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PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL BEHAVIOR OF FACEBOOK USERS: A STUDY ON THE STUDENTS OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN BANGLADESH

Quamrun Nahar *

***Abstract:** Access to Internet has increased the use of social networking sites like facebook in urban areas of Bangladesh. This has happened everywhere in the world with varying pace. In the last few years, facebook has earned immense popularity among students because of its easy method of use and free sign-up access. A total of 150 samples from five private universities were interviewed to understand the pattern of facebook use and perception of its influence on behavior of the users. The results showed that more than half of the student users kept awaking at night for longer hours which had confined them to a conditional and non-traditional life styles. They also felt inattentive to their class lectures and academic activities. Every three out of five students had considered some sort of impact on family and household work due to the use of facebook.*

***Keywords:** Perception, Personal behavior, Private university, facebook, Social networking sites.*

Introduction

In this hi-tech time, for information and interaction, people depend not only on newspapers but also on online news portals, blogs, social networking sites (SNS) like Twitter, Hi 5, my space, Zorphia, LinkedIn, orkut, Bebo, XING, Friendster, Mixi, Renren, Flickr, and facebook. Among the social networking sites (SNS), facebook is playing the most important role in interacting socially. These sites allow people to sign up free of charge and create on-line profiles, and provide a platform for people to interact with one another in a virtual sphere (Urista et al., 2008, cited by Sams Bin Qader, November 2013). Among the social networking sites (SNS), facebook is the most prominent one. Young generation, more specifically students, are the leading consumers of facebook. They use it for information and study, making new friends, to stay tuned with them and their family members across the world.

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The students of private universities, in general, are the frequent users of Internet as well as facebook, thanks to Internet availability. Many private universities have provision of distributing free laptops among their students and many of them have wifi zone. They are comparatively rich to avail computers and Internet access to use facebook.

Communication scholars have begun exploring who uses facebook and for what purpose (Acar, 2008; Sheldon, 2008; Urista, Dong & Day, 2009). An important benefit seen in the statistics above is the ability of facebook to make college students feel socially connected to a greater sense of community. This could be beneficial in boosting students' self-esteem. Past studies have shown that students who are active on facebook are more likely to participate in extra-curricular activities. But, as we have also seen in the news, social media can also have a negative effect on emotional health when abused by cyber bullies who harass and torment peers. However, if a student is using facebook to propel his or her knowledge, for example, by participating in a facebook group created by a professor for students of a particular class, the social network may have a positive influence on education and spark the student's interest in learning certain subject matter (Julie D. Andrews, April 28).

Social Network : facebook

Nowadays facebook is the most popular social networking site across the world, let alone Bangladesh. Facebook is a social site produced by Mark Zuckerberg on February 4, 2004. He designed it in his room at Harvard University in the US. It was a social website for Harvard students. Soon his site spread outside the university. It started getting popular and by the end of the second week of its operation, over half of Harvard students registered in facebook. They used it as a way of contacting with each other and in a short period, millions of people became facebook members and founded a broad and influential network.

It is not only a social network site that paves the way for finding new friends or communicating with old friends, but also a site for exchanging views and ideas among youths and others. The capability that a youth can communicate with other youths in different countries has turned the social networks including facebook into a site for introducing and discussing new ideas. (Wikipedia)

People love to pass time on facebook as it is easy to use and its signup is free. Facebook is the leading online social networking site today, especially amongst the youth. Because of its features, facebook has become popular amongst youth putting behind other social networking sites such as Orkut, LinkedIn and MySpace. Users can connect to their friends, friends' friends, share photos, videos, post web links, post status message, develop their own home page and can do many other things.

Facebook has made such a big boom in our culture because in the recent years everything that involves communication and technology has become available and popular. Most of the facebook users in Bangladesh are the students of universities and colleges. Bangladesh has 33,52,680 facebook users till 31 December 2012 as per Internet World Stats.

Why people use facebook

People are extremely busy now. They are busy with study, job, household work and more. That is why they can manage little time to see their friends and relatives in person at home and abroad. Facebook in this regard has become an easy option and way to interact with all. They use facebook to see them virtually, chat with them and of course to be informed of what's going on around, at home and abroad. Facebook is a place where people interact with new people, exchange their opinions with others through status updates and photo uploading as well as sharing, make new friends, know about new things and this way pass leisure time and stay connected to the world. Some 2.80 million people of Bangladesh use the world's strongest social media, facebook, as it secured 51st position among the nations using the network globally, according to a survey report stated by The Financial Express.

