ADULT LEARNERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF USING SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS IN THEIR LEARNING PROCESSES

Authors: Elizabeth Ochola¹,Dorothy Omollo², Nobert Basweti³

Abstract

Social networks are increasingly gaining importance in higher education by offering learners opportunity to virtually interact with colleagues and lecturers. The ability to leverage Social Networking Sites (SNS) for meaningful learning activities has the potential to benefit the modern adult learner who has to balance a career, family obligations, and the goals of attending college. This paper is a case study that highlights the use of Google Plus and Whatsup in the learning processes of MBA students at the University of Nairobi. The participants of this study were drawn from the MBA evening class of 500 students between ages 19 and 49 years. The research used a single quantitative and qualitative case study approach to explore the benefits associated with incorporating social networking functionalities within an adult’s learning experience; the preferred social networking sites and why? ; Adult learners experiences in utilizing social networking services; the pros and cons of using the social networks in learning. The findings reveal positive uptake with a few challenges including: computer illiteracy, resistance to new technology, concerns for privacy and information overload from lecturers’ posts.

Key Words: Social networking tools, Adult learning, perception

¹ PhD Student( Communication Studies- Moi University); MA Linguistics and African Languages), Assistant Lecturer, Department of Communication Skills and Studies, University of Nairobi, P O Box 30197-00100 Nairobi, Kenya. Email:elizabeth.aua@uonbi.ac.ke or elizabeth.nyarose@gmail.com Tel.+254 721 553609

² PhD Communication Studies, Lecturer, Department of Communication Skills and Studies University of Nairobi, P O Box 30197-00100 Nairobi, Kenya.

³ MA Linguistics and African Languages), Assistant Lecturer, Department of Communication Skills and Studies, University of Nairobi, P O Box 37788-00100 Nairobi, Kenya. Email: norbert.ombati@uonbi.ac.ke or nobersweti@gmail.com, Cell phone: +254 723 743 927