Research Article

Social Networks and Interpersonal Relations in Higher Education

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Abstract

This work identifies the use of social networks and interpersonal relationships in the teachers and students of an Institution of Higher Education. The research was carried out in the Academic Unit of Education of the Catholic University of Cuenca, to determine to what extent the social networks influence the interpersonal relations of students and teachers. This is quantitative research that is based on bibliographical and descriptive research. The technique used was the survey, and as an instrument, a questionnaire of multiple-choice questions addressed to the students and teachers of the Academic Unit of Education. In conclusion, I emphasize that the social networks have become part of the daily life of all the university actors of this research that evidences that the minion that a student reaches to interact with others through the networks is 1 to 10 times a day, instead in the teachers it can be observed that they interact more than 21 times a day.

Keywords: Social Medial; Interpersonal Relations; Global Communication; Mobile Technology

Introduction

The composition of this research-based article addresses the issue of social networks and interpersonal relations in Higher Education, is justified by the fact that it is one of the most common problems today, it looks for to overcome the deficiency that exists when interacting face-to-face, whether they are teachers or students at the Academic Unit of Education of the Catholic University of Cuenca.

The research identifies the measure and with what intention students and teachers use social networks and it's in interpersonal relations because these are pages that were created to "help" have more contact between people, whether they are known or not.

The study aims to help students become aware of social networks, knowing that they are of daily use and currently considered "necessary" because of a particular dependency that has been created and has even caused mismanagement, which leads to bad decisions and therefore has negative effects on life projects.

This project aims to promote awareness of the use and the abuse of access to social networks and the excessive use that can affect interpersonal relationships; for this purpose, the research had the help, collaboration, and disposition of the members that integrate the Academic Unit of Education of the Catholic University of Cuenca; Likewise, there were no economic impediments, since the investigator covered the costs.

Concerning the problem being addressed, several authors have published the results of various investigations and their criteria.

The impact of mobile technology use and interpersonal relationships, investigated in México, they say that the mobile phone is an instrument used to accompany young people in their daily activities, as the vast majority occupies it for most of the day, They also tell us that it went from being an interpersonal communication device to becoming a platform of high complexity [1].

The cellphones smartphones affect young university students in a positive way in their interpersonal relationships, presenting a series of conflicts, and these can vary depending on the sex as here women predominate as they are less tolerant of being occupied in their presence [2].

High school adolescents with internet and social network addiction and interpersonal relationships, researched in the City of Cuenca-Ecuador, states that today technology has made several significant advances, as the social networks, as these have become one of the most essential tools for communication, especially in adolescence as this is considered a vulnerable age because it can cause some addiction [3].

Nowadays social networks have become more complex and useful, that is why its use is continuous, causing people to increasingly lose interest in leading a life outside of social networks, as they begin to take an absolute disinterest in what's going on around them, and without realizing it, we are immersed in and dependent on using them in a "sickly" way because when we move away from reality, it takes us apart from our family, friends, etc.

Most of the time we put aside the things that should matter to us, like our health and our relationships, for using social networks to be supposedly "trendy", "because my friends do it", or to get the attention of others, users of these networks, so the question is: How do social networks influence interpersonal relationships in the teachers and students of an Institution of Higher Education?

Social networks

Social networks are services that help people build a profile within the internet; this can be public or private, where people post to share any information where it can articulate a list of friends or users where a connection is established, in short, these are virtual spaces to facilitate the interaction of people [4].

In today's society, we find it difficult to think of a life without technology, since the internet, social networks have a confident presence in our daily lives that is unimaginable since they are growing along with the new generations, as children and young people choose these networks as tools [5].

Now, social networks should not be seen merely as tools, because as we know, it is one of the easiest and fastest ways we have to communicate and interact with other people, but we must bear in mind that these do have consequences because when we use them excessively, we fall into an addiction and no longer use them only as a communication tool, but as a daily need.

In the case of students in our time, they use them as we said for communication, but today they also occupy them because of the ease they give to develop learning activities without the need for pre-specialization, either synchronously or asynchronously.

Likewise, teachers have been adapting to these techniques, since they are now creating groups on different types of virtual platforms, to be able to communicate not only during school hours but also outside of them.

We have to take into account that social networks have influenced us in a certain way since with these we not only play the role of receivers as other media such as TV or radio, but with them we assume the role of sender and receiver, and this makes it possible for users to share experiences or opinions.