Researches have shown reasons for using social media. Scholars have found out gratifications among users and reasons for using facebook by them. Sheldon (2008) described that people use facebook for six major purposes: relationship maintenance, passing time, virtual community, entertainment, coolness and companionship. Urista, Dong and Day (2009) identified five major reasons: efficient communication, convenient communication, curiosity about others, popularity and relationship formation and reinforcement. Cha (2010) found that entertainment, boredom relief, interpersonal utility, escape, and convenience are the motives of using social networking web sites. Cha noted that although earlier studies (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) found 'learning' as one of the most important motivational

factors of Internet use, it is not so in the case of social networking web sites. Baker & Oswald (2010) noted that there is a positive relationship between facebook use and closeness with friends with whom users interact. They concluded that online social networking services can provide a comfort zone to shy individuals to interact with others, suggesting that psychological traits may have a role to play in the use of facebook. Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn and Hughes (2009) stated that facebook provides high satisfaction to its users in their need for diversion and entertainment, need for (parasocial) relationships, and the need for identity construction.

Effects of facebook in society

The facebook was created with the concept of allowing students and young adults to share their common interests. With the passage of time, it has grown in many other aspects of connecting people. Started often as a pastime utility, it becomes an addiction among the users. Through facebook people around the world is creating groups; opening pages and creating public awareness; doing campaign for many noble causes like saving someone's life; collecting money; urging for tree plantation; cleaning cities and so on. People are protesting on socio-political issues; inviting people to create human chain or waging movements, often converted into social uprisings like, the Arab Spring. Facts show that facebook is a very useful medium if used within certain limits. It is beneficial for the ones who nowadays want to be an entrepreneurs sitting at home and make publicity by publishing photographs of products or services to reach the buyers.

With differences of opinion, teachers at university level are keeping in touch frequently with the students, creating groups and opening pages and discussing a particular topic. Through photo sharing, opinion building and writing, the students of different disciplines or subjects of academic institutes are placing them in a wider perspective of a global issue.

Keeping in touch with the relatives abroad is a very common feature of facebook. Families settled abroad want to have strong communication with their homeland and its inhabitants. It is very helpful for people who feel shy in social interaction. Needless to say, it is a useful source to make friends, share thoughts and get the regular updates of favorite persons. Sometimes facebook is being used as a platform for giving information on bride or bridegroom in many countries of Asia. One weak side of using facebook is that it has a very narrow border line between favorite pastime and

addiction. One starts using it initially to make friends and ultimately ends up with a lot of lavish time in taking playful quizzes and exploring various facebook applications. People busy in their lives feel easy to communicate through facebook but at times it becomes very annoying as virtual communication takes the place of real life meeting. Its inappropriate use may hamper one's status, working environment, resulting in firing from a job.

Review of literature

The present study is based on 'Usage and Gratification Theory'. Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. UGT is an audience-centered approach to understanding mass communication. Diverging from other media effect theories that question 'what does media do to people?' UGT focuses on 'what do people do with media?'

For four main reasons people use media and these are information, personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment, as states Denis McQuail (McQuail 1987: 73). People who use facebook seek all these purposes and they get these but in their own ways. There are many options in facebook, but the users seek options of their own needs and become gratified.

Blumler and Katz (1974) stated that the need of audience has social and psychological origins which create certain expectations about the mass media, leading to wide-ranging patterns of media exposure which result in both the gratification of needs and in other consequences often unintended. This does assume an active audience making motivated choices. However, McQuail suggests that the dominant stance of recent researchers in this tradition is now:

Personal social circumstances and psychological dispositions together influence both ... general habits of media use and also ... beliefs and expectations about the benefits offered by the media, which shape ... specific acts of media choice and consumption, followed by ... assessments of the value of the experience (with consequences for further media use) and, possibly ... applications of benefits acquired in other areas of experience and social activity.

