

Digital Media Platforms and Education: The Uses of Social Networking in the UAE and China

Badreya Al-Jenaibi

Department of Mass Communication at the United Arab Emirates University
aljenaibi@uaeu.ac.ae

This article reviews university students' perceptions of media literacy by examining the use of social networking platforms in academic settings. The findings from surveys of Chinese and UAE students (n=998) reveal that while many students believe that media literacy should become a priority in modern curricula, this urgency is not felt by the majority of students. The study draws from gravitation theory to place the use of social media

tools within a broader background of communication. The Uses and Gratification Theory is also invoked to explain how social networking was made attractive to campus activists and protesters in the two countries.

Keywords: social media and pedagogy, social networking, media literacy and education, digital media and education

Digital technologies are transforming the learning environment not only to provide exciting new learning tools but to meet the changed literacy needs of students. Kellner and Share (2005) argues, “Computer and multimedia technologies demand novel skills and competencies and if education is to be relevant to the problems and challenges of contemporary life, engaged teachers must expand the concept of literacy and develop new curricula and pedagogies” (p. 370). Although digital literacy and the use of technology in the classroom are highly valuable for today’s students, too many teachers are not addressing new literacy needs, and students are missing out on a valuable part of their modern education.

With the advent of social networking platforms in educational institutions, student skills have been enhanced in various ways. This research focuses on social media usage of university students in the UAE and China. The research explores the importance of new technologies in the classroom and new online learning environments. This study explores the following issues: What impact has social media platforms played in enhancing

classroom interaction and discourse in UAE and Chinese universities? What is its future potential? The researcher also aims to understand how students use social networking outside of the traditional meeting and learning space and how they perceive the use of social networking for educational purposes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditionally, literacy refers to the acquisition of reading abilities. In today's content-rich media environment, traditional literacy may not be sufficient to enable students to navigate their digitalized world. Media literacy expands on the tradition of reading and oral literacy to include electronic and digital media tools and records. Media literacy is also referred to as information literacy, digital literacy, visual literacy, and 21st-century literacy (Tyner, 2007). What constitutes literacy changes when social change occurs. Kellner and Share (2005) argues that what is considered literacy shifts when there are social and cultural changes in a society and it is based on the elites who control the most powerful social institutions. Kellner and Share (2005) also argues that in light of current technological changes, "educators must develop robust forms of media literacy, computer literacy, and multimedia literacies, thus cultivating 'multiple literacies' in the restructuring of education" (p. 370). Although media literacy might generate several definitions, they are all meant to broaden what is meant by literacy in general.

In today's world of digital technologies, educators increasingly believe that digital media literacy is a growing priority for their students. In the past decade, technology has been introduced very rapidly and it is causing the world to change profoundly in terms of communication and media availability and type. The term "media literacy" has generated a variety of definitions with emphases on the following: critical thinking in media literacy (Adams & Hamm, 2001, as cited in Potter, 2010); analyzing messages (Hobbs, 2001); deciphering information (Silverblatt, Eliceiri, & Eliceiri, 1997, as cited in Potter, 2010); and the interactivity and social nature (Hall, 2006). The National Communication Association offers an overarching definition, finding that a media literate person "understands how words, images, and sounds influence the way meanings are created and shared in contemporary society in ways that are both subtle and profound. A media

literate person is equipped to assign value, worth and meaning to media use” (in Potter, 2010, p. 676).

Many educators are trying to develop new tools in ways to help students deal with what De Abreu (2010) calls digital platforms the space for real-time delivery of video, audio or information to multiple networks such as cable, satellite, and broadband. Delivery of media is made through many devices including mobile phones, set-top boxes, PDAs and computers. De Abreu (2010) argues that media literacy education is the key way students can learn to interpret and understand the media images and information that surround them. She also argues that media literacy can help students to become critical thinkers and that educators can help students become “digital citizens” (p. 24) who are sophisticated and smart when it comes to discourse and how to participate in it.

Media and education are traditionally not considered integrally linked. Because of the pervasiveness of media, there seems to be some urgency in how it is being addressed by educators. According to Lundby (2009), pedagogical issues related to media as a new field with a range of implications for both research and teaching include: the need for further research on the ways that knowledge is produced, distributed and disseminated with current digital platforms; the presentation of media and media-related issues in education curricula; and a best-practices approach in the educational environment related to practical media pedagogical activity in "various areas of youth and adult education" (Lundby, 2009, p. 72).

Perhaps if the study of media was framed as a type of new literacy required by modern students, then the pedagogical issues would be clearer. For example, media literacy may occur through teachers teaching about media and how to interpret it, but it also refers to the new uses of media forms and technology and content in the classroom. It is considered a new way to acquire knowledge. Furthermore, the use of the new technologies may enhance skills in ways that are superior to traditional literacy methods. For example, McLoughlin and Lee (2010) argue that digital tools enhance self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning refers to the ability of a learner to prepare for his/her own learning, take the necessary steps to learn, manage and evaluate the learning and provide "self-feedback and judgment, while simultaneously maintaining a high level of motivation," which enables them to “execute learning activities that lead to knowledge creation,

comprehension and higher order learning" (p. 49). McLoughlin and Lee (2010) believe that digital platforms have enhanced the ability of students to self-regulate and personalize their knowledge acquisition. From a pedagogical perspective, digital platforms help to:

- ensure that learners can make informed educational decisions;
- diversify and recognize different forms of skills and knowledge;
- create diverse learning environments; and
- include learner focused forms of feedback and assessment (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010, p. 49).

