

The Use of Social Media for Educational Purposes in Japanese and Chinese Students

Toshiki Matsuda
Nihon Fukushi University
nw160401@n-fukushi.ac.jp

Yating Zhen
Wenzhou University
546100557@gmail.com

Sho Ichikawa
Nihon Fukushi University
nw160039@n-fukushi.ac.jp

Hongyu Chen
Wenzhou University
782031723@email.com

Abstract: Many people, including students, use social media now in their daily life. Under these circumstances, we would like to focus on the use of social media for educational purposes, especially in Japan and China. Therefore we posit that there are some differences of the way to use social media for educational purposes between Japanese and Chinese students. We gathered data on the use of social media between them, conducting questionnaires, interviews and discussion. As the result, there were some differences of the usage of social media in Japanese and Chinese students. Considering this result, we would say that social media will be more essential for students to enhance their study. Meanwhile, as for collaborative learning, it gives us the opportunities to consider and realize a better use of social media. We will discuss these issues to deepen our knowledge of the effective use of social media in education.

Keywords: Social Media, Facebook, WeChat, higher education

INTRODUCTION

These days, many people, including students like us, often use social media for many purposes such as chatting with their friends, using the Internet. It is necessary for us to use social media in a daily life. However, there are also negative aspects of social media. For example, Madge, Meek, Wellens and Hooley (2009) indicated that the more problems occur such as social media addiction, fake news, bullying and so on as the use of the social media expands among us. Under these circumstances, we would like to focus on the use of social media by Japanese and Chinese students, especially for educational purposes. If we can confirm them, we might be able to find the better way of the use of social media for educational purposes. In case of China, WeChat, which is the most famous media, has influenced students' study since it has some learning functions for them.

However, in case of Japan, we sometimes use particular social media, such as Google+ for our study while we do not use Facebook or LINE, which are the most known in Japan.

The goal of this study is to pursue the effective use of social media in Education. To achieve this goal, as the first step, we compare the difference of the social media use between Japanese and Chinese university students, and discuss what kind of insight we can obtain from it.

METHOD

We conducted questionnaire surveys to students of Nihon Fukushi University in Japan and Wenzhou University in China, and asked how they use social media in a daily life, and how often they use social media for educational purposes.

We also interviewed some particular people for ensuring the result of questionnaires, and we discussed all the results which we got from our survey.

In addition, we focus on the international collaborative event as the example of the better use of social media for education.

RESULTS

China

According to the result, WeChat is the most famous and used social media among students. Since many students know some useful functions for educational purposes, nearly 70% of students use WeChat more than 2 times a week.

We would say that WeChat is a good for many of them to continue or concentrate on their study.

Although many students use WeChat for chatting, they can use it for educational purposes as well because both functions are included. Therefore, it is possible for students to feel annoyed to use WeChat

for their study when they like to chat with their friends.

As this result shows, most of them can utilize WeChat for educational purposes. Moreover, 70% of them do not mind communicating with teachers via WeChat, although they consider that WeChat is private space with limited friends.

Japan

In case of Japan, students also use some media for their study, however, in their case, they use unfamiliar social media such as Google+ while some familiar social media such as LINE or Facebook are not used so much. Although it is possible to use Facebook for educational purposes, they generally do not have such idea.

On the other hand, more than 70% of Japanese students say they would like to use social media for educational purposes. In other words, they would like to know how to use it. However, unlike Chinese famous social media like WeChat, Japanese one does not have learning functions that are easy for students to use.

Social media use in collaborative learning

We have been collaborating for an international collaborative event, called world youth meeting (WYM). It gathers many participants from both Japan and some Asian countries, then they give joint-presentations with multi-national members. They need to discuss what they present before they meet face-to-face, and they generally use social media to make it.

As for our group, we have communicated with each other to discuss how to make our presentation through WeChat. We have regularly conducted a video conference to make a presentation. As the result, we all have made successful collaboration thanks to the use of social media.

DISCUSSION

We think social media will be more essential for students to use for educational purposes since many students are willing to do it. Sato, Kageto, and Kirkpatrick (2013) showed examples of social media use in project-based learning and pointed out the nature of posts is different for each social media platform. Therefore, we should learn how to use recent social media effectively and in practical ways.

Meanwhile there are some points we have to think about for learning how to use social media. For instance, Madge et al. (2009) showed some of the students did not want their teachers to interfere with them through social network service because they would like to keep their privacy.

In WeChat, teachers can intervene in student's personal space. If it happens, it is possible when the more students try to use WeChat, the more of them will dislike to use it. Meanwhile, WeChat has some good learning functions which attract students. However, for Japanese students, the kind of tool which includes learning functions is not familiar; hence we need to think about it comprehensively to find the better use of social media for students' learning.

We think that one way to think about better use of social media is to use it for ourselves as students. In our case, we have used it in our collaborative learning, WYM, as described earlier. This practice made us consider and realize a better use of social media. Using social media for educational purposes can play an important role for our experiences and study.

CONCLUSION

We found there are some differences of the use of social media between Japanese and Chinese students.

However, their attitude towards the study are the same. Therefore we proposed to pursue the better way of the use of social media, considering some aspects which we confirmed from our survey.

Furthermore, we realized using social media could help us to consider and realize a better use of social media for international collaborative learning, which can make us work for the better world as a member of the next generation.

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