Professionalism in Using Online Social Networking Tool: An Assessment of LIS Students' Facebook Profiles

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Abstract - **With the advent of social media, students must not only be aware of professionalism in their face to face interactions, but also in the electronic environment. The aim of this study was to assess the level of online professionalism on Facebook profiles publicly accessible by students. A research was carried out through a new Facebook account of all students at the Institute of Information Sciences, Noakhali Science and Technology University. Demographic details and photographs / comments of unprofessional behavior were recorded for each individual Facebook profile. There was a little alarming level of unprofessional content visible on student Facebook profiles. Students should be fully aware of their professional responsibility in the context of using social media.**
Keywords: **Facebook using, Social Networking Tools, LIS students, Bangladesh.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU) is situated in coastal terrain Noakhali of Bangladesh around 101 acres of land. It was established in 2005 as 27th public university (out of 42) and fifth science and technology university in Bangladesh, with the mission to provide high-quality education, training, research, and complementary services to meet the technological, social, and economic needs of individuals and communities in Bangladesh.

The academic programs of the university commenced on 2006. As of 2019, NSTU had total faculty members of 312, registered students of 7800 across its six faculties– Engineering & Technology, Science, Social Sciences and Humanities, Business Administration, Education Sciences, Law, and two institutes– Information Sciences, Information Technology (NSTU, 2019).

Established in 2016, the Institute of Information Sciences (IIS) has been tasked to address the acute shortage of personnel in the information sector and to meet the information and technology needs of Bangladesh and beyond.

It has a department namely Department of Information Studies which offers four-year honors in Information Science and Library Management.

The Institute also offers a one-year course on Post Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Science. This study attempts to show the use of Facebook as a social media technology by students at IIS, their awareness, familiarity and using pattern with the social media.

A. Social Networking Tools

The world continues to change due to the explosion of and easy access to information as well as continuous development in technology access and integration (Zinyeredzi and Zinn, 2016).

In the course of time, major technological breakthroughs have led to radical changes in the way people communicate and interact. In the last few years the social networking tools gained a lot of attention and started to be used in educational settings.

Nowadays there are many communication tools available to connect with others at any time. One of the most well-known social networking tools that has a huge number of users is Facebook which is created by Mark Zuckerberg, a former Harvard University student in Feb 2004.

Facebook is one of the most utilized forms of social media that navigation generates habits, and the behaviors and reasons for accessing this social platform are becoming more and more diverse (Gherheş and Obrad , 2016).

Facebook allows its users to create a 'profile' whereby they can communicate with friends and family through 'Facebook chat' or by means of their 'wall', where they can post statuses, photos and comments.

Facebook allows the general public to access personal information unless viewing restrictions are placed by the individual with the account. Such information may be considered personal, such as comment and photographs.

The aim of this study was to assess the level of online professionalism on Facebook profiles available for public viewing of students from IIS, NSTU.

TABLE I OBSERVATIONAL CHECKPOINTS

Checkpoints	Options under the Checkpoints
Gender	Male
	Female
Year	1st Year
	2nd Year
Facebook Profile Name	Official Name
	Pseudonym
Profile Picture	recognizable Photograph
	unrecognizable Photograph
	Objectionable material
Accessibility	publicly accessible,
	totally blocked.
	blocked some contents
Friend list	Visible
	invisible
Profile contains department/ university name	Yes
	No
Personal post	Yes
	No
Departmental notice share	Yes
	No
Professional news related post	Yes
	No
Political post	Yes
	No
Sexual status	Yes
	No
Objectionable post	Yes
	No

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to assess students' presence on Facebook and the extent of their activity, with particular reference to online professionalism.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the social networking tools used by the students of IIS, NSTU;
2. Categorize the information provided in their personal profile, of their behavior of accessing and using Facebook;
3. Identify the level of educational purpose do students in the Institute of Information Sciences use Facebook.
4. Determine the role of students played through Facebook in professional development.

III. METHODS

It was an observational study which systematically evaluated the Facebook profiles of all enrolled students at IIS, NSTU, and data were collected from the publicly visible materials. Each profile was subsequently scored with regard to professionalism based on some categories. Profiles were categorized as 'private' or 'public'. Demographic details, accessibility, mention of being an IIS/NSTU student, and photographs/comments of personal, professional, political, unprofessional behavior were recorded for each individual Facebook profile. One week later, the Facebook search was repeated to validate the data. Each profile was subsequently scored with regard to professionalism, based on the following rating system mentioned in Table I.

The only data which was analyzed was the information that students made publically available and did not require special permission from the students. Every registered student of IIS was searched on Facebook individually by each author using the newly created Facebook account. Names which produced multiple results were narrowed down by network, affiliation, institution or current location to identify the correct profile. Data were analyzed using MS Excel.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Networking Sites (SNS) are web based services that allow users to create online profiles, connect with other users and view and interact with content posted on these sites (Boyd &Ellison, 2008). In terms of global reach, Facebook is the most popular SNS in the world (Tunick *et al*, 2011). When it was created, Facebook was designed specifically for university students, with the goal of facilitating social interactions in a secure way, a space reserved for students (Boyd, 2007). Current estimates suggest that up to 95% of university students use Facebook, with the majority of them accessing their profile more than once a day (Peluchette & Karl, 2008, Cain *et al.* 2009).

Zinyeredzi and Zinn (2016) surveyed on the use of web 2.0 technologies by library and information science students. The results revealed that between 72% and 97% of library students held accounts on the following Web 2.0 technologies: YouTube, Skype, Google Apps, WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook.

