Ethical Behaviors of Undergraduate Students in Social Media Usage in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore and compare ethical behaviors in the usage of social media among undergraduate students in the Curriculum and Instruction program, Faculty of Education. The sample consisted of 600 students enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2021. They were selected using a stratified random sampling technique and divided into different groups according to their majors. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire concerns participants' demographic information. The second part included a five-point rating scale questionnaire used to elicit students' ethical behaviors while using social media. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, one-way ANOVA, and multiple comparisons of Scheffe's method. The findings revealed that the participants possessed high levels of ethical behavior in social media usage, and there were significant differences in participants' ethical behaviors while using social media, at the 0.05 significance level when classified by major.

Keywords: Social Media Behavior, Undergraduate students in Curriculum and Instruction program, Faculty of Education

1.   Introduction

In recent times, telecommunication technology has been developing rapidly; therefore, communication has become more accessible and convenient than before. Information technology helps bring our world closer, reduces communication gaps in terms of time and location, and acts as an information source connects people.. It allows people to search for information from around the world in minutes through a computer with an Internet connection.

Advancements in information technology via the internet are highly successful because of cooperation from a global network of members; therefore, it has become an essential and popular communications system mainly because it exhibits the ability to exchange information in every form—messages or texts, information, picture or graphics, moving pictures or videos, and sound. These forms are optimal communication channels (Chabnak, 2005).

An online social network is a group of people who form a community. They perform activities together through an Internet network in the form of websites that continually expand. They communicate through Internet networks and create a community for communicating information related to business, entertainment, and education. Despite the high usefulness of online social networking, it exhibits threats such as fraud, obscenity, sharing of false information and rumours, cybersecurity threats, online games, smears, bullying, prostitution, online gambling websites sharing inappropriate clips; these are the primary problems of using technology. There are several forms of invasion of privacy in online social networks, such as displaying people's personal information available online without their permission, which can lead to the individual receiving unsolicited texts and calls. The objective might be to connect with people for business. However, often, the recipient may not prefer their information being shared

online; therefore, this is considered a threat to their privacy. Even uploading video clips of the personal lives of other people of recorded TV shows may harm the person. These behaviors are considered an invasion of privacy of other people through online social networks.

Currently, teenagers are interested in intensively using online social networks; moreover, online social networks are currently popular, especially among high school students. If they do not use online social networking, they are considered obsolete by their peers. However, groups of teenagers who use online social networks have improper behaviors and are against the Thai culture. These teenagers waste their time on online social media instead of focusing on academic activities. Therefore, it affects their academic performance and may significantly impact their future education. Moreover, the number of people who use online social networks increases every day. Laempetch's (2016) study shows the concerning impact of Internet use among the youth.

Some groups of people inappropriately use online social networks; for instance, some websites may present too much personal information. If the users are not careful enough about their information, miscreants may use the information for unethical practices such as stealing an individual's work, leading to a violation of their rights. The aforementioned issues may arise among the youth and teenagers if they use online social media without ethics and responsibility, when they should actually focus on their education. The university's primary mission is to provide a learning process to help students graduate with the knowledge, ability, and ethics, with the teachers transferring knowledge and experience to students. However, it is of utmost importance to provide students with knowledge on online ethical behavior, to enable them to be responsible citizens of the society.

Therefore, the researcher investigated the ethical behaviors of using online social networks of students who enrolled in a bachelor's degree course in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, and compared ethical behaviors among different majors. This study can help educational institutes establish policies for using online social networks for students effectively and safely. Moreover, the study results can be used by educational institutes as a guideline to prevent the negative impact of improperly using online social networks for students; teachers providing knowledge to students about using online social networks creatively and safely is useful to build effective online communities.

2. Research methodology

2.1 Population and samples

The population in this research is undergraduate students, Department of Curriculum and Instruction Faculty of Education, in the second semester of the academic year 2021. A total of 23,374 students from 10 different majors were selected. The sample size was selected using Krejcie and Morgan's sampling table at the 95 percent confidence level using Stratified Random Sampling. However, this study collected the sample data of 600 participants to prevent data discrepancies.

2.2 Research instruments

A questionnaire on social media usage was used as the instrument in this study. It was divided into two parts and consisted of 35 items. The consistency index of questions was between 0.80–1.00, and the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.93.

3.   **Data collection and analysis**

The questionnaire was distributed among 830 undergraduate students at the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education; a total of 600 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 72.29%.

The researcher carried out data analysis using a statistical software program in the following steps:

1. Analyzing student's general information and determining the frequency and percentage;

2. Analyzing respondents' behavioral data in using online social networks and determining means and standard deviation; and

3. Conducting a one-way analysis of variance to compare students from different majors.

If the result of the variance analysis found statistically significant differences, the researchers compared the differences in mean scores using the Scheffe method.

4.   **Results**

Table 1 shows the ethical behaviors in social media usage of the participants.

