the studies concludes that learners are flexible and willing to include the Facebook and other SNSs into their learning process and with the help of these SNSs, learners can be more participative in the language debates and discussion and make them more lively, productive and fun to attend (Thurairaj, et al.,2015).

2.2 Social network sites and their use as learning management systems

LMS is also defined as the set of tools and applications that provide and administer teaching materials, recognize and evaluate personal and collective knowledge targets, follow the development in achieving the desired objectives and collate and produce information for examining the process of knowledge acquisition (Davis, 2008). Undeniably, various educational institutions of higher education have adopted LMS and recognized its significance in managing the learning process for adult education despite of the fact that various tools of LMS have exclusive capabilities to support and provide an infrastructure, in the form of Course Management System (CMS), for digitized knowledge exchange among educators and learners (Gremu & Halse, 2012). With the help of CMS, an LMS offers plethora of applications and conditions that support educators to share learning content with learners, enable students to share study materials, projects and researches, provide an

interface to post the learners' grades and reviews on performances, offer access to a dedicated group messaging exchange service to enable users to exchange important information and learning materials, support online discourse forums and instant chat service so that participants candela with many other people throughout their learning environment (Pilli, 2014).

Because of the world-wide popularity and fast-developing nature of SNSs, many teachers of adult education propose to consider using SNSs as substitutes to LMS based on the reasoning that a tailor-made SNSs, which are specifically modified to act as LMS, can effectively offer a variety of services and applications that can cater for a collaborative and collective saving and sharing of learning materials online, offer information exchange tools and features of SNSs that can be altered to improve learning, timeline and cloud supported media services (Cerda and Planas, 2011). The main objective for proposing SNSs based LMS is to enable learners to get acquainted with cutting edge technological applications for the reason that these competencies can prove to be significantly helpful in their future employment. Consequently, many educational institutions have adopted substitutes for LMS and lots of educators are availing these services to facilitate the learners' knowledge acquisition process (Suthathip and Songrit, 2012). The structure of the LMS substitute provides participants a collaborative platform where they can control and manage chosen online services. By following this structure, learners and educators can opt for the services as per the needs of learning.

There are various studies that have suggested the use of SNSs substitutes to LMS (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotoma, Robinson & Weigel, 2006; Wheeler, Yeomans & Wheeler, 2008). Upon the successful implementation and support of SNS as an LMS, it can provide substantial benefits to learners by establishing further links beyond the premises of their learning environment (Chen and Bryer, 2012). Their use as LMSs can prove to be extremely effective because of their business models which offer a fun and communicative learning environment, provide users an opportunity to interact with those who share the identical hobbies and interests, form social groups and communities based on specific interests and affiliations specifically in the place of work, and educational institutions (Alivera and Olivera-Smith, 2013). Because of the important function that SNSs are playing in everyday' life for people across the age groups, nationalities and cultures, there is a great need for SNSs to be synchronzied with online knowledge acquisition conditions for effective learning and instruction (Veeramanickam and Radhika, 2014). Incorporating the system of methods of LSM and combine it with the functionalities and services offered by SNSs can form a hybrid learning platform that offers combined, dedicated services for both LMS and SNSs for educational purposes. One of the researches concludes that SNSs can be an ideal alternative for LMS because of their built-in features that provide instructional, social and hi-tech solutions (Jonnavithula and Tretiakov, 2012).

2.3 Students' attitude towards Social Networking sites

Educators of all types and educational affiliations have been actively incorporating online mediated knowledge acquisition tools and activities into their lessons besides the traditional classroom instructional methods and acting as a direct provider of educational observations and experiences to students (Hong, Lai and Holton, 2001). The exponential growth of World Wide Websites, that focus learners-generated materials, ease of use, learnability and interoperability, and their capabilities of supporting and offering knowledge, that is in the form of text, and/or visual and interactive, have enabled them to gain world-wide recognition (O"Reilly, 2005). A wide range of social networking sites (SNSs) are available i.e. Facebook, Youtube, Pininterrest, blogs, Instagram, Linkedln, and they are being used by the people across the globe and there is no doubt that SNSs' popularity has significantly increased in

the past decade (Bosch, 2009). Due to the increased use of SNSs in almost all the parts and walks of lives, more and more academicians and scientific investigators are acknowledging their importance and further exploring the possibilities of SNSs' role in adult learning (Tılfarlıoğlu, 2011).

