SOCIAL MEDIA AT CZECH AND POLISH UNIVERSITIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The study defines terms from the social media field within the scope of the electronic educational environment as well as social media and social networks as a means of study support at a university. The research on a representative sample of the University of Ostrava and the University of Silesia students, which was carried out within the scope of the 7th RP IRNet project, is aimed at the analysis of the current situation regarding the use of social media by the university students and at the differences in the use according to the country of study.

Keywords

Social media, social networking, support, study, university students

Introduction

Current digital technologies change how children relate to the world – they influence the process of acquiring and processing information, communication, self-expression and creativity. According to the current Eurostat statistics, 76% of the Czechs between the ages of 16 and 24 use social media.

According to the latest "Adults' Media Use and Attitudes" report (2015), 93% of the 1,640 adult respondents in Great Britain use social media, the most of all the compared groups. 72% of all adult respondents (16 to 65+ years old) use social media. 97% of users use Facebook, 48% of which use it exclusively. More than eight in ten social media users consider their Facebook profile to be their main social media site.

The use of social networks is the most diverse in the 16–24 age group which includes university students: 80% of them use Facebook, 10% of them use Twitter and the remaining 10% use Whats App, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

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 "Two thirds of adults with a profile use social media more than once a day. Close to one in four (23%) say they visit social media profiles more than ten times a day, and this has increased since 2013. In total, eight in ten (81%) do so at least daily. A third of those aged 16–24 (34%) and 25-34 (33%) with a social media profile visit more than ten times a day, and this is more likely than average (23%). In contrast those aged 45- 54 (11%) and 55+ (8%) are less likely. Men (22%) are more likely than women (16%) to say they visit less often than daily."

Social media is most commonly undertaken on a smartphone, particularly by younger adults. This is more likely among those aged 16–24 (64%) and 25–34 (58%).

Rosen (2010) introduces the term iGeneration, which he uses for the contemporary elementary and high school students. The iGeneration members are always online, take digital technologies for granted and they are an integral part of their lives.

As far as the school instruction is concerned, the traditional concept of classroom teaching is beginning to change as the formal education and informal education are connected more than ever. We think that social media is one of the ways to make school and education more attractive to students – social media is their natural environment, it offers countless opportunities for the support of educational activities and teamwork, it encourages creativity and peer learning (by sharing skills, experience and ideas). And what is the situation at universities? Are social media and social networks used for education?

Social Media – what is it?

Both the professional and general public have become acquainted with the term social media. Mostly, the terms social media and social networks are considered to be synonyms. However, scientific publications offer several definitions. Bouda (2009) introduces several definitions from various authors who define social media as:

- Tools that "provide easy use of collaborative working spaces by using various communication tools";

- A means that enables communication, which has a different purpose than the traditional media. Social media is based on interaction between people. The public feedback (be it in the form of commentaries or editing the original text or content) is the key element;

- All Internet media, which enable gathering of the like-minded groups of people and the discussion about various topics;

- The so-called new media, or media 2.0.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, states that social media "are computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks". It falls within the subset of mass media. It consists of highly interactive platforms, which use mobile and web-based technologies to create user-generated content. Social media differs in many respects from traditional media. The main difference is that, unlike in the initial model where there was only one source, the information is distributed by many sources. Another major difference is the possibility of an immediate reaction, editing, comment or other modifications of the content.

The following definition, Wigmore (2015), stresses the importance of communication for the use of social media, "Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking , social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media".

The authors of the SMILE (Social Media in Learning & Education) project (2013) argue that generally speaking, social media contains at least some of the following characteristics:

- Social media challenges traditional models;
- Social media allows people to communicate;
- Social media allows people to collaborate;
- Social media gives people an audience;
- Social media services often remove hierarchy and are built from the bottom up;
- Social media is open and transparent.

Whether you have your own definition for social media or even disagree with some of the characteristics above, the one thing that everyone seems to agree on is that social media, social networks and the social web is moving from strength to strength. The term given to this by the website socialnomics is the 'Social Media Revolution'. Socialnomics has also produced a viral YouTube video that provides a number of interesting facts and figures about the rise and growth of social media.