Table 1 Ethical behaviors in using social media of the undergraduate students

Ethical Behaviors in Using Social Media	Sample (n = 600)		Ethical Behaviors	Ranking
	$\bar{x}$	S.D		
1. Not use a computer to harm other people.	4.53	0.44	Always	4
2. Not interfere with other people's computer work.	4.77	0.39	Always	1
3. Not snoop around in other people's computer files.	4.60	0.47	Always	3
4. Not use a computer to steal.	4.50	0.59	Always	6
5. Not use a computer to bear false witness.	4.45	0.62	Often	7
6. Not copy or use proprietary software that you have not paid for.	4.15	0.73	Often	10
7. Not use other people's computer resources without authorization or proper compensation.	4.52	0.61	Always	5

Ethical Behaviors in Using Social Media	Sample (n = 600)		Ethical Behaviors	Ranking
	$\bar{x}$	S.D		
8. Not appropriate other people's intellectual output.	4.16	1.03	Often	9
9. Think about the social consequences of the program you are writing or the system you are designing.	4.44	0.60	Often	8
10. Always use a computer in ways that ensure consideration and respect for your fellow humans.	4.67	0.45	Always	2
Total	**4.48**	**0.36**	**Often**	

According to Table 1, 85.20% of respondents were female (n = 511). The majority of respondents (n = 522) were between 23–28 years of age. Most respondents were Thai major students (n = 133, 18.80%). In terms of occupation, most of the respondents were students (n = 577, 96.20%). The average monthly cost of their living was 5,000–9,999 baht (n = 292, 48.70%). Most of them had more than four-years' experience using online social networks (n = 469, 78.20%). Most respondents had Facebook accounts (n = 592, 21.5%), and the most frequently used online social network service was Facebook (n = 438, 73.00%). About 87.20%, used social media via smartphones (n = 523). Regarding the frequency of using online social networks in a day, 213 respondents (35.50%) used social networks all day long. They used online social networks the most between 6:00 pm and 9:00 p.m. (n = 321), and most of them (n = 273 or 45.50%) spent time using online social networks for 1–3 hours. About 30.5% of respondents (n = 183) used online social networks to track news or work. The most favorite social network feature for most respondents (n = 254, 42.3%) was updating information in real time. They mostly spent time using online social network media at home (n = 528, 88%). Most of them (n = 256, 42.70%) had 100–500 friends in their social network.

Ethical behaviors in social media usage among the participants were at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.48, S.D = 0.36). Students in different majors generally exhibited different ethical behaviors while using social media, and this was statistically significant at the level of 0.05, which is in accordance with the hypothesis.

5.   Discussions and suggestions

The research results can be summarized, synthesized, and discussed to construct the information, thus providing suggestions for further research. It seemed to have some critical issues that should be discussed as follows.

The results from data analysis showed that ethical behaviors in using social media among undergraduate students in the Curriculum and Instruction program, Faculty of Education, in all aspects were at a high level overall ($\bar{x}$ = 4.48, S.D = 0.36) because the program, which produces teachers, has a curriculum that focuses on enhancing knowledge and professional standards.

Teacher professional standards must comprise both knowledge and ethics. All students of the faculty of education must register for two basic courses—RAM 1000 (knowledge and morality) and ECT 1301 (computer for teaching and learning), which include content about the ethics of correctly using social networks. Consequently, most students understand how to use social networks with morality and ethics. Phoprasert (2015) found that the social media usage behavior of undergraduate students at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang generally is at a high level. Similarly, Thamrongphan (2014) found that Chulabhorn Technical College (Lat Kwang) students' behavior in using online social networks is also at a high level. Furthermore, Iamrit (2016) examined the behavior and ethics of using online social networks of undergraduate students at Burapha University regarding ethics in using online social networks and found that students' ethical and proper use of social media was at a high level. Srichusin (2011) found that the level of ethical behavior in using online social networks of graduate students in the Faculty of Education of Public Universities was high. Moreover, Suwan (2009) conducted a study on the ethical behavior in the Internet usage of Nong Chok Temple Secondary School students, Office of educational service area Bangkok area 2, found that student's ethical behavior of Internet usage was high.

The results of exploring and comparing ethical behaviors of undergraduate students in social media usage in the Curriculum and Instruction program, Faculty of Education, have been divided into different groups according to their majoring programs. In addition, the study found that the ethical behavior of social media usage is different at the statistical significance level of 0.05 in every aspect due to the different majors of the students under the jurisdiction. Consequently, students' different aptitudes and interests in various fields affects their ethical behavior. Laemphet (2016) found that students with different study plans are affected by using online social networks differently at a statistical significance of 0.01. Chuinam (2015) studied the behavior and effects of using online social networks of junior high school students in Sukhothai province, classified by year. The results indicated that students in different classes were affected by social media networks in terms of learning, family, emotion, and society differently.

The results of the comparison are as follows: Early childhood education major students gained higher scores on these seven areas of ethical behavior in using social media than other students from different fields: 1) One shall not interfere with other people's computer work. 2) One shall not use a computer to steal data and information. 3) One shall not copy or use proprietary software. 4) One shall not use other people's computer resources without authorization. 5) One shall not steal other people's intellectual output. 6) One shall consider the social consequences of their actions. 7) One shall mannerfully use a computer in ways that respect the rules and regulations; students in the early childhood education major must take computer, morality, and ethics courses as their compulsory subjects and elective subjects more than other students. These courses include CEC 3206 innovation and technology for the early childhood level, CEC 3216 computer for early childhood, and CSO 3102 teaching for values and ethics development. These courses include ethics and morality for information technology use and promote the correct use of information. The factors mentioned above lead the students majoring in early childhood education to gain higher ethical behavior while using social media than students majoring in other subjects.

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