Andrews (2011) found interesting data in a survey that 96 per cent of college students use facebook. It was also found that grades of students who checked

facebook while studying were 20 per cent lower than grades of those who did not check facebook while studying. About 79 per cent of students did not believe that multitasking in the way mentioned above negatively affected their grades and 20 per cent of students that use social media reported feeling connected to their institution. Some 75 percent of college students reported desire for collaborative online activity.

In one study, Wesseling revealed the way in which students have contact outside school. After the direct 52 per cent use of 'ping and what's app', facebook was cited as the second most preferred method of communication, which is 26.3 per cent. E-mail was third (17.9); and just 0.7 per cent used their phone solely for calls. The remaining 3.1 per cent claimed to use a combination of these different methods of communication. This prompted Wesseling to investigate student's actual activity on facebook and to know how students contact each other. The second and third surveys measured whether a student had contact with other students via facebook and if they joined a group page related to the institution. The group pages are divided by: 1. project group (6-9 student per group), 2. class page (+/- 30 students per class) and 3. year page (all the students in the first year, max. 960). The number of users increases from 44.6 per cent to 98.4 per cent. In addition, the use of separate pages also shows percentage increase (Nathalie Wesseling, 2012). The key difference between using a phone or computer to call or send messages and using facebook is that one can choose a variety of communication methods on this multifunctional platform. One can chat directly with another student with the option to create or join group pages, in order to be informed through one's timeline, whenever someone posts a message.

New research from the Department of Psychology at North Carolina State University said that 57 percent of college students think their facebook statuses, comments and pictures were appropriate, while 69 percent of job recruiters reported finding components they do not want to see in someone they hire, such as evidence of drinking, drugs, bad-mouthing previous employers or lying on their resumes, among others. (The Oswegonian, 22 November, 2013).

In a study Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) found a significant negative relationship between facebook use and academic performance. They found that facebook users were reported spending fewer hours in study per week on

average and lower mean GPAs than the non-users. In the same study, a majority of students claimed to use facebook accounts at least once a day. Similar results were also reported in Vanden Boogart (2006), Canales *et al* (2009) and Junco (2012). Junco (2011) studied the relationship between facebook usage and student engagement, a construct related to positive college outcomes. Facebook was found negatively correlated with engagement scale score and positively correlated with time spent in co-curricular activities. Junco (2012) examined the relationship among numerous measures of frequency of facebook use with time spent preparing for class and overall GPAs. Hierarchical linear regression analysis showed that time spent on facebook was strongly and significantly negatively correlated with overall GPA.

Roblyer *et al* (2010) found facebook as potential to become an appreciated source to support students' educational communications and associations with faculty. The research found a comparison between faculty and student responses. These students were more open to the possibility of using facebook and similar technologies to support classroom work while faculty members are more likely to use more traditional technologies such as email.

The results of perceptions of academic use of social networking sites (SNSs) by students of the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh was conducted by Jahan and Zabed Ahmed (2012) and the results indicated a positive attitude towards academic use of SNSs by the students. But the differences in terms of students' opinions on academic applications of SNSs were evident due to the fact that the use of these sites in academic contexts was not well defined. The higher academic institutions needed to devise proper policies and strategies on how they could utilize social networking sites to support education and learning apart from classroom use.

In 2009 and 2010, researchers from the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project found that between 67 per cent and 75 per cent of college-aged young adults used social networking websites (Jones and Fox, 2009; Lenhart, 2009; Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr, 2010). In late 2010, an EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR) study of 36,950 students from 126 US universities and one Canadian university revealed that of the students who used social networking sites, 97 per cent said they used facebook (Smith & Caruso, 2010). In another study, students reported

devoting a lot of time to facebook, spending an average of over one hour and 40 minutes a day on the site (Junco, 2011).

