

**THE RELATIONSHIPS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING
WEBSITES AND STUDENT ACADEMIC LEARNING
IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES**

By

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This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Computer Science & Engineering of the University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of MBA in information Technology.

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Abstract

Successful Learning is a challenge for any university. Hence it is an important task to be carried out in order to survive in various environmental changes and challenges. University students prefer having an 'IT-enabled' social networking methodology because; social networking tools can be considered as most popular, inexpensive, easy to use, and flexible learning support tools.

Social networking site is a website that provides a virtual community, for people interested in a particular subject such as friendship, kinship, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige. The analysis on the impact of social networking websites on learning practices in the context of Sri Lankan universities is yet to be done. This research has been carried out in order to cater the above said need. The 'decomposed theory of planned behavior' is the chosen theoretical framework for this study. This framework helps to identify the practical factors influencing the adoption of social networking websites for learning. The conceptual framework is developed further, by extending learning support aspects into the theoretical framework. The conceptual framework consists of four main concepts and the analysis is done in three steps, pair-wise. An online questionnaire is used to collect data from students who are studying in Sri Lankan universities.

Research result indicates that most of the students use social networking websites inside universities and are aware about the educational benefits of those sites. Further it reveals that there is an average level of students currently using social networking websites for educational purposes. Facebook is the most popular site among students in Sri Lankan universities and It reveals that the Facebook and Ning are the most best solution is to start with the implementation for academic learning.

Further results of this study prove that except subjective norms of students all the other factors are positive towards the intention to adopt social networking websites for academic learning. Further subjective norms of students has no effect on

Intention to adopt social networking websites for academic learning and student perceived behavioral control is the strongest factor influencing the intention to adopt. Another finding is that if anyone feels such an intention to adopt, then there is a very high possibility that they would go ahead and actually use social networking websites for academic learning. Since attitude and perceived behavioral control have a strong relationship with the intention to adopt social networking websites for learning, this is an indication to the university administration that they should take necessary steps to enhance students' attitudes and their behavioral controls in order to adopt social networking websites for academic learning.

The research also reveals that, the adoption of social networking websites highly influences the existing learning support practices of the universities. Communication and collaboration activities are the most influenced learning support practices when adopting social networking websites for academic learning in Sri Lankan universities. Publishing and sharing activities are the other learning support practices considered in this study.



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This research identifies the current usage behavior of social networking websites and level of importance of several factors influencing the adoption of social networking websites for academic learning. The efficiency of future social networking website implementations will be increased, if the identified factors are taken as suggestions and necessary steps are taken to enhance the university background prior to technical implementation. Thus the findings of this research project will be useful for students, lecturers, public and private higher educational institutions, in order to ensure efficient use of social networking websites for academic learning, particularly if they are planning to adopt to social networking sites for learning for the first time.

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List of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Description |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| CMS | Course Management Systems |
| IT | Information Technology |
| OSN | Online Social Networking |
| PBC | Perceived Behavioral Control |
| SL | Sri Lanka |
| SLU | Sri Lankan Universities |
| SN | Social Networking |
| SNS | Social Networking Sites |
| TPB | Theory of Planned Behavior |



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