There are two domains of media literacy—the use of media in the classroom and a content analysis and critical evaluation that is meant to help students use a critical understanding of the nature of mass media, the techniques used, and their impact. Media literacy usually includes hands-on projects, and creative products, where students use a range of texts and tools, including artifacts found in popular culture, primary and secondary source materials, mass media, educational media, advertising, as well as blogs, podcasts, vodcasts, wikis, and the way people use media tools and discourses, such as text messaging (Tyner, 2007).

New technologies can help improve the purpose and outcome of modern education. Kaveh's (2012) research revealed that many vital educational advantages stem from applying new technologies. Knowledge atmospheres that have a multiplicity of media used "promote social cooperation models, better teaching methodologies, and better initiatives and collaborations" and they "enable students to expand their information base, world view, and collaboration" (Kaveh, 2012, p. 35). Kemker, Barron, and Harmes (2007) argue that new technologies can help students have a more authentic learning experience where students (1) construct meaning and produce knowledge, (2) use structured inquiry toward meaning, and (3) their work will have value or meaning beyond success in school (Kemker et al., 2007, p. 305). Kemker (2007) and her colleagues followed 300 sixth graders through their next three years of schooling. With the addition of laptop computers and other technologies, the students with technology access scored significantly higher on achievement tests than student in the same school in previous years who were not using digital technologies (Kemker et al., 2007).

Aside from using digital media to connect to different forms of information sharing, teachers are also using new technologies to helps students with basic problem-solving

skills and for things like reading and math. For example, video games have been developed that have educational purposes. Their use is based on research that shows students gain many benefits such as quicker response time, ability to problem solve, and increased cognitive skills. Miller and Robertson (2011) conducted research with elementary school children where computer games were used in elementary classrooms in 32 schools in Scotland. The research found that there were significant gains in the speed and accuracy in solving math and other problems from the students who used the video games.

Not only do new technologies create better tools for teachers and more positive learning environments, they also help students participate in the outside world through news and information sharing. One social benefit of using media in the classroom is that some educators believe it will help students participate more in their surroundings. Examples include using social media platforms for political issues in the classroom such as social justice and political activism in order to help students become better citizens and have more democratic ways of thinking (Preston, 2008), to encourage students to actively participate in discovering and responding to social issues (Lee, 2003), or to creative community, empower users and revolutionize communications (Burwell, 2010). It has also been argued that the use of technology in the classroom will help students become better citizens and have more democratic ways of thinking (ChanLin, 2007; Crawford, 2010).

Using technologies in the classroom does not automatically mean that students will have a better learning experience or perform better in learning outcomes. Mateer (2013) argues that media should be used carefully in the learning process. Mills and Levido (2011) state that teacher need to know how to migrate formerly print exercises to real-world examples outside of the classroom. If the new technologies are not used correctly, they could cause more problems than they create. Carr (2008) argues that too much use of the Internet is making people less intelligent and the way information is received by surfing over large amounts of data has changed the way our brains operate. People are not able to concentrate or read deeply due to excessive internet usage (Carr, 2008, p. 3).

Potter (2012) argues there are three key issues related to media literacy: (1) “media” must be clearly defined, (2) a definition of “literacy” must be provided, and (3) purpose must be considered. Potter (2012) also identifies some common themes related to media

literacy. First, mass media potentially creates both negative and positive effects on young people. Media literacy enables young people to protect themselves from media's potential negative effects by facilitating more control over the influence media can have. This literacy is particularly urgent in a culture where media messages are pervasive. Further, media literacy is something that must be learned with the guidance of experts, especially "considering that media messages are constantly evolving" (Potter, 2010, p. 678).

Social Media in China

According to the World Watch Institute (2015), the economy of China is increasing day by day because of huge international demand for its products (Alon, 2003; Mente, 2000). China has been ranked the top country for Internet users, with 641,601,070 users and an average yearly growth of 24,021,070. The total population of the country is almost 1.4 billion. As China's borders were opened to other countries and cultures in 1979, it has become the country with the largest number of users of advanced technology (MacKinnon, 2008).

The market for social media in China is massive, with over 500 million users (Pring, 2012). The largest social network in China is called Qzone (Annual revenue of Baidu, 2013). Renovah (2014) found that Qzone has more users than Facebook. Further, China is using We Chat, Tencent Weibo, Sina Weibo, Renren and Kaixin. In fact, the number of people using WhatsApp in the whole world is less than the users of We Chat in China alone. Most people utilize smartphones for web access (Lee, 2000).

According to Yu and Kak (2012), Charles (2012), and Keith (2012), China has a unique social media landscape from the rest of the world. China does not have Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter. William (2007) suggests that the reason that China uses different platforms and under different regulations is to attract customers. In this way, multinational telecommunication companies cannot easily access China's markets (Swartz, 2009).

China's distinct culture has resulted in the creation of a unique media landscape (Rapoza, 2011). For example, Youku is used instead of YouTube and offers a distinct platform for videos. In the videos, Chinese has not only short films present, but also videos contain pure content present in which the government is showing its culture and attract Chinese (Charles, 2012). The government shows pure content that attracts

individuals to see videos repeatedly, the content must follow Chinese regulations and laws (Williams, 2013).

Dorban, Qzone and RenRen are Chinese alternatives to Facebook (MacKinnon, 2008). The Chinese government has banned Facebook usage. Qzone is China's largest social network and attracts many youths (Goldsmith & Wu, 2006). University students tend to use RenRen, which functions similarly to Facebook (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Sina Weibo is the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, launched in 2009. Users can write almost 140 characters (436 Chinese words) as their status, a relative increase over Twitter (Fu, 2013; Xiaoxiao, 2013). They can post, comment, and follow their friends easily on computers or smartphones. Chinese students instant message but China has a unique platform called QQ, which has nearly 808,000,000 users per year (Chen, 2014). Rather than using SNS, it is common for youth to use We Chat.

