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Tamanna Nazneen Rahman, Nazmun Nahar and Sadia Rahman

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**Facebook, A Blind Trend to Follow or  
A Meaningful Communication Base?  
A Study on Private University Students of Bangladesh**

*Tamanna Nazneen Rahman<sup>1</sup>*  
*Lecturer, Faculty of Business Administration, AIUB*

*Nazmun Nahar<sup>2</sup>*  
*Assistant Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, AIUB*

*Sadia Rahman<sup>3</sup>*  
*Assistant Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, AIUB*

**Corresponding author\*:** Tamanna Nazneen Rahman  
Email: tamanna@aiub.edu

## **Facebook, A Blind Trend to Follow or A Meaningful Communication Base? A Study on Private University Students of Bangladesh**

### **Abstract**

This study reflects on educational leaders' involvement with the private university students of Bangladesh in bringing out their true potentials of positive usage of Facebook for education and information sharing. This also shows the students know the range of educational and information they can use for their benefit of self-teaching and not to use this social application just for the sake of wasting time. They invest a lot of time on Facebook, so how to direct their rational and critical thinking can provide this ICT to be a base for them to enhance their performance in an academic setting as well. This further provides them to be confident in brainstorming, group working, writing, and speaking in a constructive manner which will align Bangladeshi private university students with global culture with the shared platform of social media -Facebook.

**Keywords:** Facebook, Communication, Education & Information sharing, Educational Leaders, Critical Thinking, ICT, Education for All (EFA)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The term Facebook is interconnected with our minds and lives. It is such a popular word nowadays that it is part of our daily routine. We even cannot think of a single day to spend without the touch of Facebook. It has been considered as one of the most popular platforms for social networking among youth. Facebook is very popular among young generations especially the major users are university students. Facebook was introduced on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2004, when a 19-year-old student Mark Zukerberg founded the radical site to connect with Harvard University (Grossman, 2010). Later, the user number extended up to millions of people around the world, and among them, majorities are university students. University students use Facebook for different grounds like profile creating, networking, educational purpose, extracurricular activities sharing with friends and society, entertainment, etc. According to user perception, we can identify some tasks which are very frequent and popular for university students like: sending emails, posting/sharing links, viewing/posting pictures, posting a message to the wall, posting a message to others, chat, checking friends/teachers information, belonging to groups, sharing extracurricular activities like a success story, performing arts, sharing talents on multiple areas, etc. Facebook Usage can be classified through 3 variables: Daily tasks, Work-Related activities, and Social Relations. Sometimes students spend time engaging themselves through unnecessary chatting, allowing wrong /unwanted people, or by browsing unnecessary contents. It requires controlling the usages of Facebook for maximum utilization and definitely in an efficient manner.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Young generations especially University students use Facebook for various purposes like sharing news, networking, collecting reviews from current and past students. They may use messenger for answering queries, generating content to know about career, organizing and promoting university events, creating their pages, creating a network with the alumni's, and many more. A study by Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe (2011) shows that approximately 73% of teenagers have joined social networking sites by the end of 2009, among half of them (38%) visiting social networking sites on daily basis. Through Facebook people may create a public or semi-public profile, they may track different people, can maintain networking (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social Relationship nature is changing continuously with the blessings of Facebook (Aghazamani, 2010) and it becomes popular with the younger generation. According to the study (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012), Facebook has started to be used for an educational purpose. Students can use Facebook for their classroom activities, any type of communication with classmates and faculties, and for sharing different posts that are relevant to their study (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010). A study (Apaolaza, Hartmann, Medina, Barutia, Echebarria, 2013) stated the purposes of Facebook use and it was classified through variables like daily activity, work-related activity, and social relations. McCarthy (2010) identified the trend of Facebook helped a lot to foster university culture, and it enlarged the social and academic collaboration between peers. A research (Ogedebe P., Emmanuel J., and Musa Y., 2012) was conducted on public and private universities and revealed the relationship between academic performance and facebook usage rate. It determined that academic performance will decrease when we will spend more time on Facebook. Frequent uses of Facebook will hamper the study (Thompson, 2017). Youth is the power of any society. We love to see our young generation productive and definitely, they have to utilize their time efficiently. Sometimes they engage themselves with social networking sites in such a way that makes them lazy and inefficient. They may destroy their valuable time for chatting, unnecessary browsing, etc. According to Pathan et al (2017), male students spend more time browsing and chatting on Facebook than female students. Though it has a very small negative impact on student's life, the greater frequency of the usage rate of Facebook can enlighten self-esteem and can be a good reason for increasing self-satisfaction (Valkenburg, Peter and Schoutan, 2006). Richard and Jin (2015) identified a good relationship between motivation through Facebook and satisfaction in life. Our study is to look into those areas which Facebook