Objective of the research

The objectives of the research are as follows:

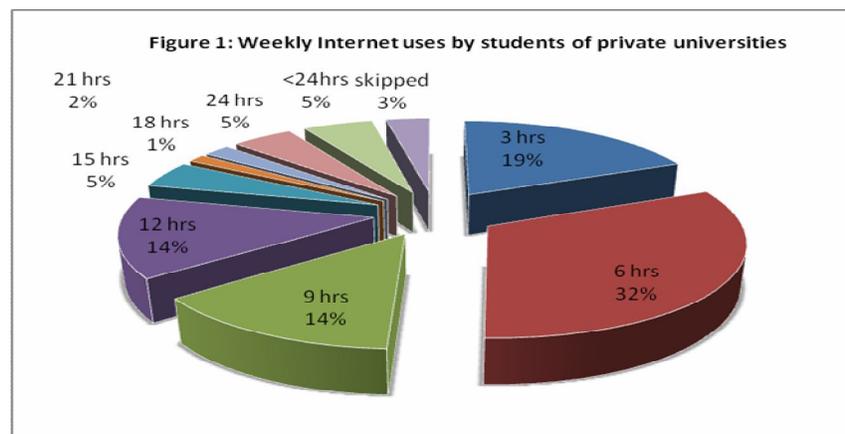
1. To find out how the students of private universities use facebook;
2. To investigate how much time they spend using facebook;
3. To examine the impact of use of facebook on daily life of those students;
4. To find out the level of influence of those students.

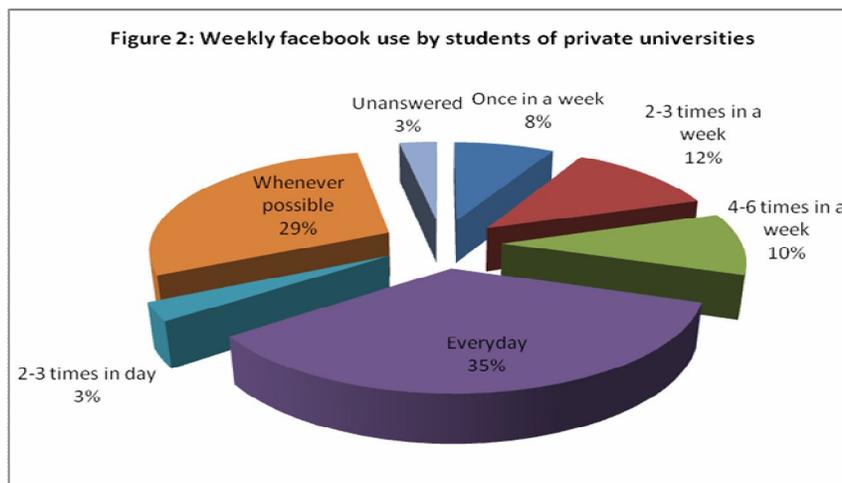
Research method and sample

This research is based on data collected from purposive sampling. The population for this research has been drawn from the students of undergraduate level of five private universities of Bangladesh namely, East West University, American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB), Atish Dipankar University, Northern University and Eastern University. A total of 150 students, 30 from each university, were interviewed with questionnaire.

Presentation and interpretation of data

In this study, the questionnaire was given to sample respondents directly as survey tools and 100 per cent of questionnaires were filled in written form. After the completion of filling-up questionnaires, those were scrutinized and data available were processed. The primary data collected through questionnaires are presented in tables and figures for analysis.





Among the Internet users, the trend found is that the largest chunk was of 32 per cent who used only upto six hours and the next chunk was 19 per cent who used three hours. Two different chunks of 14 per cent who used Internet for nine hours and 12 hours respectively were significant in the study. The other portions ranging from one per cent to five per cent were shown in the figure 1. The use of facebook has been increasing fast in Bangladesh as per the recent data available. The data collected for this study showed that among the users almost 35 per cent use facebook everyday and around 29 per cent use it ‘whenever possible’. There were different other frequencies opted by the respondents (figure: 2).

Table 1: Frequency of the use of facebook in a day

Frequency of use in a day	Total number	Percentage
30 minutes	56	37.33
1 hour	40	26.67
1 hour 30 minutes	4	2.67
2 hours	32	21.33
Total	150	100

In regard to the use of facebook, around 37 per cent answered that they use 30 minutes in a day while 26.67 per cent use 1 hour in a day. (Table 1)

Table 2: Consequences of the use of facebook and behavior of students

Category	Yes N per cent	No N (per cent)
Check mail	140 (93.33)	10 (6.67)
Benefit in study	73 (48.66)	77 (51.33)
Update status	51 (34)	99 (66)
Keeping awoken at night	82 (54.66)	68 (45.33)
Impact on work-time	86 (57.33)	64 (42.66)
Perception of change on behavior	85 (56.66)	65 (43.33)
Impact on family activity	59 (39.33)	91 (60.66)
Fake ID use	19 (12.66)	131 (87.33)