Social media in China is heavily restricted and regulated by the government, but this does not go undisputed. For example, on October 1, 2014, China blocked Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp applications completely because of happenings in Hong Kong (Parker, 2014). Many students walked in Hong Kong streets to show support for social media freedom, and this posed a threat to the Chinese government's policy of regulation and was also tied to pushes for democratic elections in the territory. In light of this, the government blocked the platforms (Fitchard, 2014).

Social Media in the UAE

Extensive literature exists detailing the myriad ups and downs associated with social media across the globe (Bakardjieva & Feenberg, 2002). As far as the Arab world is concerned, social media usage has been extensive. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) serves as an important case study because of its relatively large Internet usage in comparison to other Arab countries. Despite this fact, there is no current, comprehensive and accurate accounting of social media usage in the UAE. One source ranked UAE users third among Middle Eastern countries in usage with 8.8 million users, after Iran and Saudi Arabia (Internet Usage Statistics, 2014). Unlike in China, all social media tools are open for the public in the UAE. According to a 2014 survey, 93% of respondents held accounts and 57% of respondents strongly supported government use of social media for design and delivery of public services (Mourtada & Alkhatib, 2014, p. 11).

According to Al Dhaheri (2015), UAE industrialists are increasingly using social media to raise their commerce by advertising products and events through social media locally and internationally. Social media have also shaped the relationship between citizens and their government by providing a platform for opinions and concerns and a venue for dialog. But the sheer size of data on social media presents a challenge.

According to Stats.ae (2015), a website that screens social media usage, UAE youths post 2.5 million tweets a day. There is a similarly large and potentially rich set of data from circulation on Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr and other platforms (The National, 2014).

Students in the UAE also use social media in different grade levels. For example, over 26,000 in the 12th grade use sites, which constitutes nearly 70%. UAE students are using social media for academic purposes (Schools in UAE, 2014).

Al-Jenaibi (2014) argued that the most well-known tools in the UAE are usually similar to those used in other counties in the Middle East, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and others. UAE students are both generally skilled in the use of a variety of platforms, and well aware of possible moral and practical limitations. Social media have served as a vital foundation and vehicle for news, data, commercial growth, opinion sharing, cultural production, and entertainment. But citizens are also well aware of its potential as a platform for making business and government practices more transparent, and its usefulness as a mobilizing platform for political change.

Al-Jenaibi (2013a) found that students still require more media freedom and fast Internet without censorship. According to Mourtada and Alkhatib (2014), "59% of respondents stated that they visited official government social media pages regularly, with 20% of them visiting these pages at least once a week, 8% of them at least once a day, and 31% of them several times a day," (p. 12). The number of social media users is growing in the UAE due in part to new services and promotions provide by telecommunication companies (Al-Jenaibi, 2013b). Therefore, most of the users believed that using social media for community service might be helpful. For short-term profits, "85% said that by creation" (p. 14) communication among citizens and government more proficient, social media sites could decrease the prices of making and carrying these facilities, while "80% agreed" (p. 14) that social media's ability to improve data exchange could increase service quality.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study draws from Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) that was developed to understand mass media in 1974 by the theorists Blumler, Katz, and Gurevitch. Applied then to understanding mass media, it suggests that receivers are responsible in selecting media that satisfies their needs, such as for knowledge and for social communication (Katz, 1987). It maintains that mass media is actively incorporated into their lives by audiences. The theory states how the receivers use the media to satisfy their specific gratification (Katz & Gurevitch, 1974). In this study, interview data will determine: a) whether social media satisfy the professional needs of professors and students to contribute to their teaching and learning abilities, and b) the understanding of university professors of the effectiveness of social media in satisfying the expectations of their targeted receivers.

Gratification theory is a receivers-centered approach that transfers the focus of research from the purpose of the communicator to the needs of the receivers (Katz & Gurevitch, 1973). When receivers such as students use media, they are looking to satisfy a specific need, whether for entertainment, business, or acquiring information (McQuail, 2010). The high use of Twitter, Facebook and other social networking sites reflects the satisfaction of audience needs through chatting, updating statuses, tweeting and re-tweeting, etc. A key facet of the theory is the requirement of expectations (Severin & Tankard, 1997). Individuals such as university students search for media that satisfies or fulfills their expectations. If expectations are not met, continued usage is discouraged (Rubin & Windahl, 1982). A gratification-based need for media is motivated not only by psychological reasons (Grant et al., 1998), but also by social circumstances. For instance, new students in a university would likely use social media to connect with classmates, to acquire information about campus resources, and for academic purposes.

The application of the Uses and Gratification theory supports the primary aim of this study, which is to gain an initial understanding of a set of basic questions about social media in classrooms as a basis for future research. This aim includes: a) to obtain a general gauge of the kinds of sites preferred by university students in China and UAE, b) to explore the reasons users decided to use these sites, c) to learn more about various challenges they came across while using different social networking sites, and d) to solicit

opinions about how difficulties could be overcome. The study focuses on the use of media and interests in relation to people's livelihoods and satisfactions which determines selection of media type and usage. The study included some queries that helped provide an accurate picture of how social media are being used, under what conditions, and essential information about future plans to develop social media, get students' feedback, and track students.

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

RQ1: How do students use social networking outside of the traditional university meeting and learning space?