users preferably Bangladeshi university students mostly choose, and according to their feedback, we want to identify the most demanding attributes.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Ten questions on survey monkey were created to gather surveys from 134 recipients (AIUB students) for gathering the valuable data for this research. The main idea was to see How many students were using Facebook for educational purposes. Also, the questions were arranged in a way to see if they were influenced by similar groups, ideas and were they communicating using Facebook in a meaningful communicative way to expand their knowledge of education and use their critical thinking abilities on the social network platform. So, was to establish these students are not just following a trend blindly but truly understanding the capacity of the social network platform and thus rationally using Facebook.

#### **3.2 Research Methodology**

Ten questions on survey monkey were created to gather surveys from 134 recipients (AIUB students) for gathering the valuable data for this research. The main idea was to see how many students were using Facebook for educational purposes. Also, the questions were arranged in a way to see if they were influenced by similar groups, ideas and were they communicating using Facebook in a meaningful communicative way to expand their knowledge of education and use their critical thinking abilities on the social network platform. The questionnaire was developed and used to back up the methodology used in this research. The designing of our methodology was qualitative of nature, but help was taken from survey monkey to gather data and create the analytical results. The surveys were sent to students at American International University-Bangladesh. The results gathered from the data collection were used in simple qualitative analysis to provide rational and evident research. In the finding section, the details are discussed.

### **3.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.3.1 Data Dissecting and Analysis**

This study is prepared as dichotomous questions, in the form of YES/NO, are used to evaluate the inclination of students at a private university of Bangladesh in Facebook. Table 1 summarises all the responses from the nine questions used in the survey to fulfill the objective of the research. The table is described in the following paragraphs.

**Table 1: Survey Findings**

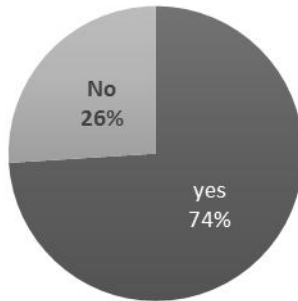
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes Response</b>	<b>No Response</b>
<b>Facebook as a media of communication</b>	99%	1%
<b>Multipurpose use of Facebook</b>	94%	6%
<b>Belongingness in Facebook groups</b>	73%	27%
<b>Negative impact of net being part of Facebook Group</b>	42%	48%
<b>Involvement in education through Facebook</b>	92%	8%
<b>Facebook as an educational platform</b>	90%	10%
<b>Facebook, a platform to deliver positivity</b>	95%	5%
<b>Awareness regarding the impact of Facebook</b>	95%	5%
<b>Awareness of Facebook use in education worldwide</b>	84%	16%

Source: Primary

For the first question, almost all students (99%) agreed that they use Facebook as a medium of communication for various purposes among friends, families, and teachers. Due to the ease, popularity, and vast coverage, it has surpassed the traditional communication modes

such as email, telephone, letters, etc. Most respondents (94%) of this research agreed that they use Facebook in different areas such as sports, shopping, food, makeup, etc. In addition to these, they also follow new trends as part of the entertainment. The rest use social media simply for networking and communicating.

The third question tries to address whether the students fulfill their need for belongingness by being part of any group on Facebook or not. It is observed that Facebook provides options to create groups based on similar interests. These interests vary ranging from different social, economic, environmental causes to domains such as clothing, cooking, etc. As represented in Figure 1, it is evident that 73% of users get to feel like a part of a group by sharing and following the same type of materials on the social platform and they also find it important to belong to these kinds of virtual groups. However, a significant amount of responses i.e., 27% believe they do not belong to any group of Facebook and it is not crucial for their wellbeing. This may have happened due to any negative impacts caused by virtual groups such as indifference, lack of activities, lack of compatibility within the group, etc. As this is out of our research scope, this area requires further investigation.



**Figure 1: Belongingness in Facebook Groups**

On the other hand, a good amount of student even feels angry, sad or upset if they are not being able to be part of any group the desire. We can see from Table 1 that 42% of students feel that way. So it is not being a part of its groups can harm the mental wellbeing of the student



whereas if they participate in any groups for sharing or learning or simple entertainment, it helps them in having a positive mindset.