"Users no longer play a single role as receivers - a position they had barely abandoned in the communication process of the traditional media-, but take on the part of both receiver and sender, an almost innate alternation to interpersonal communication which now moves into global communication, which, applied to the media, has led to the coining of terms such as 'prosumer', a user who is not only a consumer but also a creator of content" [6].

Types of social networks
There are three types
Professional Networks

These networks allow to know a full list of professionals, the people who access these publish their résumé for interaction and search of job opportunities; these have an internal search engine that allows you to track a contact base through the name of a particular company or university, such as: LinkedIn, Xing, Viadeo [4].

It should be stressed that these networks, like the others, will always be updated continuously, Here we can create different forums on various topics, also recommend specific articles to other contacts, ask friends for recommendations, the users of this social network give themselves a chance to meet in the professional area, for example, when we are going through an employment crisis.

General network

Those who enter this type of network do so to get in touch with other people who may or may not be in the area; the purpose is to communicate or share photos, music, videos and personal information, This type of network has generated some mistrust, as users run the risk of not knowing for sure who is on the other side of the screen, for example, MySpace, Facebook, Tuenti, Hi5 [4].

Specialized networks

Today it is found networks that are determined to a particular social or economic activity; These make it possible to satisfy an inherent human need to be part of groups with common characteristics and interests, for example, Ediciona, eBuga, Cinema VIP [4].

These types of networks are considered for all people who want to create a personal account, which means it doesn't matter if you're going to meet people, look for a job or upload photos and videos to share with your contacts.

What are interpersonal relations?

Interpersonal relationships are a basic need for individuals; there are several factors involved, such as personality and cognitive functions. Relationships create a character and in them, they can be modified.

Interpersonal relationships play a fundamental role in the integral development of people; through this, the individual reinforces his social environment and also favours his adaptation. All of us establish various types of relationships throughout our lives, with our parents, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, etc. And with them, we share ideas, comments and even ways of seeing life, it is known as interpersonal relationships [7].

Man has always needed to communicate with other people, to be able to express their ideas or opinions, and even more their feelings, that is why interpersonal relationships play a fundamental role in human development because if we don't communicate with others, we'll feel lonely and sad, we wouldn't be able to express our emotions, we'd be leading an empty life.

Interpersonal relationships are what benefit our social environment, our adaptation and improve our quality of life since these are present from the day we are born until the last day of our life, since we need to make friends, empathize with other people, we need a stimulating environment.

The general objective of the research is to identify the use of social networks and interpersonal relationships in the teachers and students of a Higher Education Institution and the specific goals are: to know the theoretical and scientific contents that support the social networks and the interpersonal relations and to find out the use of the social networks in the interpersonal relationships of teachers and students of the Academic Unit of Education of the Catholic University of Cuenca.

Method

The research project is quantitative and is nothing more than "a unique methodology that is the same as that of the exact and natural sciences and its purpose is to seek an explanation for phenomena by establishing regularities in them" [8], and this is based on literature research that is "a detailed description of a certain topic that can plan different scenarios about development and that allows strategic decisions to be made" [9]. And descriptive, "it highlights the characteristics or features of the situation, phenomenon or object of study" [10].

The technique used was the survey, as an instrument a questionnaire of multiple-choice questions addressed to 206 students and 20 professors of the Academic Unit of Education of the Catholic University of Cuenca, These were validated by Mr Dean Engineer Pablo Cisneros Quintanilla and Mr Assistant Dean Dr Juan Fernando Pesántez Calle, The tabulation was done in Excel, and then the tables were elaborated by placing the frequency and the corresponding percentage.

Results

These results were elaborated with the information obtained through the survey; With a total of 15 mandatory items for students and a total of 13 articles for professors, these questions were designed specifically for the participants.

The survey was conducted with 215 students and 20 teachers. Here are the results obtained from the assessments issued by the respondents in a graphic form, including textual responses.

Surveys directed at students

Degree	Ciclo	Facebook		Google+		Instagram		YouTube		WhatsApp		Twitter	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Educational Psychology	Seventh	30	85	18	51	24	68	8	22	34	97	26	74
	Ninth	21	100	12	21	15	71	11	52	18	85	8	38
Total 56		51	91	30	53	39	69	19	33	52	92	34	60
Initial Education - Nursery School	First "A"	14	82	5	29	9	52	11	64	11	64	6	35
	First "B"	15	75	10	50	15	75	7	35	17	85	6	30
	Third	22	91	8	33	15	62	12	50	22	91	15	62
	Fifth	27	100	16	59	23	85	10	37	26	96	9	33
	Seventh	29	100	6	20	15	51	12	41	17	58	7	24
	Ninth	32	100	12	37	15	46	17	53	32	100	9	28
Total 149		139	93	57	38	92	61	69	41	125	83	52	33

Chart 1: In which of these networks do you have a personal account?