RQ2: What effect does social networking have on the bond between professors and students?

RQ3: What are UAE and Chinese students' attitudes and perceptions toward using social networking for educational purposes?

METHODS

This study uses a multi-method approach by combining a qualitative and quantitative analysis. This multi-method approach helps to verify interpretations of what is taking place in a given environment (Hammond, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), works toward obtaining more complete answers, and raises overall robustness (Mingers, 2015). Owing to its analytic power, this research approach enriches a researcher's understanding of situations and enables researchers to broaden the scope of study and factor in other characteristics of a phenomenon (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Plewis & Mason, 2005; Sammons et al., 2004). Multi-method research places the researcher in a position to discover new factors which might encourage future research (Hoyles et al., 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). According to Sincero (2012), surveys carry the advantage of allowing people to answer questions freely, especially considering the sensitive topic about social media in China. Additionally, surveys circumvent geographical dependence (Wyse, 2012). Surveys also allow researchers to combine analysis of subjective, qualitative opinions with more valid statistical information.

Sample

The researcher selected students in the United Arab Emirates University and Zayed universities in Dubai and Abd-Dhabi because they are the largest government universities and have many local students who are the targeted sample. In China, Peking University and Beijing International Studies University were selected for the same reasons. More than 600 surveys were distributed in each country from September 2014 to March 2015. Out of 1,200 surveys, 998 were returned. Two sets of data were collected among 403 Chinese and 595 UAE students with the proportion of nearly 58% female and 42% male for the Chinese sample and 59% female and 41% male for UAE sample. Most students were aged 18-25 (Chinese nearly 94% and UAE nearly 97%) and single (95.3% Chinese and 85% UAE).

Data collection

The questions focus on capturing respondent's perceptions and/or attitudes regarding the following factors:

- desirability of social networking (SN) among students in China and UAE
- perceived advantages of SN in the classrooms
- need for SN in the teaching environment
- concerns about adequate usage of SN at universities
- benefits of SN to university students in China and UAE

The 5-point Likert scale asks respondents to select either (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, or (5) Strong Agree with statements about perceived favorability of work-place environments. Identify the differences and differences in the study sample of university students about usage patterns and new media, according to the views of the general traits are as follows:

- Differences in the rate of youth employment and SN usage, according to the extent of owning a smart phone or the number of phones and computers available in the universities.
- Differences in the rate of youth employment and SN, according to the average monthly income categories in the classroom
- Differences in the rate of youth employment and SN usage, according to the extent of Internet use at the university.
- Differences in the rate of use of SN according to their distribution to students.
- Differences in the cumulative average for users of SN by type (student).
- The degree of satisfaction among a sample study of young people using SN by age variables monthly income and the field of study and type (student) gratification.
- The study sample about the extent of dissatisfaction with SN views

- The impact of the use of SN to gain expertise in the university, such as research.
- The most important places to use SN and gender networks.
- Needs of young people achieved by the use of SN.

Statistical Analysis

As previously indicated, t-test, regression, descriptive statistics (frequency) and inferential statistics (correlation coefficients) are used in data distribution on the mean and to find the relationship between independent and dependent variables. It was measured at the ordinal level because this option measure both numbers and categories. The researcher used inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation coefficients to test hypotheses.

RESULTS

The majority of Chinese students have 1-2 computers (53.3%) and smartphones (71.7%), while the majority of UAE student have 3-4 computers (41.7%) and 1-2 smartphones (46.1%). Time students spend online is 1 -3 hours (Chinese 51.6%, UAE 31.4%) and 4-5 hours (Chinese 25.3% and UAE 28.7%).

In terms of the number of computers, 53.3% Chinese and 34.3% of UAE student have 1-2 computers in their homes; 38.5% of Chinese and nearly 42% of UAE students have 3-4 computers; nearly 7% of Chinese and 15.3% of UAE student have 5-6 computers. The proportion of 71.7% of Chinese and 46% of UAE have 1-2 smartphones in home; 17% of Chines and 23.5% of UAE have 2-3 smartphones in home. Among the respondents, 51.6% of Chinese and 31.4% UAE students spend 1-3 hours a day online; 25.3% Chinese and 28.7% of UAE student spend 4-5 hours a day online.

An independent sample t-test shows that there is not a statistically significant different between males and females toward patterns of use of communication networks in China. However, it was found that male and female students in the UAE have different ideas about the purpose of using communication networks. The result shows there is a statistically significant different idea about the purpose of using communication networks between males and females toward using Google, Facebook, and Twitter in UAE. Males in UAE are less likely to use these platforms compared to females.

Table 1
T-test of gender differences toward use of comm network (Chinese and UAE)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
		Mean	F	Sig.	t	Sig	Mean Difference	
How often do you use Google?	male	3.281	.704	.40	2.07		.3777	
	female	2.903			2.782	.006	.3777	
How often do you use Facebook?	male	4.023	.004	.949	-.547	.585	-.0714	
	female	4.095			-.544	.587	-.0714	
How often do you use Twitter?	male	4.509	1.851	.174	.903	.367	.0885	
	female	4.420			.920	.358	.0885	
How often do you use YouTube?	male	4.108	.022	.881	.498	.619	.0608	
	female	4.047			.497	.619	.0608	
How often do you use Instagram?	male	4.152	1.595	.207	1.403	.161	.1865	
	female	3.966			1.415	.158	.1865	
How often do you use Black Berry messenger (BBM)?	male	4.702	.026	.873	-.010	.992	-.0008	
	female	4.703			-.010	.992	-.0008	
How often do you use WhatsApp?	male	4.655	.755	.385	.503	.615	.0472	
	female	4.608			.507	.613	.0472	
How often do you use Skype?	male	4.322	.028	.868	.396	.692	.0458	
	female	4.276			.396	.693	.0458	
How often do you use Snapchat?	male	4.532	2.214	.138	-.597	.551	-.0627	
	female	4.595			-.586	.558	-.0627	