With the help of SNSs, educators and learners can have the opportunities to interact online and use their accounts to covey feelings, thoughts, or ideas and form a personalized online social group in which they can come together to freely discuss and identity learning issues and problems and with the help of that discussion influence learning pace and skills (Hoy and Milne 2010). According to the study, 75% of all the learners in the age bracket of 18 to 30 years have an account on a SNS and one of the driving forces behind their decisions to create accounts was to express oneself (Pew Research Center, 2010). When it comes to the adult learners of higher education using internet in general and SNS in particular, it has been observed that not only more and more students are using internet but the use of SNSs is significantly increasing too (Budden, Anthony, BUdden & Jones, 2007). One of the studies examining the numbers of hours adult learners spending on SNSs concludes that college students are spending more than 6 hours per week using Facebook and MySpace (Budden, and Budden, 2009). A number of students consider their online accounts to be private and allow others to view their accounts only after they have approved them to be their friends. Learners' perceptions of the untrustworthy measures pertaining to the safety of their profiles on SNSs may lead to unconstructive outcomes. Another study claims that generally learners possess comfortable or moderate feelings about the safety of their profiles online (Decker, 2006). Some knowledge that has been shard on SNSs may lead to harmful and unproductive consequences especially for those scouting for employment opportunities (Vicknair, Elkersh, Yancey and Budden, 2010).

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SNSs have scope and potential to become the most effective and efficient learning tools, and they can successfully facilitate the creation of the social settings in which positive and constructive learning takes place and students acquire essential competencies in objective analysis and evaluation of learning issues (Mason, 2006). However, other studies have pointed out that SNSs may not make a significant or immediate difference on learning structures and methodologies and their capabilities to stimulate learners for an effective knowledge acquisition is an area that still needs to be further explored and investigated (Ziegler, 2007). It is important to note that the incorporation of SNSs into the instructional methodologies of adult educators and its impact on learners' attitudes, especially during the language acquisition process is an area that still needs more investigation (Tılfarlıoğlu, 2011). Facebook, as the world's largest SNS, with more than 1 billion users and a large number of them are learners from different educational levels and backgrounds, enable its users to create profiles, share photos, videos, links and use own or others accounts to express and communicate. It has a great potential of becoming one of the effective tools of knowledge acquisition that aims to foster the learner-educator associations by developing constructive and productive educational opportunities (Mazer, Murphy and Simonds, 2007). One of the studies that was conducted to evaluate the possibilities of using Facebook as an educational tool to create positive learners' attitudes and its impact on learners conclude that learners are found to be more enthusiastic about developing their own social spheres and become more motivated to learn and practice the required language skills (Piriyasilpa, 2010).

Being able to develop, share, connect and make remarks in Facebook enable educators and learners to acquire tailor-made learning observations that are suitable and relevant to their learning needs and requirements (Lenhart, et.al.,2012). One of the researches that aims at evaluating the constructive use of SNSs in educational context concludes that the use of SNS, to improve learners' involvements in knowledge acquisition and strengthening the desire and needs of having learning conditions that promote interactive, active and collaborative learning, proves be remarkably successful and effective (Ractham,

Kaewkitipong and Firpo 2012). Another study that targets the use of Facebook as a course management tool finds its positive impact on the learners' attitude to acquire knowledge (LaRue, 2012). Facebook is also found to be productive and useful for promoting interactions among educators and learners (Cheung and Vogel, 2011). Moreover, numerous studies identify that one of the main purposes of using SNSs by learners is to socialize and their attitudes for socializing can be used as a means for further learning (Hew, 2011; Hewitt and Forte, 2006; Wodzicki, Schwammlein & Moskaliuk, 2012).

It is vital to recognize and comprehend the learners' attitudes about the SNSs and their roles as tools for helping students becoming more engaged and retain more materials for their learning. One of the findings of the study reveals that confidence and trust of learners influence their attitudes to respond for learning (Azjen and Fishbein, 1980). Learners' constructive or unconstructive opinions significantly impact their capabilities to succeed or not, and/or their willingness to take part in knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, students' attitudes toward the learning problems may impact their intent to acknowledge the knowledge and alter the qualities of reciprocal actions or influences about learning (Glover and Brunnin, 1990). Essentially, recognition of learners' attitudes about SNSs is very crucial because learners and educators' abilities to respond to learning can be conditional to their recognition or refusal of SNSs. The researchers have concluded that the acknowledgement of the positive use of SNSs greatly impacts the way students think or feel about learning (Lee, Cho, Gay, Davidson and Ingraffe, 2003). A constructive and acknowledging attitude about a particular SNSs leads to the implementation of that technology so it is of utmost important to be conscious about learners' attitudes, especially for language acquisition. Adopting the use of SNSs can enable learners to be flexible and motivated to use SNSs based learning in the most productive and effective way possible (Akbari, Eghtesad, Simons, 2012).