Source: "Student surveys." Made by: Authors, 2019.

When the students were asked in which of the networks they have a personal account, we could see that they all have at least 3 or 4 accounts activated, in the area of educational psychology with 92% using WhatsApp, followed by 91% using Facebook and 69% using Instagram. Now in the field of initial education have activated an account with 93% on Facebook, with 83% on WhatsApp, and 61% Instagram. It can be said that the networks that are most used by students are Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

When the students were asked about what they use the networks for, they pointed out above, in the area of educational psychology with 83% say, to keep in touch, as well as 89% in the field of pre-school and nursery education.

A significant difference was found in this response since students in the area of educational psychology with 27% answer "sometimes", whereas students in initial education and nursery school, with 82%, answer "always".

Degree	Semester	Keep in touch		Comment publications		Upload photos/ videos		To communicate with my family		To interact with my fellow students		To communicate with my friends	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Educational Psychology	Seventh	29	82	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	17
	Ninth	18	85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	14
Total 56		47	83	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	16
Initial Education - Nursery School	First "A"	13	74	0	0	1	5	2	11	0	0	1	5
	First "B"	12	60	0	0	2	10	3	15	0	0	3	15
	Third	15	62	0	0	1	4	1	4	2	8	5	20
	Fifth	20	74	3	11	1	3	3	11	0	0	0	0
	Seventh	25	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6
	Ninth	28	87	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	0	2	6
Total 149		113	89	3	2.01	5	3	11	7	2	1.34	15	10

Chart 2: From the above What do you use these social networks for?

Source: "Student surveys." Made by: Authors, 2019.

Degree	Semester	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
Educational Psychology	Seventh	13	37	19	54	3	8
	Ninth	10	47	8	38	3	14
Total 56		23	41	27	48	6	10
Initial Education - Nursery School	First "A"	8	47	9	52	0	0
	First "B"	11	55	9	45	0	0
	Third	8	20	14	58	2	8
	Fifth	14	51	12	44	1	3
	Seventh	16	55	13	44	0	0
	Ninth	25	78	3	9	4	12
Total 149		82	55	60	40	7	5

Chart 3: Have these networks helped you to interact better?

Source: "Student surveys." Made by: Authors, 2019.

	Semester	1-10 times		11-20 times		21 or more	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
Educational Psychology	Seventh	14	40	16	45	5	14
	Ninth	12	57	9	42	0	8
Total 56		26	46	25	44	5	29
Initial Education - Nursery School	First "A"	9	52	6	35	2	11
	First "B"	14	70	3	15	3	15
	Third	20	83	4	16	0	0
	Fifth	17	62	10	37	0	0
	Seventh	18	62	8	27	3	10
	Ninth	4	12	23	71	3	9
Total 149		82	55	54	36	11	7

Chart 4: How many times a day do you interact with other people through social networks?

Source: "Student surveys." Made by: Authors, 2019.

When the students were asked how many times a day you interact with other people through the social network's students in the area of educational psychology responded that from 1 to 10 times with 46%, Likewise, in the field of initial and nursery education, this response is 55%.

In the area of educational psychology, with 48% of students responding that they do not care whether or not they are active in social networks, with 39% respond that it is easier to communicate through these and with 28% they say that through the networks they can express what they feel with sincerity. Likewise, in the area of early childhood education, 55% responded that they did not care whether or not they were active in social networks, 37% say it is easier to communicate through social networks, and 19% can express their feelings with sincerity through these networks.

Surveys directed at professors

When professors were asked on which networks they have a personal account, they replied on Facebook, by 70% WhatsApp by

	Semester	I'm afraid of having physical contact with other people		I can't interact except through social media		I feel like I express myself better if it's through a screen		I have more friends now that I have social networks		It's easier to communicate through social networks		I can express what I feel with sincerity		I don't care whether or not I'm active in my social networks	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Educational Psychology	Seventh	2	5	1	2	6	17	3	8	10	28	8	22	20	57
	Ninth	3	14	1	4	2	9	1	4	12	57	8	38	7	33
Total 56		5	8	2	3	8	14	4	7	22	39	16	28	27	48
Initial Education - Nursery School	First "A"	1	5	1	5	4	23	0	0	6	35	4	23	12	70
	First "B"	1	5	0	0	3	15	1	57	8	40	4	20	11	55
	Third	3	12	0	0	1	4	1	4	6	25	4	16	19	79
	Fifth	1	3	2	7	3	11	1	3	9	33	3	11	17	62
	Seventh	3	10	0	0	5	17	1	3	7	25	6	22	14	51
	Ninth	5	15	7	21	3	9	2	6	20	62	8	25	9	28
Total 149		17	11	16	10	19	12	6	4	56	37	29	19	82	55

Chart 5: From the following expressions, check the ones that best express your feelings.