The facts include:

- If Facebook was a country, it would be the world's 3rd largest with more than 3× the size of the U.S. population;
- There were over 75 million more people playing Farmville than there were real farmers;
- A new member joins LinkedIn every second;
- 1 in 5 couples meet online.

The video concludes by stating that, 'Social media isn't a fad, it's a fundamental'.

Social media and education

Bouda (2009) refers to David Meerman Scott's scientific paper entitled "Asking the Right Questions about Social Media" when he argues that the media in the form of the mass-media touch every person and thus are omnipresent. The man encounters television, radio, the Internet or newspapers everywhere.

Social media

As far as social media is concerned, Bouda (2009) highlights three points:

1) We access information through social media as it is included in the search results of the Internet browsers.

2) Social media is present on the portals of Internet newspapers or on information portals.

3) If a person asks their friends for information, they are often provided with a link or a blog or other social media with a discussion on a particular topic.

Digital technologies are becoming more accessible to a number of teachers and students. It is only up to them which one they decide to use in their teaching and studying, respectively. Jelínek (2015) introduces the typology and overview of the new generation websites based on the study by Matt Bower from Macquarie University (Australia). The study helps both teachers and students organize educational tools and at the same time helps them choose the optimal tool for teaching and learning, respectively. The study divides the individual tools into 32 groups and 14 categories. Those are tools based on discussion, tools for working with images, tools for working with sound, tools for working with video, tools for the creation of presentations, books, animations, social networks, web applications, tools for organization and sharing of materials, tools for working with data, tools for event logging, tools for the creation of tests, tools for 3D modeling and tutor tools.

Biernátová (2012) summarizes the possibilities of social media in terms of information education:

1) Social media serves as a supplement to the classic instruction. It enables discussion between the students and the teacher.

2) Through social media the teacher shares study materials (Slideshare presentations, YouTube videos, etc.) or uses embeds and links to concentrate them in the e-learning environment (web bulletin board, LMS or social network).

3) The teachers create private social networks, which replace the LMS, where the students can engage in discussion, share their materials or submit their homework.

4) The instruction takes place on one of the public social networks (e.g. Facebook).

5) Some of the Facebook pages (Twitter accounts, etc.) primarily used for promotion can also be used for sharing relevant information.

6) Social media is used as a source of information (Twitter, YouTube, geotagging).

7) Social media is used as tools in instruction or as a means to achieving educational goals (e.g. blogs, wiki, podcasts). Students themselves create the content, acquiring the required knowledge in the process.

Rhanem (undated) argues that social media fulfils needs that can be hierarchized, the lowest level being everyone's need to acquire information anywhere (content), followed by the need for massive networking with no or only low costs (technology), the need for participatory culture that enables sharing, commenting and collective storing of information (WIKI) and the need to live in the real-time environment which is made possible by a number of distribution channels for a continuous period of time.

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Social Networks

Social networks are becoming an integral part of their users' lives. The main advantage of social networks lies in the fact that the users can communicate not only with people who live close to them, but also with people who live on the other side of the world. The interconnection of social networks and education is a current topic. As technology is playing an ever-important role in people's lives, this kind of education could have an enormous impact on the future image of the entire educational system. The use of social networks is on the rise as the number of users, and with it the potential for advertising and business plans, is increasing every year. As far as the future is concerned, social networks offer a vast number of opportunities – from influencing large interest groups (well-targeted advertising) to customized applications to the offer of services based on deduced behaviour on the Web.

Jelínek (2015) argues that social networks are not used exclusively by teenagers as more and more adults are starting to use them. In the Czech Republic, approximately 50% of the Facebook users are aged between 20 and 35. This fact tells us that social networks are used not only by students but also by teachers (which makes the education process more attractive to both groups). The following are the social networks intended for the field of education: Twiducate, Class Tools, Edmodo.

Smetánková (2014) refers to the T.H.E. Journal (Technological Horizons in Education) when she claims that social media is a suitable educational tool. It extends the possibilities of learning outside of school and helps students become acquainted with real-life problems and situations (they can learn from one another and from experts). As a result, teachers can incorporate new teaching methods into instruction. Moreover, being connected to social networks helps teachers in self-education.