Since most people who have the internet also have Facebook accounts, we must identify the scope of its use in one of the most important aspects of our lives which is education. Our respondents were students and as a result, it is a must query to find if they are involved in learning and sharing culture even in social media. As Figure 5 portrays, 92.46% conform to their participation in educational activities through Facebook. They even agree that they can even contribute to intellectual conversations because of these undertakings. As an extension of question 5, another question was asked whether Facebook can be used as an educational platform or not. In answer to that question, approximately 90% of students answered that it can be used for transferring educational information, tutoring peers, and others. Hence, it can be established as a formal platform for online learning.

Also, it is found that 95% of students who were part of the surveys fruitfully use Facebook. Not only do they use it for basic communication or networking but also for sharing positive quotes, funny contents, and stories of influential people. This in turn motivates and inspires others in current global issues such as climate change, animal and natural preservation, news circulation, etc.

Through two questions of the study, we tried to understand the awareness among our students regarding the use and impact of Facebook in their lives. In answer to the question “Do you realize the impact of your post and communication on Facebook and how vast Facebook is?” 95% agree to understand the consequences of their actions on this social platform. Moreover, most (84%) of them are aware that teachers and students worldwide use this medium for educational purposes in form of sharing scholastic information and materials.

Lastly, The Venn diagram in Figure 2 answers an additional question which showcases the devices used by Facebook users. 99% of users use mobile and 27% use the laptop in accessing Facebook.

However, it is clear that 26% of users use both mobile and laptop in getting into the program as per their convenience.

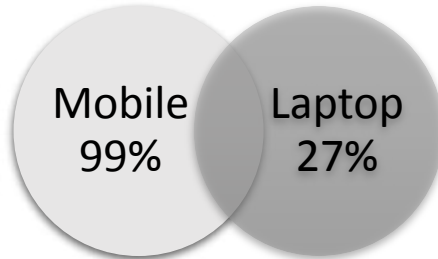


Figure 2: Device used for logging in to Facebook

### **3.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

Our study will project on the benefits it will bring if mobile phones, computers, and the internet are used in education with the use of Facebook in Bangladeshi educational institutions which will be of benefit for students and as well as teachers. This study will also shed some light on Facebook is not only a blind trend that our youngsters (Private university students) are following but are using it in a constructive and meaningful way. We will try to see that this Facebook is not just a go with the flow trend but also can prove to be a possible base for students to communicate in terms of educational and informational purpose. This study will also help with our leadership preparation as (Lumby & English,2009) gives explanations to the selves' as self-aware leadership. Finally, our discussion we will show that students of private universities are sharing educational information over Facebook, being part of groups and becoming globally connected through learning and sharing activities via this Social Platform. This will then show us whether their critical way of thinking is being backed up by their regular communication over Facebook. We surveyed students from American International University-Bangladesh who are current students from different semesters and different departments.

### 3.4.1 Students comprehending the educational Benefit of using Facebook

As we consider ourselves to become successful educational leaders, we have therefore decided to pick a topic which we see needs attention for resolution or implementation in 'New way of Teaching/Learning'. This is indeed self-practice but via communication between fellow Facebook users of same classes/university. This then can become a self-learning social networking platform for knowledge and information sharing outside class hours. More so, we have decided to investigate technology usage in Private University sector specially in Bangladeshi education and communication context. From our survey we find students are using mobile phones to communicate in Facebook with their classmates or friends from similar level (may be studying in different university in same of different countries). As shown by (Davies, 2010) mentions in her work that technology used in educational fields defines the leadership and thus we will seek to bring a shift with the emerging of technological advancements with the usage of Facebook in Private Universities in Bangladesh.

### 3.4.2 The four factors to come in handy

The facts to solve this problem in providing EFA in Bangladeshi Education sector, can be collected and applied from a finding from a widespread, Aussie Educational-research project (Mulford, 2005). He showed in his research the four factors which can be put into action:

### 3.4.3 Distributed leadership

As educational leaders, first we would have to know about the context and the players' past, present, and human affairs to conceptualise an identity of self and generate awareness within (Lumby and English, 2009). Then we can understand our student's capacity of knowledge creating. But then the argument placed by Armstrong (2005) explores the gender, race and equality issues can arise which might hamper in leadership preparing and developing into over-simplifying complexion in the notion of a leader. So, how to solve this to provide solution for others can be done through training, practice and development of self. (Heywood, 2005) has counter argued to self's development by saying when a leader can think of his/herself as in a plural manner then that leader can get out of that complexity from the notion of self. This is the reason when a leader can understand self and awareness then his role will be easy adaptable, because he can direct him/herself into the role and

can fully provide the cultural expectations. In this case, the teacher to take up the new role as providing quality education and ensure learners are coping with new policy and approaches. This can optimise teachers to help students beyond classroom learning. Teachers can encourage them to learn educational ideas, follow positive people, learn about different cultures and create groups which will communicate outside classroom hours. For example, from one of our experience, in Dublin City University, Ireland, for both BA and MSc students, they have to create a work group page on Facebook and teachers are included in their groups to support or just observe if they are working on the given projects/assignments as a group. They share information, add ideas, and the respected teachers helps them with ideas too if needed. They share links, vlogs, eBooks, journals, etc. which helps make an assignment top notch.

