# Knowledge Acquisition through Social Media towards Academic Performance among Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to investigate knowledge acquisition using social media among final semester students in the Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). This study used a survey method to collect data. A total of 173 respondents answered to this survey questionnaire which was a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire measures the methods of knowledge acquisition through social media, factors influencing knowledge acquisition through social media, and students' academic performance who acquire knowledge through social media. The results showed that respondents quite agree on the methods of knowledge acquisition through social media (Mean=3.35) and factors influencing knowledge acquisition (Mean=3.49) and about their academic performance (Mean=3.83). The implication of the study is that the academic institutions and organizations can use this study in enhancing the students' academic performance and productivity in the organization by using social media as a medium to acquire knowledge.

For future study, the study can highlight on barriers in knowledge acquisition through social media and extending the target population to the employees in the organizations.

**Keywords:** Knowledge acquisition, Social media, Methods of knowledge acquisition, Factors influencing knowledge acquisition, Students' academic performance

## 1. Introduction

Social Media (SM) nowadays has become a trend among the societies regardless of what background they are from. The revolution of social media has started to align with the Internet. There are various types of social media that have been introduced to the public such as collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia), blogs and micro blogs (for example, Twitter), social news networking sites (for example, Digg and Leakernet) content communities (for example, YouTube and DailyMotion) and social networking sites (for example, Facebook)**.** Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."

Meanwhile, knowledge acquisition can be defined as accepting knowledge from the external environment and transforming it so that it can be used by an organization (Liao et al., 2010). Knowledge acquisition through social media is a new approach for the societies nowadays. Majority of the society have access to social media, therefore some of the societies must have the thirst for knowledge. So they will try to acquire new knowledge through mediums that they have been familiar with such as Blogs, Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, and Wikipedia. Most of the students in the higher education nowadays took the advantage of the social media to distribute and acquire knowledge among them. However, to acquire knowledge through social media there are a lot of problems and challenges faced in order to obtain the right and useful knowledge.

Knowledge acquisition at an individual level is composed of two crucial elements. The first element is change in the cognitive structure or the mental model. Since knowledge is justified, belief in what is the truth (Nonaka, 1994), acquiring knowledge means that individuals change their cognitive structure by justifying their personal belief that the acquired knowledge is true (Gray & Meister, 2004).

There are several methods of knowledge acquisition that can be done. One of the method is observation. As mentioned by Kosso (2011), observation is the active acquisition of information from a primary source. In living beings, observation employs the senses. In science, observation can also involve the recording of data via the use of instruments. The term may also refer to any data collected during the scientific activity.

According to a study by Kawulich (2005), humans can acquire knowledge through observation but only certain knowledge will be stored and others will be lost in time. Based on the result, 100 percent of the respondents can acquire knowledge through observation, but on the other hand, the amounts of knowledge acquired were totally different from each

respondent.

Moreover, self-motivation, current trends, and people are some of the factors that influence knowledge acquisition. Evans (2004) identified 5 major trends in education that influences student to acquire knowledge through social media which are personal access to mobile devices, internet connectivity, use of video for classwork and homework, mobile devices for schoolwork and using different tools for different tasks.

Meanwhile, the purpose of the study is to investigate knowledge acquisition using social media among final semester students in the Program of Bachelor of Science in Library and Information Management, Bachelor of Science in Information Systems Management and Bachelor of Science in Records Management in Faculty of Information Management in University Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Puncak Perdana, Shah Alam. The objectives are:

1. To identify the methods students use to acquire knowledge through social media

2. To examine the factors that influence students to acquire knowledge through social media

3. To identify students' academic performance who acquire knowledge through social media

## 2. Methods

Data was collected through survey method by using questionnaires. The sample consists of 303 students from the Program of Bachelor of Science in Library and Information Management, Bachelor of Science in Information Systems Management and Bachelor of Science in Records Management in Faculty of Information Management. From the feedback, one hundred and seventy three (57%) of the questionnaire were returned and usable for analysis. The questionnaire items were designed on a 1 (strongly disagree) through 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale. For data analysis, descriptive statistics includes mean and standard deviation.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Reliability Test

Table 1: Reliability Test Result

| Variable | Number of Statement | Cronbach Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Methods of Knowledge Acquisition through Social Media | 7 | .903 |
| Factors Influencing Knowledge Acquisition through Social Media | 5 | .725 |
| Students' Academic Performance | 6 | .839 |

Table 1 outlined the scales of all variables from the results of Cronbach's alpha. It can be summarized that Cronbach's alpha value of methods of knowledge acquisition through social media (0.903), factors influencing knowledge acquisition through social media (0.725) and students' academic performance (0.839) exceed 0.7 thus satisfying the validity assumptions of the items in the respective dimensions.