The average Facebook user regularly posts content in their profile, including status updates that serve as a continuous commentary on the individual's life, provide links to external content of interest, join groups sharing a common interest or affiliation and publish photos and videos of themselves and their friends (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Nason, Byrne, Nason and O'Connell conducted an assessment of professionalism on Facebook on 287 students from the University Dental School. The results showed that 62% had a Facebook account. 3% had a public account (fully accessible) while 97% had a private account (limited access); 36% of students mentioned the dental hospital in their profile; 34% had questionable content on their profile and 25% had non-professional photographs on their profile.

Gupta, Singh and Dhaliwal (2015) conducted a survey of Facebook profiles and e-professionalism among

undergraduate medical students in India. The results showed that 611 students, 477 (78.1%) had detectable Facebook profiles. Out of 477 profiles, date of birth, address, email, phone number, religion and political opinions were rarely shared; sexual orientation and relationship status were displayed on about one-third of the profiles. Most of our students use Facebook's privacy settings to hide some content from others. Non-professional content was rarely visible in the profile of the stranger. Thompson et al. conducted a study of medical students and found that 37.3% of their participants kept their Facebook accounts confidential, compared to 97% of our cohort. The presence of non-professional online behaviors varied considerably between the two studies. An in-depth analysis of ten students was conducted using a random number generator; they scored 30% of unprofessional behavior (anything that could be interpreted as illustrating substance abuse, sexism, racism or disrespect for patients) in their study, compared to 3% having a "definitive violation" of professionalism and In our study, 34% had a "questionable" violation of professionalism.

Walton, White, and Ross (2015) studied the evaluation of an educational intervention to promote the appropriate use of privacy settings by medical students on social networking sites. A systematic search of the public Facebook profiles of each member of the class was performed and data was collected on the types of publicly visible material. Of the 152 students in the class, profiles were found for 121 (79.8%). The majority of students used appropriate restrictive privacy settings; However, a significant minority had publicly visible information, including comments, photographs, location, and medical student status. Educational innovation was well received, with more than 90% of students recognizing that this topic was important and well treated. A follow-up search revealed that many students had changed their privacy settings to make less information available to the public.

Hinck and Evans (2012) conducted an observational study on the use and professionalism of Facebook among CAM students, which consisted of systematically evaluating the Facebook profiles of all students enrolled in an accredited CAM institution, regarding the type and professionalism of the content that can be viewed publicly. The content was considered unprofessional if there was evidence of alcohol consumption, reported sexuality, coarse language or gestures, violence or breaches of patient privacy. Results of the 744 students enrolled, 57% of the identity could be confirmed, with publicly available Facebook profiles. The majority of this non-professional content involved photos showing alcohol consumption. Violations of patient privacy were found in 1% of sites, but only in chiropractic.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There is a total of 123 (62+61) students in the Institute of Information Sciences [25.2% (n = 31) 1st year students, 39.8% (n = 49) 2nd year students and 34.9% (n=43) 3rd year

students] were included in the survey. A total of 28 (18%) Facebook users were excluded from the study as multiple results were found for their name that could not be recognized as a verifiable account. Demographic details are listed in figure 1.
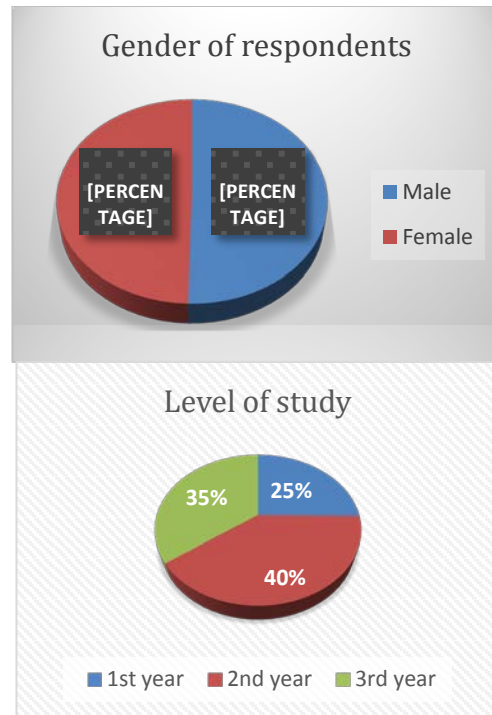

Fig.1 Demographic detailed of respondents

94.31% (n = 116) of students mentioned the official name and only 5.69 have used pseudonym as their profile name. Regarding profile picture, 63.4% (n=78) photograph are recognizable, 35.77% (n=44) unrecognizable and a very few 0.82% (n=1) is objectionable as profile picture including alcohol.

In regards of Facebook contents, 55.28% (n=58) contents were publicly accessible, 37.40% (n=46) contents were somewhat block and a few 7.32% (n=9) were fully block.

Only fourteen students (11.38%) have their friend list visible, most of the students' [(n=109) 88.62%] friend list were invisible.

84.55% (n=104) students share departmental post. The highest rate was of personal post 90.24% (n=111). 64.23% (79) students shared departmental notice. 14.63% (18) students post/ share professional news; the rate of political post was only 8.13% (n=10), sexual post was 0.81% (n=1) and objectionable post was 4.07% (n=5).

VI. CONCLUSION

The use of Facebook is widespread amongst LIS students. Despite the use of standard security settings, a low level of

unprofessional content was also visible. Students need to be fully aware of their professional responsibility in the setting of social media. Based on our findings, the institute of information sciences needs to consider an educational module regarding the management of personal profiles in a professional setting for future benefits of students.

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