FACEBOOK: LECTURERS' PERSONALITY, CREDIBILITY AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCES

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on how social media precisely Facebookis used as a tool of communication between lecturers and students. Personality of lecturerson Social Network Sites (SNS) effects the academic performances of studentshas been researched, but the focus on credibility calls for further exploration. Hence thispaper presents a conceptual framework to examine how the lecturers'personalityon Facebook challenges their credibility among students' and how it affects the students' performances. The fundamental of Big Five Personality Theory (B5PT) with Communication Privacy Management theory (CPM) and Social Network Theory (SNT)along with the Theory of Performance (ToP) contribute to the conceptual framework incorporating the role of motivation as a moderating factor.

Keywords: Facebook, Lecturers' credibility, Students' performance, personality Big 5 theory, theory of Performance

1. Introduction

Being the most preferred Social Network Site (SNS) Facebook has reached it 1.11billion user as of March 2013 (Statistic Brain.com). From staying connected with family and friends and finding lost friends to business use, now the education industry is using Facebook actively as a mode to serve the students better. Lecturers are using Facebook as a platform to interact and communicate with students. Many university and college lecturers and students see this as a norm to interact that enables them to obtain immediate question and answer session.

By engaging in SNS sites precisely Facebook,one's identity or personality becomes public, therefore what is being seen in the Facebook profile of lecturers and students gives an immediate perception about their lifestyle.This exposure bring both positive and negative towards the lecturer-student relationship. Research has been conducted on lecturers' personality on SNS that affects the academic performance of students, but further exploration is needed, looking at the credibility of the lecturers that actively interact with students via Facebook and how does it differ from offline conversation.

According to Larry D. Rosen (2007), the current student generation are known as 'Net Generation' where their live is active in social media and being able to multitask while studying. Therefore keeping up to this generation lecturers need to be internet savvy and create a convenient and conducive learning environment for students. Besides, exposure of the lecturers'personality becomes the initial stage of motivating factor for students to enhance their performance at school.

Initially Facebook as an online directory for college students for keeping in contact with friends in school require users to have ".edu" address to create profile until the year 2006 and now it became the largest social network site. Therefore the predominance of Facebook indicates the necessity for using them in classroom to continue engaging with students.Lipka (2007) has reported that adults are a fast growing group on *Facebook*, identifying teaching staff from higher education as amongst this group. More specifically, in research conducted for Pearson Education, Tinti-Kane, Seaman & Levy (2010) report that 80% of educators have at least one social network account, that *Facebook* is the most popular of these, and that 30% of the educators use these social networks to communicate with students.

Lewis and Nichols (2012), indicated that overall, students had positive attitudes toward using social media in the classroom, and having experience of using social media to study improved the positive attitudes as well. Besides, faculty members and students might have different perceptions of social media. According to Rolbyer*et al.*(2010) explained students in general were more open to the idea of using Facebook as a study material compared to professors. On a different view, Munoz and Towner (2011), the proponents of Facebook for blended learning, stated that students should not be required to join Facebook pages of instructors because of privacy and other issues that mainly challengelecturers' credibility.

Based on the above issues, this study aims to address the gaps in the literature by presenting a conceptual framework comprising three major variables: lecturers'personality (LP), credibility and students' performances (SP). Rationales behind each relationship backed by fundamental theories, as well as limitations in the past literatures in terms of concept will be discussed in the following section.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Social Network Theory (SNT)

Basically there are two elements in any social network, online or offline: **nodes** and **ties**. Nodes are the elements of the network that "act" - whether they are organizations, small groups, or individuals - and ties are the ways these nodes relate to each other (Gray Miller). In this case Facebook is connecting students and lecturers in an online setting and a face to face communication in an offline environment.