#### 3.4.4 Development and students learning

Learning how to learn (MacBeath, 2008) concept can be applied here. Regardless supportive or oppressive policy environment exist, this teaching and learning project can be undertaken in order to put forth a new learning way in Bangladesh. But the argument here in (MacBeath, 2008) is that a classroom is a teacher's space and he/she can apply any style he wants. And since this is more student-based style it will be acceptable because of the strong authority of the teacher. Having said that the innovative way of learning in this technological era is much more welcomed. As all the private students of Bangladesh are tech-savvy. How this can work is explained below.

#### 3.4.5 Initiating the innovative approach of 'New way teaching & learning'

Ability is a skill of creativity I believe. So critically constructing thoughts (critical thinking) is therefore a skill that a student and a researcher uphold. Hence, if we were to describe this to the how question then this notion needs to be broken down into several steps:

Step 1: People brainstorm ideas before critical thinking

Step 2: It's a process of new level thoughts based on or basis for knowledge. This process may be a range of thought processes. These are ranging from identifying the relevant one to the irrelevant ideas. So critically challenging one idea from another or justifying or mapping the ideas to work with, are all part of the process.

Step 3: When one can analyze confusion and disagreement with peers (Chanock, 2012) gain the ability to think critically.

### 3.4.6 The relationship is between critical thinking and speaking/writing:

The relationship between critical thinking and speaking/writing is somehow correlated in the instance of a learning platform. So, if a student is communicating information over Facebook with this idea at the back of his/her mind then they will learn to use this Social Network Platform wisely.

**Critical thinking:** We feel a student may get confused but if he critically analyses, investigates, reads about the topic, then the vague thought gets cleared up and becomes focused. Then they can choose an idea they want to think about and work on. They can communicate on Facebook in their leisure time with their classmates to a better understanding of whichever topic they wish to know about more.

**Speaking/Writing in a critical manner:** Whether it is speaking or writing, creativity is essential which comes from the critical thought process. Out of many ideas, picking the right or the best one is the critical thought process. Then while speaking, if one articulates in a nice manner or a presentable way would be rather appreciable among the audience. Finally, creative writing is sort of like picking the right word, statement, sentence structure, grammar, etc must be academic or be of practical use for the context the writer/speaker is working from. For example: If the writer is a student, he/she has to pick formal words rather not casual words for academic writing. They must follow a certain format for composing an essay or display a confident character with the usage of the right kind of words during presentations or workshops. But they cannot instantaneously just start creating perfect pieces of writing and speeches, for this to happen they need to be practicing. And regular writing and jotting down ideas from their head can aid in creating the best work in writing or speaking. And here Facebook can play a vital role for them to be ready for becoming a critical thinking person.

Therefore, critical thinking and speaking/writing are closely related. Without thinking before start speaking or putting words onto a paper or on MS Word, one cannot produce a nice or meaningful creation. Words, ideas are many in our word collection, so using the right one will be of more

practical use. Therefore, if the students start using Facebook for regular communication methods, then their writing and thinking will hopefully be of critical way of thinking. This platform is informal and will allow the students to create and pool in ideas for their educational purpose. They are writing on Facebook, brainstorming and this is preparing them to a way of becoming critical thinking person. This will create a rational notion in them so they will not use Facebook as a blind trend to follow but use their wisdom for educational and self-enriching. Neither less to say, when they come back to the classroom setting then they can apply their confidence which they gained from using Facebook in an informative communication manner. This will improve their writing, communicating with classmates and teachers. Thus, will boost self-confidence in students and will encourage them to learn new knowledge without any fear. Because they will be able to understand deeper via Facebook communication.

Thus, we figure out, this will initiate the innovative approach of ‘new way of teaching & learning’. For example, we talk in class suppose in an area of business ‘let’s say in Toyotas production system’, so the students find out what is this production system and initiate a converse on Facebook regarding this information which is educative and creating them to critically think and write for effective communication to happen. We, teachers, were instructors by our role, but we are more than that now. We can now say that we are facilitators, we are empowered in the learning process (new teaching approach) and empowering our students to gain the maximum using the latest trends and technology of advanced knowledge transfer. They will get a feeling of achievement. We can say our students are becoming part of global culture by using Facebook for education and information pooling from all over the world’s educated mass.