A number of other authors (e.g. Haddon, 2015) mention the issue of online victimization of youth caused by social media which can take a number of forms and have a number of serious consequences. In younger children, this issue is associated with the parent's insufficient management of their children's time while the older children are not aware of the risks social media may pose, i.e. their so-called digital literacy is insufficient.

The use of social media at universities

Social networks at universities

While the university students use all types of unspecified social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), they could also make use of the following more specialized networks (Ross, 2016):

Snapchat, the popular photo and video messaging app, which can engage students with learning materials in real time.

Trello, essentially an online sticky-note tool. Trello links pictures, videos, and documents in threads that can be shared between group members. The tool organizes discussions into boards like Pinterest, and allows to share and curate relevant information.

Vine, six-second, looping videos are all over social media – and they can be a resource for higher education institutions, too. They can be used to present the university campus or promote events, but they are also a useful tool for wider engagement.

Pocket, this bookmarking service allows users to collect and download article links to curate their own online magazines. Users can follow the curated feeds of other "pocketers", which means that students can link with professors who have publicly shared relevant links and articles. It saves the hassle of a group email and can be updated instantly.

Google Docs, using collaborative documents is not a new thing, nor is giving peer feedback on assignments. Mixing them together, however, to enable students to give instant feedback on each other's work, is immensely useful. Google Docs allows tracked editing and comments, which means that students can work in groups in their own time, without having to take part in structured seminars, and the document can be sent to the lecturer for feedback.

Italk, primarily used as a recording tool, this is one of the best ways to capture lectures and upload them online, or share via email. There's an option to change the quality of sound recording, and transferring between devices is quick and simple.

Wunderlist, some students are more organized than others, and the disorganized ones can be the bane of their tutors' lives. Organizational app Wunderlist allows students – and lecturers – to create folders for each module, with notes, due dates, comments, contact lists and, perhaps most crucially, reminders of upcoming deadlines.

Instagram, the image-sharing tool can be harnessed to collect real-time data for coursework. Rather than passively relying on data collected by others, students can engage in their own collection of all kinds of evidence. Instagram also provides an opportunity for collaboration – students can upload, tag, and comment on pictures on each others' feeds, thus expanding the reach of discussion.

Research on the use of social media at universities

Luton (2014) has recently conducted a research on the kinds of social media used at universities and their benefits. The sample of the international research consisted of 711 academic scholars and post-gradual students (i.e. M.A. and Ph.D. students) of social sciences. They currently use (in sequence) Twitter, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, Facebook and ResearchGate, with Twitter being considered the most useful medium by the academics.

For the majority of respondents, the principal benefit they gained from using social media was related to the connections or networks they had established with other academics, students and also those outside academias.

The second benefit is openness and sharing. The opportunity to reach individuals and groups outside the university was particularly valued as part of this ethos of openness and sharing. The third benefit is self-promotion. Many respondents mentioned the opportunities for promoting their own research and discussing their ideas in early form with colleagues. The fourth benefit concerns the area of university research. A number of respondents stated that social media allowed them to keep them in touch with new developments and events and provided them access to unpublished and new articles in their field of research. The fifth benefit is instruction.

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Some respondents mentioned using social media in their teaching. They remarked that social media helped them engage their students and a way in which online students in particular can easily connect with academic staff and each other. Finally, several postgraduate students and early career researchers wrote that social media connections often gave them emotional as well as academic support, which they found particularly important at their stage of academic career.

The respondents also described ten other phenomena and feelings associated with the use of social media in the university environment:

- privacy and the blurring of boundaries,
- the risk of jeopardizing one's career,
- lack of credibility,
- quality of content posted,
- time pressures,
- social media use becoming an obligation,
- becoming a target,
- too much self-promotion by others,
- plagiarism,
- the commercialization of content and copyright issues.