Except seven percent, all students in the sampled universities, who use facebook, usually check their e-mails on a regular basis, as found in the survey. There were several consequences studied among the facebook users like majority of them agreed that they kept awaking at night (about 55 per cent); almost same number of people stated in affirmative that they had problem attending classes, problem to concentrate on class lectures, inattentiveness in work, fatigue and so on. The students also perceived several behavior differences like not providing time to family or friends, lack of participation in extra-curricular activities, disruption in peer feelings. About 60 per cent of the students did not feel any impact on family activities because of using facebook, but 39 per cent, in their opinion, had considered some sort of impact on family and household work. Small segment of the students interviewed held the opinion that they had fake facebook ID. (Table 2).

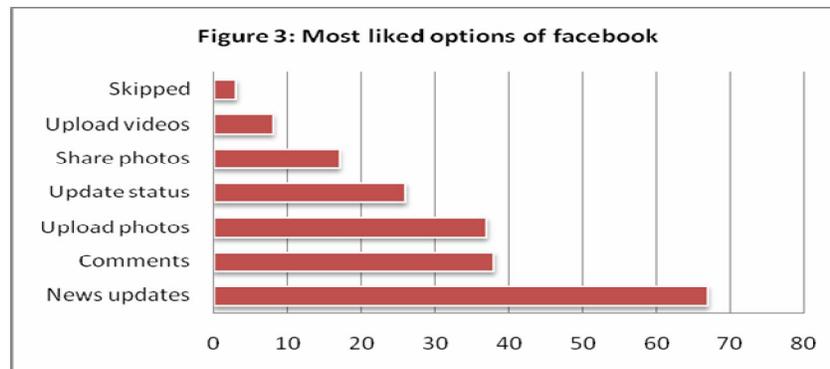


Table 3: Reasons for liking facebook

Contents	Total number	Percentage
To communicate	28	18.67
To share feelings and information	25	16.66
To enhance knowledge/ information	32	21.33
To chat	20	13.33
To get entertainment	20	13.33
To comment	16	10.66
To post opinion	6	4
To see photo	8	5.33
Unanswered	1	0.66
Total	150	100

The use of facebook by the young people is almost a lifestyle and at the same time they thought of some sort of preference for using it. Regarding their first preference for facebook, little more than 21 per cent respondents said they do it “to enhance knowledge/information”; around 19 per cent “to communicate”; one-sixth of them shared their “feelings”; about 13 per cent opted for chatting and another 13 per cent used facebook for “entertainment” (Table 3).

Table 4: Frequency of using Internet in a week

Content	Total number	Percentage
Once in a week	12	8
2-3 times in a week	17	11.33
4-6 days in a week	15	10
Everyday	57	38
Whenever possible	44	29.33
Unanswered	5	3.33
Total	150	100

Table 5: Acceptance of an unknown person as friend

Content	Total number	Percentage
Always adds (Yes)	32	21.33
Never adds	115	76.66
No response	3	2
Total	150	100

Table 4 shows that some 38 per cent respondents use internet everyday while 29 per cent use it whenever it is possible. Almost 77 per cent never accept unknown persons as their friends at facebook, whereas around 21 per cent always add. A significant per cent of the respondents said that they never add any unknown person as friend while around 21 per cent add unknown person as friend (Table 4 and 5)

