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## Social media as a complementary learning tool for teaching and learning: The case of youtube

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### ABSTRACT

Taking into account the importance of using video and visual objects for teaching, some universities utilize YouTube as a complementary teaching tool. This work analyses students' perspectives on the usage of YouTube for learning, their corresponding usage patterns, and associated factors prompting them to use YouTube. We interviewed 30 students, and went on to develop a scale for academic learning as a determinant of YouTube usage, which was then validated amongst the students. Data were collected from a total of 321 students in the Faculty of Business and Accountancy, University of Malaya to test the developed construct. The results confirmed that entertainment, seeking information, and academic learning are some of the main motivations for using YouTube. We regard YouTube as an effective tool that can enhance the learning experience if the video is indeed relevant to the subject at hand. It is recommended that instructors integrate YouTube into their respective courses to benefit from its inherent advantages in the context of learning/teaching.

### 1. Introduction

It is an established fact that combining social media usage and higher education will serve to bring both the institution and students closer (Karvounidis, Chimos, Bersimis, & Douligeris, 2014; Manca & Ranieri, 2016a, 2016b; Mbatha, 2014; Moghavvemi, Paramanathan, Rahin, & Sharabati, 2017). The use of social media (SM) and its potential as a learning tool (Osgerby & Rush, 2015) are becoming topics worthy of research. Blogs, Wikis, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are some of the more common forms of SM (Gao, Luo, & Zhang, 2012; Manca & Ranieri, 2016a, 2016b). It was also pointed out that Facebook can be used to collect information (Junco and Cotten, 2012), be used as a learning tool (Moghavvemi & Salarzadeh Janatabadi, 2017), connect students, and propagate university culture (Yu, Tian, Vogel, & Kwok, 2010). Wiki is especially useful in collaborative projects (Wang, Hao, Cao, & Li, 2014) or as a blog interface for feedback and interactive learning (Churchill, 2009; Ellison & Wu, 2008). YouTube is an example of SM that allows for the formation of social relationships that revolves around uploaded videos. It was confirmed that many students used YouTube to learn and seek information, however, studies show that the use of YouTube for academic learning and its effectiveness as a teaching tool lag far behind other SM, such as Facebook.

YouTube is the third most visited website in the world, behind Google and Facebook (Alexa, 2015). Videos pertaining to education, entertainment, marketing, and science are constantly being uploaded to YouTube since 2005. Its usage in a classroom setting (higher education) is a niche endeavour, however, this approach is receiving more and more attention (Alon & Herath, 2014; Torres-Ramírez, García-Domingo, Aguilera, & Casa, 2014; Tugrul, 2012). The revolutionary channel of the University of California

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(Berkeley) ([www.youtube.com/UCBerkeley](http://www.youtube.com/UCBerkeley)) has prompted other universities to launch their own channels, such as in medicine (Duncan, Yarwood-Ross, & Haigh, 2013), sciences, and the performing arts (Everson, Gundlach, & Miller, 2013). These channels are intended to encourage the students/teachers to watch the videos, cultivate student-teacher coordinated efforts, enhance the learning process, and enable real-time feedback from students (Torres-Ramírez et al., 2014). More and more, universities are realizing the benefits of using technology as a teaching tool, and are adopting technological approaches that are suitable in a classroom setting to complement traditional teaching approaches. This realization prompted many studies pertaining to the effectiveness of supplementary teaching tools in a classroom setting, such as YouTube, which is unfortunately scarce in literature.

This study intends to elucidate two factors; students' usage of YouTube and its effectiveness from the perspective of students vis-à-vis teaching and learning. This study consists of three main objectives:

- i) To elucidate the pattern and purpose of using YouTube amongst university students in Malaysia.
- ii) To measure students' perception vis-à-vis the effectiveness of YouTube videos in the context of academic learning, and
- iii) To develop a method that can be used to measure academic learning as one of the determinants of using YouTube amongst students.

Statistics confirmed that ~90% of Malaysian Internet users visit YouTube at least once a day (Statista, 2016). According to TNS Research, Malaysians aged 16–34 spend the most time on YouTube, averaging at 80 min, which is twice that of the reported world average (Leng, 2016). Our research will detail the usage and purpose of using YouTube amongst university students.

## 2. Literature review

SM refers to a broad range of applications that enables users to create, share, comment, and discuss a multitude of digital content (s). It is regarded as 'dynamic', 'interactive', 'democratic', 'people centric', 'volatile', 'social', and 'adaptive' (Manca & Ranieri, 2016b). Another aspect of SM that is often overlooked is its ability to transform teaching/learning into a more social, open, and collaboration-oriented endeavour. Researchers utilised many theories/models to determine the viability of using SM for teaching purposes. The Blended Learning theory (Fleck, Beckman, Sterns, & Hussey, 2014) was used to examine the usage of YouTube in a classroom setting. He noted that students are receptive towards using familiar online learning tools, which ultimately enhance their learning experience. Other researchers proposed that blending multiple SMs can influence blended learning in higher education (Artal-Sevil, Romero-Pascual, & Artacho-Terrer, 2015), which has a substantial optimistic effect on the teaching process (Alebaikan & Troudi, 2010). It was reported that when online sessions were used to augment traditional teaching methods, the students responded more readily and learned at a faster pace (Graham, Toon, Wynn-William, & Beatson, 2017; Korr, Derwin, Greene, & Sokoloff, 2012). Blended learning also allows the students to be flexible and to freely provide feedbacks vis-à-vis the course (Alebaikan & Troudi, 2010; Korr et al., 2012). These aforementioned benefits associated with blended learning have convinced many curriculum implementers to adopt it in their respective institutions.

YouTube grants the students satisfaction due to the use of videos in a traditional classroom setting (Torres-Ramírez et al., 2014; Tugrul, 2012). Clifton and Mann (2011) reported that the use of YouTube to teach nursing procedures improved the students' attention and retention, due to the fact that it is much easier to remember visual cues than auditory ones (Johnson & Mayer, 2009). Dupuis, Coutu, and Laneuville (2013) also reported that biology students who volunteered to watch online videos pertaining to their classes end up with better grades compared to their classmates who chose not to (Dupuis et al., 2013). Sobaih, Moustafa, Ghandforoush, and Khan (2016) proposed that SM is an effective tool to teach hospitality and tourism, particularly in developing countries (Sobaih et al., 2016). Students reported higher satisfaction and increased retention when SM is integrated into their courses (Alon & Herath, 2014; Barczyk & Duncan, 2012).

Balakrishnan and Gan (2016) pointed out that the Malaysian government regulates the use of SM, especially Facebook, due to political considerations. However, this does not extend to the use of SM for education, which the government wholeheartedly supports, as reflected in its recent emphasis on online learning for higher education, as detailed in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education). In fact, a pedagogical approach that combines both online learning and traditional face-to-face instruction is set to be implemented in all higher education institutions in the country (MoE, 2015). With ~67% of the population being Internet users (Internet World Stats, 2014), of which more than 50% are users of SM (Statista, 2016), SM-linked technologies are expected to play a pivotal role in realising the government's goals in the case of higher education. Some universities in Malaysia are beginning to implement blended learning, while instructors are utilising YouTube and Facebook to complement their traditional teaching approaches. Students responded to this shift by also increasing the use of YouTube to learn, however, there is little in way of formal research elucidating the effectiveness of YouTube for learning/teaching purposes.

## 3. Participant and data collection

### 3.1. Qualitative stage

We designed three open-ended questions based on the objective of the study, and distributed the resulting questionnaire to 30 business students (YouTube users) at the University of Malaya, Malaysia:

- a) Why are you using YouTube (purpose of use)?

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