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Another study examining the impact of SNSs on learners' attitude depicts that adult learners either consider SNSs impacting their self-respect constructively or neither constructively nor unconstructively (Sponsil and Gitimu), 2013). During the transition to adulthood, students strive to describe their individuality. One of the studies states that profile pictures of adult learners on SNSs and the way they are distributed to others online depict the way technology plays its part in the creation of users' individuality (Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert, 2009). Collecting responses form colleagues and bolstering the associations of companionship are some of the important aspect of the users' transition to adulthood. The use of SNSs may result in obsession toward the site and significantly impact the learners' routine habits and practices. Overall, adult learners do not consider SNSs as a threat to suppress their individualities (Benage, 2011). Most of the students acknowledge SNSs' importance as a means for exhibiting their individualities though some elements of their identity can be subdued in online interactions and therefore, though the developers of SNSs are not aware but the individualities of learners are being divided to accommodate the limited space of SNSs (Sharqi, Hashim, and Kutbi, 2015).

3.0 Practical implementation of Social Networking Sites for learning

For the purpose of this study, Facebook has been chosen as a case study to indicate its usage as a learning management system while to describe the application of SNSs for instructional purposes, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube have been chosen.

3.1 Facebook as a learning management system

There are countless ways in which Facebook can be used for instructional purposes though in this study, the systematic procedure of how Facebook as a Social networking website can be functioned as an effective LMS for adult learners is described as follows;

1. The first step is to form the class group page on Facebook and send out invitations to learners to join the administrator. This group page can be used to disseminate important information, exchange learning materials, manage and execute online training and knowledge sessions.

2. Group's profile page can be used to spread most up-to- date knowledge and it can act as a virtual wall to exchange learning materials, receive reviews on performances and distribute learning specific information such as links from a hypertext documents to another location, photos, and videos.

3. Learning materials can be exchanged in any format though Facebook only supports picture or video format so in order to provide access to un-supported applications and services such as Google doc, the simple configuration can be applied to use this particular service or other applications through the Facebook platform.

4. One of the functionalities of Facebook is to offer the event creation service which can be used to manage the learning content. For any particular training or plan of study, the relevant course material can be made available and the status of an event can be made unrestricted so all learners can easily log in and obtain the information on the page. Creation of an event will automatically be added on the Group page which means all learners can be kept informed with the information related to the proposed training or knowledge session. Educators can have an ease in supervising learners' involvements due to the name stamps functionality that reveals the names of learners who visited the page and accessed materials.

5. There is also an opportunity to support debates and discussions over learning matters by either utilizing the space on the event function page or access the other administrative matters default discussion function located on the Facebook group. The group page can host surveys to obtain learners' responses on the learning program.

3.2 Implementation of SNSs in instructional Approaches

1. Twitter

Many academicians consider Twitter as no or minimal value SNS for learning purposes due to the 140-character limitation which is not entirely true (Barry, 2009). Following are a few important and productive uses of Twitter in adult education:

- Use for publishing a brief record of points or ideas written down as an aid to acquire knowledge and, read content, shared by other learners and follow relevant reviews and information pertaining to research articles, books, journal and other academic materials accessible at various learning institutions and disseminate information for tests, discussions, meetings, conferences etc by reaching out to a large number of students instantly (Cain Miller, 2009).

- Discuss, distribute, and/or obtain clarifications, explanations and/or solutions to the complex questions, learning exercises, issues and share citations, web links and/or the systematic description of books, research articles and information related to their authorships, publications, and editions (Briston, 2010).

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- Support and encourage group work to find the resolutions of particular issues that are easy to be resolved in groups, organize surveys, obtain feedback and create an increased sense of succinctness in order to exchange precise, summarised and to the point information by utilizing the 140-characters limitation by Twitter (Gordon, 2009).