An independent sample t-test shows that there is not a statistically significant difference between males and females toward use of communication networks as documented sources of information in China except Google and BBM (Black Berry messenger). As the results show, males are less likely to use Google as an information source compared to females. Meanwhile, it was found that male and female students in the UAE have different ideas about the purpose of using all types of communication networks. The results show a statistically significant difference between males and

females toward using Google, Facebook, and Twitter and other social networking as an information sources. Male are less likely to use these platforms compared to females.

Pearson correlation results show that there is a significant relationship between use of social networking in classroom and ‘strength communication’ as well as ‘spread news’ among both Chinese and UAE student. The relationship between use of social networking in classroom and ‘strength education’ as well as ‘broadcasting advertisements’ was found to be significant for UAE students. The relationship between the use of social networking in classroom and entertaining was significant for Chinese students. The more the Chinese and UAE students use networking in classroom, the higher positive effects they gain in terms of ‘strength communication’ as well as ‘spread news.’ UAE students believed that using networking in classroom has positive effects on ‘strength education’ and ‘broadcasting advertisements.’ Using social networking in classroom for Chinese students has positive effects on entertaining.

Table 2
Relationship between using social networking in classroom and positive effect (Chinese and UAE)

		Chinese	UAE
Impacts in strength communication	Pearson Correlation	.149**	.171**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000
Strength education	Pearson Correlation	.061	.146**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.224	.000
Spread news between people?	Pearson Correlation	.135**	.242**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000
Exchange cultures	Pearson Correlation	.044	.096*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.374	.020
Broadcasting advertisements	Pearson Correlation	.030	.170**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.552	.000
Entertaining	Pearson Correlation	.145**	.042
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.307
Positive impacts in community?	Pearson Correlation	.006	.011
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.909	.794

There is a statistically significant difference between time Chinese and UAE students spend using social media and the number of computers they have. The relationship between numbers of smartphones and time Chinese students spend using social media was not significant, but was significant for UAE students. Those who have 1-4 devices spend more time using social media.

The majority of Chinese students think Chinese language is the most used language in communication with social networking (mean=1.22) The majority of UAE student think Arabic language is the most used language in communication with social media (mean=1.17).

Primary source of information

Types of social networking as a primary source of information is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1)Always, (2) Often, (3) Sometimes, (4) Rarely, (5) Never. The responses were sorted from highest to lowest. Chinese students used Radio is Friends is the primary source when I hear about the SN services before you use them (mean: 1.45). The first five media choice for Chinese students are: 1) Friend, 2) Mobile, 3) TV, 4) Magazine, and 5) Radio. The first five media choice for UAE students are: 1) Other sources, 2) Friend, 3) Magazine, 4) Mobile, and 5) TV.

The most highly used devices for the Chinese sample were Laptop and iPhone. For the UAE sample, they were Blackberry and Galaxy. The majority of Chinese (mean=1.86) and UAE students mostly use social media in their house (mean=1.38). Chinese students mostly use Google (mean=3.07) and Instagram (mean=4.04), while UAE students use Google (mean=1.38) and YouTube (mean=1.79).

Ease of use of SN

Ease of use of SN is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. Google (mean: 1.33) and Facebook (mean: 2.51) are easy for Chinese student to use. Google (mean: 2.24) and Instagram (mean: 2.69) are easy for Chinese student to use.

Trust of SN as a documented source

Trust of SN as a documented source is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. The majority of both Chinese and UAE believed

that Google is a trusted source of information. The most trusted sources to get the information for Chinese are Google, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, and for the UAE are Google, Skype, SnapChat, and Facebook.

Social networking in the classroom

Using SN in university classrooms is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. The majority of Chinese and UAE student use social networks to communicate with colleagues in the classroom (mean: 1.85) in China, and (mean: 2.24) in the UAE.

General purposes of using of SN in the classroom

Uses of social networking in the classroom is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. The majority of Chinese students agree they are using social networking for information in the classroom (mean:2.9). The majority of UAE student agree they are using SN for information in the class room (mean:1.53).

Academic problems and SN uses

Academic problems and SN uses is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. The majority of Chinese students (mean: 2.58) and UAE students (mean: 1.16) agree that Facebook wastes time (mean: 2.58).

Kind of harmful sources

Kind of harmful sources is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Strongly Agree to (5) Strongly Disagree. The majority of Chinese students agree that YouTube is a harmful source (mean: 3.15). The majority of UAE student agree that Facebook is a harmful source of information for students (mean: 2.31)

Negative behavioural effects

Negative behavioral effects of social networking are measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Always to (5) Never. The majority of Chinese (mean:1.98) and UAE (mean:1.79) students believe that using SN has negative impacts such as wasting time.

Positive impacts

Positive behavioral effects of SN (is measured by fine-Likert scale ranged as: (1) Always to (5) Never. The majority of Chinese students agree that SN has positive impacts

in entertaining people (mean: 1.78). The majority of UAE students agree that other SN have positive impacts in community (mean: 1.19).

Social networking addicted

In response to a question asking whether you consider yourself addicted to the use of social networking, 48% of Chinese and 56.5% of UAE answered yes, and 51% of Chinese and 43.5% of UAE answered no.