The intensity and importance vary according to variables that can factor into social network theory. The dots in the network come in varying sizes and colours which are connected by lines of deferring in lengths and thicknesses. One of the defining elements of social network theory that differentiates it from other sociological sciences is the weight it gives to the relationships between the nodes, as opposed to the attributes of the nodes themselves. For an example, many has posited that their success has less to do with the degree they earn as compared to making contacts while they were in university. While this is useful to explain many social phenomena, it is also criticized for making the individual seem less able to shape their own destiny - putting the emphasis on a person's place in the network as opposed to their own attributes. (Gray Miller)

Researchers use social network theory to examine families, social groups, companies, organizations, and even countries. In the online world, it is possible to take a broader view of the many ways people meet and connect on the Internet. (Gray Miller)

2.2 The Big 5 Personality Theory (B5PT)

The Big 5 personality (B5PT) consists of Openness, Contentiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (OCEAN). Openness consists of creativity, intellectualism, and preference for novelty. Conscientiousness is reflected in discipline, responsibility, and orderliness. Extraversion is characterized by sociability, energy, and talkativeness. Agreeableness involves warmth, cooperativeness, and helpfulness. Neuroticism is characterized by anxiety, moodiness, and emotional instability (John &Srivastava, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1997).

In this study, the researcher is interested in testifying lecturers'personality using B5PT and which component in B5PT will best fit the characteristic of a lecturer. Past research indicates conscientious individuals are cautious in their online self-presentation. Neuroticism, agreeableness, and extraversion were positively associated with the tendency to express one's actual self. Neuroticism was positively associated with the expression of ideal and hidden self-aspects. (Gwendolyn Seidman, 2012) Gosling (2003) also mentioned that most people tend to judge a person's personality thru Facebook user's profile. On another note, Feist and Feist, 2009 mentioned that there are no single definition is acceptable to all personality theorists, and that it's a pattern of relatively permanent traits and unique characteristics that give both consistency and individuality to a person's behavior. Therefore, lecturers seem to be judged by students all the time.

By using Facebook as a medium to interact, both lecturers and students wished to keep their relationships professional, and therefore agreed that being a friend in Facebook is more appropriate once students have graduated. Thus, professors no longer have control over course grades and cannot exhibit any bias towards students. (Danielle Schwager, Jen Scott, &Corie Steinke) and indirectly contribute to maintenances of professionalism. Mazer, Murphy, and Simonds (2007)found that in their research, students were very concerned with faculty professionalism on Facebook and thought that faculty should only disclose appropriate information which doesn't tarnish their image as a faculty.

According to Lipka (2007) faculty can use Facebook to schedule meetings and start new kinds of educational relationships with their students.When Facebook first appeared, the concern was keeping students from posting too much information. Now, administration is seeing an increase in issues regarding professors and staff posting too much information as well. Four years ago, 8% of adults had a profile on a social network, but that number had boomed to 35% (Young, 2009). Students are reacting negatively to professors who share certain kinds of information.

With this, the lecturers' credibility is put to test. If lecturers were to disclose more information and portray a different outlook in online personality as compare to offline personality especially during lecture this will lead to uncertainty of the lecturers' credibility. Students also believed that faculty must look at what they post on Facebook, and how that may affect students' perception of them(Mazer, Murphy, and Simonds (2007)). Although there may be potential for college faculty and staff to have problems due to Facebook with posting or self-disclosure, Young (2009) finds it is critically important to master the Facebook application then to ignore it, being reason that social media plays an important role in education in the new era.

Therefore, the suitable personality for lecturers to be portrait in Facebook would be openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness as compare to extraversion and neuroticism. Each characteristic as mentioned above in the given personality is much suited for a lecturer to uphold their credibility. Nevertheless, students expect their teachers to self-disclose both content-based and relationship-based information to help themlearn (Frymier& Houser, 2000), researchers have found there is a curvilinear relationship between the lecturers' self-disclosure and the degree to which studentsadore them (Sorensen, 1989). This raises the question if student gets comfortable getting to know more about the lecturer or vice versa.

2.3 Credibility

Credibility is a quality of trusted and believable (web dic.com). J.P. Mazer *et al.* cited McCroskey and Teven (1999) on teachers' credibility is the perceived by studentson the level of competence, trustworthiness,and caring. He further added *competence* refers to the extent to which a teacher is perceived toknow what he or she is talking about, *trustworthiness* is the degree to whichthe teacher is perceived as honest and *caring* refers to the extent to which the teacher isperceived to have the students' best interests in mind.