#### 3.4.7 A deeper and vast realization of students gain and results

Education is not enough just by providing, it has to be observed whether a student is motivated and interested to learn and apply their learnings in real-life situations. It must be taken into consideration that these students are future Bangladeshi GDP creators. So, they must uphold confidence, understanding, values, ethics which they will learn from their educational institutions. Extra-curricular activities such as sports, music, dance, etc will open their inner creativity to have positive ideas. They will learn to question and think

logically, which will help reduce dropouts and to continue their thirst for knowledge. An educated society is a country's backbone. A leader's job is to ensure the teachers and students are empowered so they take up their interest and communicate together during or after school for the sole purpose of learning (Arnot, 2004). Since on Facebook they are individual users but are part of a bigger group too, they are less likely to walk away from one another and one can support the other one for not dropping out from studying. They can also showcase their talents such as, art, music, sports, singing, dancing etc in various groups, posts on Facebook and become part of a rich art and culture generation. This will also boost their self-confidence as students and will create an emotional connection for their educational institution where they relate to their friends on Facebook whom they also may be classmates with.

#### 3.4.8 Change Feasibility

To understand the policy change let us understand which change we are bringing about as an effective leader in building strength in Bangladeshi Higher Education. We tried to see if Facebook can be a base for our students to collaborate for educational purposes. And from our survey, we found out they engage in Facebook with the use of their electronic gadget such as a mobile device for communication. As described in the study the problem is clear that for their Facebook education and information sharing which is delivered via mobile and internet can resolve problems significantly. So, this is a change in quality education through means of adopting a technology leadership approach, a discourse for successful student leadership. Through the sharing powers, teachers will be student-centered and thus provide improved teaching (Blase et al., 1995). The students will be critical thinkers and will understand what the teacher is trying to teach them in a deeper sense. And it will be easier for teachers to provide new ideas to the students and ask them to brainstorm themselves to make them self-assessors. As a result, students will stay connected and show immense interest to learn. The students will put trust in teachers-motives and via the usage of technology, they will be able to communicate whenever they want in a clear-open manner. This is the creation of participatory democracy, which we see in our study will be a win-win situation in terms of learning. Next, the teachers and students should bear in mind the fact that they are in a social context and should understand the concepts of power and trust (Bourdieu, 1990). While using technology for educational advancement in Bangladesh as a leader, it is important to understand the limitations of this study which are high price of internet service

providers, data coverage, not being able to survey all private universities in Dhaka, unable to cover all the private universities outside Dhaka, not being able to survey all the Public university students. Having seen the problems, it is one way to resolute this educational lacking. This means there is room for research which wish to do in future studies and for other researchers as well. (Valk et al., 2010) showed in their paper that not equal opportunities for teachers, students which exist in the developing world can be solved by providing an economic and good education practice via technology especially via mobile phone. They showed that Information & Communication-Technologies can help build back the trust among management and teachers, within teachers and students, and within teachers-parents. With the usage of technology teachers, schools can offer new kinds of teaching which will change the student-teacher learning and teaching way than that of a traditional classroom and book education. In this way, students will become smarter. Furthermore, this mobile phone ICT will be of use in providing educational topics to students over distances.) A research paper has been published (Morshed, 2016) on how technology is creating quality in education in Bangladesh, where he showed that incorporating technologies by the leaders in schools showed their positive-roles: schools vision-mission, giving lessons, managing curriculum of respective classes, learning in a modern way, assessing students and teachers by managements and finally positive attitude towards technical assimilation and technology skill advancement which will create Facebook a feasible means of education and information sharing platform for students and somewhat teachers as well.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

We started by saying we wanted to be a successful education leader and we wanted to look into another new way of teaching and learning which will be an innovative way in the Bangladeshi educational context. We have successfully found that solution, which is to include technology such as mobile phones in education while observing and supporting students to use Facebook for educational and information sharing. ICT can offer to solve the problem of 'not being able to provide Education For All' (Lhazom, 2008) in Bangladesh. As an outcome of the discussion, it can be said Facebook can provide means of testing students' participation and communication with their teachers or without teachers, solely with their peers on Facebook in a rationalized way. Teachers, students will infuse the technology usage (mobile phones) while using Facebook as an educational source and create as



innovativeness of positive change and meet the international standard of quality education creation in Bangladeshi Universities. We will cover the limitations which we faced for this study to create more studies to put forth this idea into play in meeting our Education goal.

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