DISCUSSION

Based on this survey of literature, media literacy in education is not being promoted enough in curricula, which neglects the literacy needs of today's students. As the results demonstrate, the more students in both samples use networking in the classroom, the greater positive effects they gain in terms of 'strength communication' and 'spread news.' So, students use social networking to satisfy their needs such as communicating with each other's and selecting their favorite tools. Gratification theory suggests that receivers are responsible in selecting media that satisfies their needs, which is relevant in the UAE but less so in China where the government created and selected the media for students. UAE students believed that using networking in classroom has positive effects on 'strength education' and 'broadcasting advertisements.' Using social networking in the classroom for Chinese students has positive effects on entertaining, which supports the gratification theory in reference to the receiver's need of social networking for communication, psychological reasons, (Grant et al.,1998) and social circumstances.

In answering the research questions: Does social networking strengthen the bond between professors and students? What are UAE and Chinese's students' attitudes and perceptions toward using social networking for educational purposes? There is a significant difference between time Chinese and UAE students spend using social networking and the number of computers they have. The relationship between numbers of smartphone and time Chinese students spend using social networking was not significant, but was significant for UAE students. Those who have 1-4 devices, spend more time using social media. The majority of Chinese students and UAE students agree that Facebook wastes time. Meanwhile, the majority of Chinese and UAE students agree that YouTube and Facebook are harmful sources. Wasting students' time is one of the

most negative effects of using social networking according to both student samples. Meanwhile, Chinese students agree that social networking has positive impacts in entertaining people and UAE students see positive impacts in community.

Further, the study finds that there is a relationship between the use of social networking in the classroom and ‘strength communication’ as well as ‘spread news’ among both Chinese and UAE students. The relationship between use of social networking in classroom and ‘strength education’ as well as ‘broadcasting advertisements’ was found to be significant for UAE students. The relationship between use of social networking in classroom and entertaining was significant for Chinese students. The more Chinese students use social networking in the classroom, the greater the benefits they received in terms of ‘strength education’ as well as ‘broadcasting advertisements.’

Most researchers such as Lundby (2009) and De Abreu (2010) recognize the profound changes that digital platforms have presented in terms of the distribution and transmission of powerful messages that pervade the social environments of our modern world, yet many scholars like Swartz (2009) and Charles (2012) have also argued that students have resisted or been reluctant to address literacy needs so they can navigate their digitalized world. Perhaps this is a generational issue, since current university students did not grow up with the global social networking because of the country restrictions and regulations such as not allowing other social networking to enter the Chinese community. However, other nations and young people have the freedom to use the SN. Many Chinese students do not participate in the same way as other people out of China did, because of the government media restrictions, so they are not comfortable in this new and unfamiliar territory from a pedagogical perspective. It is exactly what the research finds that Chinese students are not satisfied about blocking and creating special social networks for Chinese.

As suggested by a few scholars, like McLoughlin and Lee (2010) in order to guide others in media literacy requires expertise in the constantly evolving and shifting mass media content. Perhaps students need more guidance and training in this area in order for true changes to be realized in today’s classrooms. Despite its imposing number of online students' users in the classrooms, the Chinese government makes it too difficult for foreign corporations to enter its social networks, making it an excessive obstacle for many

non-Chinese speaking marketers. The Chinese government uses hard control over social networks, blocking international giants like Facebook and Twitter, and censoring heavily. While students are not satisfied about censorship, some of them are satisfied with some chat tools like We Chat. UAE students have the same concerns about censorship but they are satisfied with the global networks they use and their roles for academic purposes but some concerns are slow internet and limited freedom. Students seem aware the importance of social media and their potential benefits for doing research, communicating, and accessing information.

Limitations of Study

This research will have implications for professors in UAE schools who will be able to make informed decisions about their educational tools. It will also be of interest to scholars researching similar topics and to students who actively use these technologies in classrooms. Furthermore, this study will provide essential data to aid in public policy decisions concerning teaching and educational initiatives. Future research should address the practical and best-practice methods of teaching media literacy. Also, the researcher suggests that future research should be conducted on how future educators are being prepared to address media literacy in their future classrooms.

References

- Adams, D., & M. Hamm. (2001). *Literacy in a Multimedia Age*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon.
- Al Dhaheri, E. (2015). UAE's new entrepreneurs turn to social media to pursue dreams, *The National*, Retrieved from <http://www.thenational.ae/uae/uaes-new-entrepreneurs-turn-to-social-media-to-pursue-dreams>
- Al-Jenaibi, B. (2013a). Satisfying public relations: The dormant promise of social media in the UAE. *International Journal of E-adoption*, 5(4), 1-16.
- Al-Jenaibi, B. (2013b). War of the worlds: the promise of social media in Arab spring nations. *Global Media Journal*, 1-2.
- Al-Jenaibi, B. (2014). The nature of Arab public discourse: Social media and revolution. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 3(2).
- Alon, I. (2003). *Chinese Culture, Organizational Behavior, and International Business Management*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers.
- Annual Revenue of Baidu (2013). Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/269032/annual-revenue-of-baidu/>