Past research connects credibility with the attribute as mention above. Further it has been tested using Teven and McCroskey's (1997)measure of credibility. The instrument is composed of 18, seven-step semantic-differentialscales, six each for the *competence* (intelligent/unintelligent, inexpert/expert,competent/incompetent, uninformed/informed, bright/stupid, and untrained/trained); *trustworthiness* (untrustworthy/trustworthy, phony/genuine, dishonest/honest, moral/immoral, honorable/dishonorable, unethical/ethical); and *caring* (insensitive/sensitive,cares about me/does not care about me, self-centered/not self-centered,concerned with me/not concerned with me, not understanding/understanding, has myinterests at heart/does not have my interests at heart) dimensions(J.P. Mazer *et al.*).

Therefore the researcher aims to see the correlation between B5PT and credibility and what are the other attribute that makes the connection to credibility of a lecturer.

2.4 Communication Privacy Management (CPM)

Communication Privacy Management theory describes the ways people manage their privacy boundaries and the disclosure of private information. The theory focuses on the processes that people employ to determine when and how they choose to conceal or reveal private information. According to Petronio 2002, privacy and openness are dialectic within various relationship models. She further explains how relationships develop as public and private boundaries are negotiated and coordinated. She demonstrates how individuals regulate revealing and concealing information through communication.(Wikipedia)

For example, Rebecca A. & Angela M. quoted McBride and Wahl(2005) used CPM Theory as an explanatory framework to clarify their findingsregarding teachers' management of classroom disclosures. They found that teachersrevealed private information about their familial relationships, emotions, everydayactivities, and life experiences, but did not share personal disclosures (e.g., salary)or information about negative relationships, sex, or any information they believedcould damage their credibility.

Therefore it is said that lecturerscan manage their information on Facebook and not to publicise their private information.

2.5 Theory of Performance (ToP)

The Theory of Performance (ToP) develops and relates six foundational concepts which is context, level of knowledge, levels of skills, level of identity, personal factors, and fixed factors is used to form a framework that can be used to explain performance as well as performance improvements. (Don Elger, 2011)

Generally ToP is used in all performance measurement, from the range of job performance to students studying performance. As for this research, the researcher implies ToP in students' performance and every component in ToP will be measured in accordance to students as the subject. On another note, Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1993) in Beran, Violato, Kline and Frideres, (2009) identified lecturer and student social interaction asimportant in facilitatingstudents'learning.

Past research findings indicates student-teacher communication on Facebook was almost similar to their communication in class; this is to support students' both academically and emotionally and further contribute to their well-being.

Therefore, the researcher would like to see how do lecturers' credibility effects students'' performance overall in the social media world.

2.6 Hypothesized relationship between B5PT, SNT, ToP and CPM

The entire framework is supported by SNT, which connect lecturer and students via social media, Facebook. Past research proposed lecturers have openness, contentiousness and agreeableness via the formation of lecturers' personality using the B5PT. Researcher would like to further test on extraversion and neuroticism and how it will justify the personality of a lecturer. Further CMP theory will be used to manage B5PT and control the level of exposure and maintain privacy of lecturers' personality.
The attributesin B5PT determines the credibility of the lecturer as in how competent, trustworthiness and caring the lecturer is.

P1[abc]:   There's positive relationship between lecturers' credibility (competence[a], trustworthiness[b]&caring[c]) and lecturers' personality.

Upon looking at the credibility of the lecturer, students are motivated to perform well in class. The motivation of a student is categorised in three levels as in high, low and medium.

P2:   The positive relationship between lecturers' credibility and students' performance is moderates by motivation factor.
P3[abc]:   There's positive relationship between lecturers' credibility (competence[a], trustworthiness[b]&caring[c]) andstudents' performance.

Therefore this contributesto the increase of students' performance which is controlled by ToP within six components.