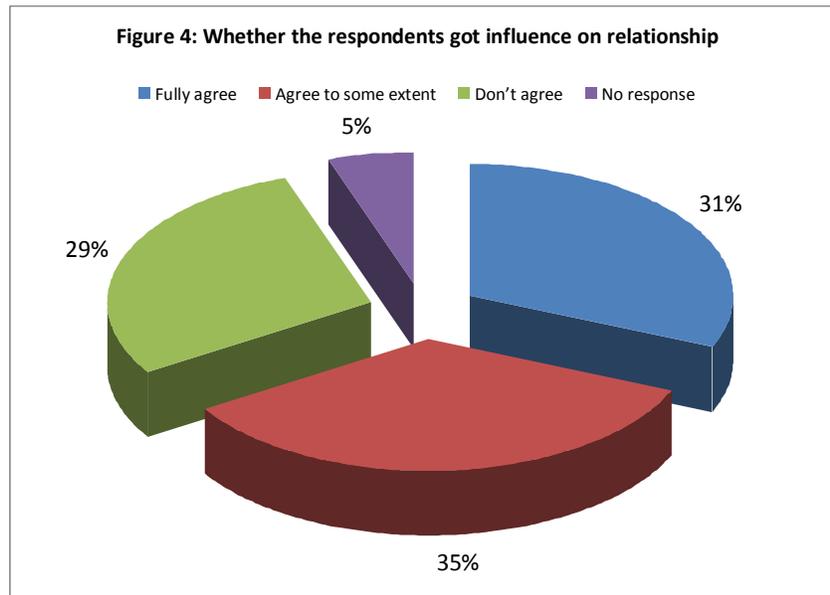
Table 6: Whether the respondents put any action on activities using facebook

Content	Total number	Percentage
Action taken	122	81.33
No action taken	28	18.67
Total	150	100

Table 7: Pattern of action by the respondents using facebook

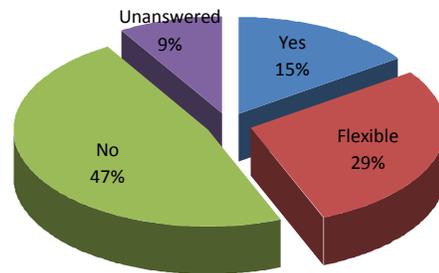
Content	Total number	Percentage
Instant	63	51.63
Delayed	59	48.37
Total	122	100

The use of facebook prompted youth to be proactive in some sort of actions as reflected by 81 per cent of the respondents. Some 52 per cent among those who were proactive mentioned that they went for instant action and 48 per cent felt for delayed action. That means, after uploading anything criticizing, if they were asked by facebook friends that why they have uploaded those in a public place like facebook, then some of them have removed those immediately and some gradually. (Tables 6 and 7).



Around 45 per cent students used facebook to get news updates while about 25 per cent used it to comment on friend's status updates in regard to most liked options. Because of arbitrary choices by 150 respondents, the number has increased to 196 (Figure 3). The use of facebook has different influences and actions which have become a common life-style image among the young people in most of the societies. In this study among the students of private universities in Bangladesh, it has been found that about two-thirds of the whole sample either "fully agree" or "partially agree" to the influences on relationship among friends, as shown as 31 per cent and 35 per cent respectively in the figure 4. Little less than one-third of the respondents perceived that "they don't agree" that facebook had any influence on relationship. The perception regarding break-up of relation of love affair was disagreed by the major portion of respondents, 47 per cent, as shown in the figure. Two other groups who were lenient towards break-up causes by facebook were 15 per cent (strongly agreed) and 29 per cent (agreed flexibly) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Respondents' perception of break-up of relation using facebook



Conclusion

It has been understood that like Internet, no other medium could grab the regions, countries, or continents so quickly. Facebook has become an extended arm of Internet among all its users. Because of everyday affair of using facebook by the young people, there have been several influences on their behavior. More than half of the students kept awaking at night for longer hours. Many of them perceived that often they kept themselves detached from family and friends as well as lacked participation in extracurricular activities. Nearly 60 per cent students had considered some sort of impact on family and household work. Small segment of the students said that they concealed their own identities. Among the students of private universities in Bangladesh, it has been found that about two-thirds of the whole sample either “fully agreed” or “partially agreed” to the influences on relationships by facebook. But regarding break-up of relation especially love affair it was disagreed by the major portion of respondents (47 per cent). The use of facebook prompted youth to be proactive in some sort of actions as reflected by 81 per cent of the respondents. Some 52 per cent among those who were proactive mentioned that they went for instant action and 48 per cent felt for delayed action. That means, after uploading anything objectionable and comments by any of friends for its pros and cons, they have removed those materials immediately or later. There is a trend of using facebook towards academic benefit, but it is yet to be established in a positive perspective as found in the study that little above half of the respondents did not get it.

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