Source: "Student surveys." Made by: Authors, 2019.

Facebook		Google+		Instagram		YouTube		WhatsApp		Twitter	
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
14	70	9	45	4	20	6	30	13	65	8	40

Chart 6: In which of these networks do you have a personal account?

Source: "Surveys conducted at professors." Made by: Authors, 2019.

65% and Google+ by 45%, a tab that showed that each teacher has accounts on at least 3 or 4 networks.

Professors with 75% use their networks to keep in touch.

Keeping in touch		Comment on publications		Upload photos/videos		To communicate with my family		To communicate with classmates		To interact with my friends	
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
15	75	0	0	1	5	3	15	0	0	1	5

Chart 7: From the above What do you use these social networks for?

Source: "Surveys conducted at professors." Made by: Auhors, 2019

Always		Sometimes		Never	
F	%	F	%	F	%
12	60	5	25	3	15

Chart 8: Have these networks helped you to interact better?

Source: "Surveys conducted at professors." Made by: Authors, 2019.

Teachers say that by 60%, the networks have helped them to relate in a better way.

Professors with 40% tell us that they interact more than 21 times a day through social networks.

1-10 times		11-20 times		21 or more	
F	%	F	%	F	%
7	35	5	25	8	40

Chart 9: How many times a day do you interact with other people through social networks?

Source: "Surveys conducted at professors." Made by: Authors, 2019.

I'm afraid to have physical contact with other people		I can't relate unless it's through social networks		I feel like I express myself better if it's through a screen		I have more friends now that I have social networks		It's easier to communicate through social networks		I can express what I feel with sincerity		I don't care whether or not I'm active in my social networks	
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	5	3	15	5	25	1	5	15	75	6	30	7	35

Chart 10: From the following expressions, check the ones that best express your feelings.

Source: "Surveys conducted at professors." Made by: Authors, 2019.

Professors respond by 75% that communication through social networks is more accessible, 35% do not care whether they are active in social networks or not and 30% can express what they feel with sincerity through social networks.

Discussion

At the end of this very exhaustive research, I can say that social networks contribute to society because as we know, they are a source of innumerable benefits and advantages for their users, but they also generate unhealthy side effects. These can lead to severe problems for younger people who are still in the process of maturing and searching for personality.

It is said that after the investigation process, more than one student and professor have more than three or four active social network accounts and not having them is an exception, because we already see the use of these as part of everyday and fundamental interpersonal communication.

When students and teachers respond that social networks help them interact, it is clear that there is no rejection of the use of technology, on the contrary, a possible preference for the ease of access and intercommunication is provided.

Social networks have become part of everyday life for each of us, and that is why the results of this research show that the minimum that a student can find to interact with other people through social networks is 1 to 10 times per day, but in professors, it can be seen that they interact more than 21 times a day.

Describing the perception of students and professors by mentioning how comfortable they are with being active in social networks the students say that it's unimportant to them, As for the professors, they affirm that if they use it massively because for them it represents a better communication.

I define this research as a study of great importance to be able to reach a conclusion and to make known neuralgic points about the use, techniques, and control of social networks and their influence on interpersonal relationships.

Limitations

It could be said that the limitation is given when the research is carried out in a single Academic Unit; however, the study can also be applied in other university settings, due to its easy methodology and starting server for other future research.

Conclusion

Thus, it can be concluded that social networks are 100% managed by students since everyone has at least one account on some social network, so they use this communication tool to keep in touch within their social circle, because by maintaining communi-

cation remotely, it allows for better comfort rather than doing it personally; however, students say they don't care if they are active or not on social networks, that is to say, they do not have a dependence on these, a conclusion that focuses on fulfilling the specific objective that is to find out the use of social networks in the interpersonal relationships of professors and students of the Academic Unit of Education of the Catholic University of Cuenca.

Similarly, it is stated that teachers have at least one active account within the social networks and use them to keep in touch within their social circle because they contribute to a better relationship and are a practical help within the professional area, conclusion that focuses on fulfilling the specific objective that is to find out the use of social networks in the interpersonal relationships of teachers and students of the Academic Unit of Education of the Catholic University of Cuenca.

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