Based on the proposed relationships above, figure 1 represents the working framework of this research.
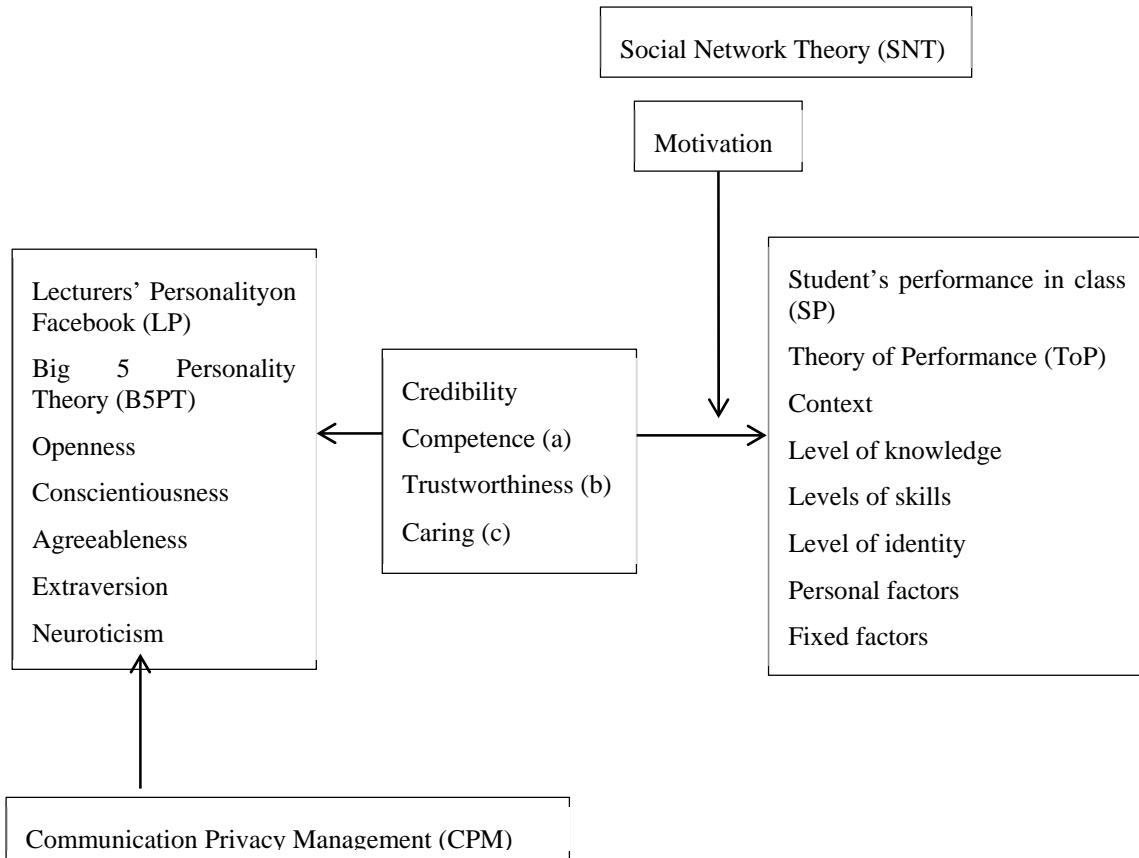
Figure1: Conceptual Model

3. Conclusion

The proposed framework is useful for a better understanding of the implication of lecturers' personality (LP) on SNS especially Facebook that challenges the lecturers' credibility and affects students' performance (SP). Discussion revealed in this paper address the existing knowledge gap in terms of application of the theories for the three major concepts (LP, credibility and SP) in the media communication literature from the social network sites (SNS) perspective. At this point in time, a major limitation of this paper is attributed that the conceptual research model proposed (Figure 1) is yet to be empirically tested. Since the proposed relationship in the research model has not been established in past literatures, this conceptual framework would be beneficial for the enrichment of lecturer-student relationship in an online communication and students' performances literatures. Practically, the outcomes of this research would facilitate online education engagement and enhance a better understanding of education quality.

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