*3.2. Methods of Knowledge Acquisition through Social Media*

Table 2: Mean score for methods of knowledge acquisition through social media

| No. | Statement | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I frequently seek information through social media. | 3.82 | .977 |
| 2. | I frequently ask for information through social media. | 3.45 | .885 |
| 3. | I frequently create conclusion from my experiment, observational study or field study. | 3.36 | .842 |
| 4. | I frequently share my knowledge through social media. | 3.36 | .841 |
| 5. | I frequently test my hypothesis by an experiment, observational study or field study. | 3.30 | .837 |
| 6. | I frequently make prediction on logical consequence from my hypothesis. | 3.13 | .811 |
| 7. | I frequently make hypothesis regarding to information from social media. | 3.02 | .985 |
| | **Overall mean score** | **3.35** | **.882** |

Table 2 shows the overall mean score of 3.35 which indicates that respondents quite agree with the statements on methods of knowledge acquisition through social media. The mean scores for all items are between 3.02 to 3.82 and this indicates that they quite agree with all the statements. By individual statements, the highest mean score is for *I frequently seek information through social media* (mean=3.82) followed by *I frequently ask for information through social media* (mean=3.45). The statement on *I frequently make hypothesis regarding to information from social media* (mean=3.02) is the lowest, but it still indicates that respondents tend to quite agree with the methods of knowledge acquisition through social media.

*3.3. Factors Influencing Knowledge Acquisition through Social Media*

Table 3: Mean score for factors influencing knowledge acquisition through social media

| No. | Statement | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I frequently have Internet connectivity in my daily life. | 4.17 | .903 |
| 2. | I frequently have personal access to social media applications. | 4.03 | .879 |
| 3. | My friends encourage me to seek information through social media. | 3.34 | .917 |
| 4. | My lecturers encourage me to seek information through social media. | 3.03 | .967 |
| 5. | My parents encourage me to seek information through social media. | 2.92 | 1.012 |
| | **Overall mean score** | **3.49** | **0.935** |

Table 3 presents the overall mean score of 3.49 which indicates that respondents quite agree with the statements on factors influencing knowledge acquisition through social media. The mean scores for all items on factors that influence respondents to acquire knowledge through social media are wide ranging which is between 2.92 to 4.17. By individual statements, respondents agree that they frequently have Internet connectivity in their daily life (mean=4.17) and frequently have personal access to social media applications (mean=4.03). They quite agree that their friends encourage them to seek information through social media (mean=3.34) and their lecturers encourage them to seek information through social media (mean=3.03). However, they do not agree that their parents encourage them to seek information through social media (mean=2.92).

*3.4. Students' Academic Performance Who Acquires Knowledge Through Social Media*

Table 4: Mean score for students' academic performance who acquire knowledge through social media

| No. | Statement | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | My GPA grade improved. | 3.95 | .776 |
| 2. | I frequently provide useful information in class discussion. | 3.92 | .699 |
| 3. | My assignment grade improved. | 3.87 | .728 |
| 4. | My CGPA grade improved. | 3.85 | .740 |
| 5. | I frequently participated in class discussion. | 3.73 | .820 |
| 6. | My mid-term test grade improved. | 3.71 | .699 |
| | **Overall mean score** | **3.83** | **.743** |

Table 4 demonstrates the overall mean score of 3.83 which indicates that respondents quite agree with the statements on students' academic performance. The mean scores for all items are between 3.71 to 3.95 and this indicates they quite agree with the six of the statements. Based on all the six statements, the mean score is highest for *My GPA grade improved* (mean=3.95) followed by *I frequently provide useful information in class discussion* (mean=3.92). Although the statement on *My mid-term test grade improved* (mean=3.71) is the lowest, it still indicates that respondents quite agree with the statement.

## 4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that majority of the students know how to acquire knowledge using the social media as a medium. Furthermore, having access to various technological devices give the easiness to the students to acquire knowledge through social media. Besides, having Internet connectivity are the major factors that influence students to acquire knowledge through social media. Majority of the respondents agreed their academic performance improve when using social media as medium to acquire knowledge. The output of the study is expected to enhance the students' academic performance and productivity in the organization by using social media as a medium to acquire knowledge.

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