2. YouTube

There are numerous possibilities for incorporating YouTube in the adult classroom (Snelson, 2009). Some of its most conspicuous advantages for adult learning are as follows (Snelson, 2011):

- Use of YouTube to expose learners to a large number of free video resources covering varied variety of subject matter and connect or attach video resources in the learning materials, online communicative boards and publish, edit, modify, organize, delete and maintain learning materials.

- Create the playlist by combining a number of YouTube videos to develop learning content. Combining videos into playlist can enable learners to find all the relevant content in one list. The playlist feature also offers the playlist description space where instructor can type in prompts and summarised points for the lesson. They can facilitate users to achieve the required targets across the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor learning domains in real-world online classrooms (Snelson, 2010a).

- Develop communicative games, seminars, and videos showing the imitations of the real-world operations relevant to learning, by combining videos through an integrated tool that sends viewers to more videos or playlists, website, to cross-promote, or take viewers back to the channel page (Snelson, 2010b).

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3. LinkedIn

One of the important features of LinkedIn is to form and support connections among users and exchange of content (Naatus and Cooper, 2014). Following are some useful methods of its application in adult classroom:

- Establish a group or enlarge the already existed group to get in touch with professionals of instruction and education occupations and get feedback on employment opportunities.

- Obtain commendations and backing from teachers, specialists and academicians of the field of your learning and communicate with a particular cluster of learners related to your or different educational institutions in order to share, research, discuss and acquire subject related knowledge in a language that is understood by all users (Shaffer, 2009).

- Gain understanding of various choices for employment opportunities, create profile page that serves as the first point of contact for most of the potential employers and obtain easy access to the system for learning and study administration for evaluating different career options and get involved in forums and groups to raise and exchange information related to learning and potential work opportunities (Stewart and Grover, 2010).

4.0 Conclusion

The continuously evolving, cutting edge technologies have overhauled the way SNSs function and because of this, the need for SNSs to cater the learning and social wants for their users is very much needed. On the one hand, for SNSs, there is a need for them to come together and combine their endeavours in order to provide and facilitate a set of digital

rules for data exchange and services for learning purposes that can be publicly available and have various rights to use associated with them. On the other hand, for adult educators, they need to be more creative and focused to find the best way possible to integrate SNSs with the current technologies in order to make a significant progress in the way learning can be organized and delivered for adult students (Kiehne, 2004). As for SNSs' role as LMSs is concerned, It is also important to understand that Facebok is not the only option that is considered as a substitute for LMS but other social media applications like blogging has proved to be quite effective tool for managing adult students' learning process and at the University of Cape Town, when educators started practicing the use of blogging as an LMS, they experienced a noticeable decrease in their roles as a creator of knowledge and increase in the learners' participations in the online communicative knowledge acquisition processes (Rambe, 2008). For that reason, it is quite interesting for the researchers to investigate the arrangement of control and authority in formal education program in which learners acquire knowledge partially through online media with some element of learners' control over time, place, path or pace (Rambe, 2011).

Teachers are required to consider the probable benefits of functioning with SNSs for instructional purposes against the risks and challenges that this addition can encompass. It is also important to make sure that all the precautionary measures have been taken, especially to protect learners' identities and information online. Having a risk free online learning environment is not only important for learners but educators and the administrations of educational institutions as well since their standing and goodwill may also be at stake in case of any potential breach of learners' identities and information (Howard, 2013).

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Suffice it to say that SNSs are having important but temporary success in terms of fulfilling the requirements of educators and learners. Although, the permanent success seems to be attainable in a distant future, at present, educationists appear to struggle with the realism of how to effectively use, organize and control SNSs based services and tools for the effective acquisition of knowledge (Kent, 2008). The trend for educational institutions to continue with the implementation of SNSs in adult classrooms is likely to go on and the importance of the most popular SNSs like Facebook YouTube. LinkedIn, Twitter and many more will continue to attract educators' attention for educational purposes but the growing popularity and significance of private SNSs and other social media alternatives for learning purposes can not be overlooked and the trend of their usage among educators is likely to grow at a rapid pace.

Signifying the positive impact and benefits of learning based SNSs and the needs for greater protection against the risks and challenges are the areas that continually draw educators and learners' attention and the full understanding and awareness of these areas may make them feel more assured, certain and positive about the inclusion of technology into the process of learning.

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