

# Using Social Media to Improve Student Engagement and Learning

OUTSTANDING ABSTRACT – Marketing Education/Experiential Learning

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## Introduction

The importance of social media for marketing professionals has grown immensely as consumers turn to it to connect with products, brands, and brand communities. Despite the importance of engaging students in education via social media, limited research investigates the uses of social media to teach core marketing concepts. The purpose of this article is to present information regarding the use of social media in the classroom. This article focuses on the author's continuing efforts using social media to enhance undergraduate marketing students learning experiences. Pre- and post-semester survey data provide insights into the effectiveness of social media as a tool for teaching core course concepts.

## Social Media, Engagement, and Learning

Social media is defined as “a variety of new sources of online information that are created, circulated, and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues” (Mangold & Faulds, 2009, p. 357). Prior research has suggested that there have been contradictory and inconclusive findings among those researches that aimed to investigate the impact of students' engagement and/or learning in education on student-related outcomes such as perceived value and satisfaction. Some research even indicated that there was a negative impact of using social media in college education. The author has been incorporating social media in his courses, specifically trying to engage and better communicate with his students by creating a Facebook group page for every class he has taught, for four years. He is interested to know whether his teaching practices have been effective and helped him and students reach their goals. Therefore, to address this issue, this research intends to answer the following two questions:

- Does using Facebook groups to communicate with students make them more engaged?
- Is posting course-related articles or news on the Facebook group page effective in stimulating more class discussions, motivating students to learn and, in turn, improving their learning?

## Results and Discussions

The results have shown that incorporating social media (Facebook in this case) significantly improves students' following areas: perceived importance of social media, engagement with the class via social media, perceived emotional value of social media for learning, perceived social value of social media for learning, motivation to learn the subjects via social media, and overall satisfaction with the class, college and university. The results have also shown that students' previous experience with this Facebook strategy, ages, gender, perceived social value, abilities of using social media, and class standings significantly influences their overall satisfaction. However, the results have not shown any significant differences between male and female students. Based on what the author has found, this study provides evidence that using social media does improve student engagement, learning, and satisfaction.

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**Keywords:** Student Engagement, Student Learning, Social Media, Facebook

## Relevance to Marketing Educators, Researchers, and Practitioners

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**TRACK:** Education/Experiential Learning

**ID#:** 1269