- Bakardjieva, M., & Feenberg, A. (2002). *Community technology and democratic rationalization*. *The Information Society*, 18(3), 181-192.
- Burwell, C. (2010). Rewriting the script: toward a politics of young people's digital media participation. *Review Of Education, Pedagogy & Cultural Studies*, 32(4/5), 382-402.
- Cain, J., & Policastri, A. (2011). Instructional design and assessment using Facebook as an informal learning environment. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 75,10.
- Carr, N. (2008). Is Google making us stupid?. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from www.theatlantic.com/magazine/.../is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/
- ChanLin, L. (2007). Perceived Importance and Manageability of Teachers Toward the Factors of Integrating Computer Technology Into Classrooms. *Innovations In Education & Teaching International*, 44(1), 45-55.
- Crampton, T. (2011). Social media in China: The Same, but different as Chinese consumers spend more time online, foreign companies should deepen their knowledge of domestic social media platforms. *China business review*, Retrieved from <http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/social-media-in-china-the-same-but-different/>
- Crawford, R. (2010). Valuing Technology in the Music Classroom: Results From a Recent case Study Indicate Why Technology Should Be Used in Education. *Victorian Journal Of Music Education*, 13(1),29-35.
- De Abreu, B. (2010). Changing Technology Empowering Students Through Media Literacy Education. *New Horizons In Education*, 58(3), 26-33.
- Charles, A. (2012). China Tightens 'Great Firewall' Internet Control With New Technology. Retrieved from *Guardian.co.uk*
- Chen, C. (2014). WeChat Games Contribute 60 Million to WeChat's MAU FigureHuxiu, Retrieved from <http://huxiu.me/page/19>
- Fitchard, K. (2014). As Hong Kong protests escalate, FireChat sees a surge in off-grid messaging. Retrieved from <https://gigaom.com/2014/09/29/as-hong-kong-protests-escalate-firechat-sees-a-surge-in-off-grid-messaging/>
- Fu, R. (2013). Sina Segmenting Weibo Usage with Multiple Versions, Retrieved from <http://www.chinainternetwatch.com/2100/sina-segmenting-weibo-usage-with-multiple-versions/>
- Goldsmith, J., & Wu, T. (2006). *Who Controls the Internet?: Illusions of a Borderless World*. Oxford University Press. p. 91.
- Grant, A. E., Zhu, Y., Van Tuyll, D., Teeter, J., Molleda, J. C., Mohammad, Y., & Bollinger, L. (1998). Dependency and control. Paper presented to the *Annual Convention of the Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications*, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Guo R. (2011). *China's Multicultural Economies: Social and Economic Indicators*. Springer. p. vii
- Hall, C. (2006). Making Literacy Real: Theories and Practices for Learning and Teaching by Joanne Larson and Jackie Marsh. *Literacy*, 40(3), 180-181.
- Hammond, C. (2005). The Wider Benefits of Adult Learning: An Illustration of the Advantages of Multi-method Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(3), 239-255.

- Hoyle, M., & Harborne, A. R. (2005). Mixed Effects of Habitat Fragmentation on Species Richness and Community Structure in a Micro arthropod Micro ecosystem. *Ecological entomology*, 30(6), 684-691.
- Internet Live States. (2014). Internet Users by Country, Retrieved from <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/>
- Internet Usage Statistics. (2014). Internet users in the Middle East, Retrieved from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats5.htm#me>
- Internet Users by Country. (2014). Retrieved on March 20, 2014, from: <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country/>
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. The public opinion quarterly, 37(4), 509-523.
- Katz, E. (1987). Communication research since Lazarsfeld. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, 525-545.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J. G. Blumler, & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research* (pp. 19-32). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Katz, E., Haas, H., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). On the use of the mass media for important things. *American Sociological Review*, 38(2), 164-181.
- Kaveh, Z. (2012). Integration and Impact of Educational Media (technologies) in the Teaching-Learning Process: A Case Study in Iran. *Middle East Journal Of Family Medicine*, 10(7), 30-38.
- Keith, B. (2012). China Toughens Restrictions on Internet Use. *The New York Times*. Retrieved on February 11, 2014, from: www.nytimes.com/.../china-toughens-restrictions-on-internet-use.html
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2005). Toward Critical Media Literacy: Core Concepts, Debates, Organizations, and Policy Discourse: *Studies In The Cultural Politics Of Education*, 26(3), 369-386.
- Kemker, K., Barron, A., & Harmes, J. C. (2007). Laptop Computers in the Elementary Classroom: Authentic Instruction With At-risk Students *Educational Media International* 44, (4), pp.305-321.
- Klopfer, E., Osterweil, S., Groff, J., Haas, J. (2009). The Instructional Power of Digital Games, Social Networking and Simulations and How Teachers Can Leverage Them. *Education Arcade*.
- Lee, C. C. (2000). Chinese communication. Power, money, and media: Communication patterns and bureaucratic control in cultural China, 3-44.
- Lee, D. (2003). New Technologies in the Politics Classroom: Using Internet Classrooms to Support Teaching and Learning. *Politics*, 23(1), 66-73.
- Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010). Social Media & Mobile Internet Use among Teens and Young Adults. Millennials. Pew internet & American life project.
- Lundby, K. (2009). *Mediatization*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.
- MacKinnon, R. (2008). Flatter World and Thicker Walls? Blogs, Censorship and Civic Discourse in China, *Public Choice*, 134, p. 31-46.
- Mateer, D. (2013). Using Media to Enhance Teaching and Learning. *Pedagogy in Action*. Retrieved from <http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/media/index.html>
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. Sage publications.

- McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. J. (2010). Personalised and self regulated learning in the Web 2.0 era: International exemplars of innovative pedagogy using social software. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 26(1).
- Mente, B. D. (2000). *The Chinese Have a Word for it: The Complete Guide to Chinese thought and Culture*. McGraw-Hill Professional.
- Miller, D. J., & D. Robertson. (2011). Educational Benefits of Using Game Consoles in a Primary Classroom: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *British Journal Of Educational Technology*, 42(5), 850-864.
- Mills, K., & Levido, A. (2011). iPad. *Reading Teacher*, 65(1), 80-91. doi:10.1598/RT.65.1.11
- Miles, Y. (2012). Inside China, *Washington Times*, 8 February 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/feb/8/inside-china-719761130/?page=all>
- Mingers, J. (2015). Helping Business Schools Engage With Real Problems: The Contribution of Critical Realism and Systems Thinking, *European Journal of Operational Research*, 242 (1), pp.316-331.
- Mourtada, R., & Alkhatib, F. (2014). UAE SN Outlook, Increasing Connectivity Between Government and Citizens. Retrieved from www.mbrsg.ae/.../2014-UAE-Social-Media-Outlook-Increasing-connecti.
- Parker, E. (2014). SN and the Hong Kong Protests, Retrieved on January 8, 2015 from: <http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/social-media-hong-kong-protests>
- Preston, L. (2008). A Space of Our Own: MySpace and Feminist Activism in the Classroom., *Radical Teacher*, 81, pp. 14-19.
- Pring, C. (2012). 216 SN and Internet Statistics, Retrieved from <http://thesocialskinny.com/216-social-media-and-internet-statistics-september-2012/>
- Plewis, I. & Mason, P. (2005). What Works and Why: Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in Large-scale Evaluations. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8, pp. 185-194.
- Potter, W. (2010). The State of Media Literacy. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54(4), 675-696.
- Rapoza, K. (2011). China's Weibos vs US's Twitter: And the winner is. *Forbes* (May 17, 2011) Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2011/05/17/chinas-weibos-vs-uss-twitter-and-the-winner-is/>
- Rautenbach, J., & Black-Hughes, C. (2012). Bridging the hemispheres through the use of technology: International collaboration in social work training. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 48(4), 797-815.
- Renovah, L. (2014). Top Trending Chinese Social Media Platforms in China. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/top-trending-platforms-china-rachael-laporce>
- Rubin, A. M., & Windahl, S. (1982). Mass Media Uses and Dependency: A Social Systems Approach to Uses and Gratifications. Paper presented to the meeting of the International Communication Association, Boston, MA.
- Sammons, P., Elliot, K., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2004). The Impact of Pre-school on Young Children's Cognitive Attainments At Entry to Reception. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(5), 691-712.
- Scheuerell, S. (2010). Virtual Warrensburg: Using Cooperative Learning and the Internet in the Social Studies Classroom. *Social Studies*, 101(5), 194-199.

- Schools in UAE. (2014). Ministry of Education's SN Sites Log Interactions With 26,000 Students and 40,000 Parents and Specialists. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolsindubai.com/2014/06/ministry-of-educations-social-media.html>
- Severin, W. J., & Tankard, J. W. (1997). Uses of Mass Media. In W. J. Severin, & J. W. Tankard (Eds.) *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.
- Sincero, S. M. (2012). Online surveys. Retrieved from Explorable: <https://explorable.com/online-surveys>.
- Silverblatt, A., Eliceiri, E. M. E., & Eliceiri, E. M. (1997). Dictionary of media literacy. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Stats.ae (2015). Social media - Statistics & Facts, Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/topics/1164/social-networks/>
- Internet Users by Country, Retrieved from <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/>
- Swartz, J. (2009). Social-Networking Sites Twitter, Flickr go Dark in China. *USA Today*. Retrieved on February 3, 2015 from: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/news/2009-06-02-china-twitter-tiananmen-protests_N.htm
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (Vol. 46). (L. Bickman, & D. Rog, Eds.) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- The National. (2014). Social media helps shape the future of the UAE, Retrieved on February 7, 2015 from: <http://www.thenational.ae/opinion/editorial/social-media-helps-shape-the-future-of-the-uae>
- Trappey, C. V., & Trappey, A. J. C. (2001). Electronic Commerce in Greather China. *Industrial Management & Data System*, 101(5), pp. 201-209.
- Turner, K. C. (2011). Rap universal: Using Multimodal Media Production to Develop Literacies. *Journal Of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 54, 8, 613-623.
- Tyner, K. (2007). Media Literacy, Aims and Purposes of. *Encyclopedia of Children, Adolescents, and the Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 524-26. SAGE knowledge.
- World Watch Institute. (2015). World Population, Agriculture, and Malnutrition. Retrieved on January 9, 2015 from: <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/554>
- William, C. (2007). Yahoo's China Defense. *New Presence: The Prague Journal of European Affairs*, 10, 2.
- Williams, S. (February 20, 2013). Life of Pi's Ang Lee Conquers Anti-Asian Bias. *Voice of America*. Retrieved from <http://www.voanews.com/content/life-of-pi-ang-lee-conquers-anti-asian-bias/1607531.html>
- Wright, L. T. (1996). Managing Relationship Marketing: A Cross-cultural Perspective of a Chinese Market. *Cross Cultural Management An International Journal*, 3(2), pp. 32-39.
- Wyse, S. (2012). Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys, Retrieved February 20, 2014 from: <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/advantages-disadvantages-surveys/>
- Xiaoxiao, K. (2013). Alibaba Buys into Sina Weibo with \$586 mln. *Morning Whistle*, Retrieved from http://www.morningwhistle.com/html/2013/Company_Industry_0503/217448.html

Yu, S., & Kak, S. (2012). A survey of prediction using social media. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1203.1647*.

Funding and Acknowledgements

The author declares no funding sources or conflicts of interest.

Online Connections

To follow this author in social media:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Badreya_Al_Jenaibi

Instagram Dr.aljenaibi