The results of the National Survey of Entrepreneurship Education (2014), conducted in 4-year dormitories and universities in the U.S.A., revealed the social media the students use and what they use them for. Out of 206 institutions, 49% use social media in particular areas and 25% of them use blogs. Facebook is used most often (33% of all uses), followed by LinkedIn (26%) and Twitter (25%). The least used media are Instagram (2%), Pinterest (4%) and Google+ (10%). To survey the offerings that U.S. schools provide outside of the classroom, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they offered any of the following opportunities - internships, online learning, continuing education or executive development courses. A large number of respondents (114) indicated that they offered internship opportunities. It also confirms that entrepreneurship education has still not made a big move toward offering online courses (43 schools), as this option was the lowest ranked only behind executive development courses (34 schools). 52 institutions stated that social media is used in continuing education.

DeAndrea et el. (2011) present the results of the research on the use of social media to improve a new student's adaptation to the university environment they conducted at Michigan State University. The social medium called SpartanConnect is used to support the adaptation of the freshman students. It was designed to improve the relationship between freshman students and their roommates at the university campus. It is interconnected with other social media such as Facebook, etc. Even though no direct relationship has been found between the use of the website and academic self-efficiency, the research indicates that the social support has a positive impact on the student's adaptation to the university environment.

When investigating the relations between social networks and students' performance in extended student communities, Cadima, Oleja and Monguet (2012) verified the validity of three hypotheses based on the previous assumption that in the educational environment, social networks play the key role of a channel for sharing knowledge and are the source of social support. The first hypothesis assuming that their results improve with the number of their interactions was confirmed. For curiosity, the students of Polytechnic University of Catalonia had 6.8 interactions per week, with a standard deviation of 4.4. Also the second hypothesis "The closer is an individual with their peers in the community, the better their results", based on the average distance between individuals, was confirmed. The Czech environment uses the term path length which is measured by the number of interactions constituting a joint (Busštíková, 1999). However, the third hypothesis assuming that the student's performance improves with the level of their networking with others (which is determined by the network density or centralization) was not confirmed.

The latest data (2014) about the number of users of two main social networks show that they are widely used at universities. If we compared the number of Facebook and Twitter users at the University of Ostrava with the total number of students (not assuming that all the users are current students), then at the time of publication of the abovementioned information the number of users would be 70%.

University	Facebook	Twitter
Charles University	19,019	562
Masaryk University	16,724	769
Czech University of Life Sciences	10,997	591
University of Economics	9,879	129
Technical University of Liberec	8,360	-
Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design	7,543	179
University of Pardubice	7,282	-
Mendel University	6,894	-
Palacký University	6,802	156
University of Ostrava	6,736	242

Table 1: Ten Czech universities according to number of social network users in April 2014

Research on use of social media by University of Ostrava and University of Silesia students

Research objectives
The subject of the research was the use of social media by university students. The goal of the research was to collect and analyze data about the current situation concerning the use of social media and learn whether it varies in various forms of study.

Research problem and research questions

The authors of the study formulated the basic research problem as follows: There are no relevant data concerning the University of Ostrava students' use of social media, which kinds of social media they know/use and what their needs and expectations are as far as this area is concerned. The formulated research problem was further specified by the following research questions:

1) How do students evaluate the need to cooperate when solving educational problems?
2) In what ways do students use social media within the scope of cooperation?
3) What is the reason for students' participation in virtual communities or social networks?
4) What motivates students to share the results of their activities in an electronic environment?

Research hypotheses

Corresponding research hypotheses were formulated on the basis of preliminary findings regarding university students' learning habits and their orientation in corresponding studies:

- H1: The University of Ostrava students and the Silesian University students differ in the need of cooperation during solving study problems;

- H2: The University of Ostrava students and the Silesian University students differ in the degree of use of social networks;

- H3: The University of Ostrava students and the Silesian University students differ in the reasons for participating in virtual communities;

- H4: The University of Ostrava students and the Silesian University students differ in the motivation for presenting one's results in the electronic environment.

Research file and data collecting

The students of the Pedagogical Faculty of the University of Ostrava in the Czech Republic and the students of the Faculty of Ethnology and Educational Science of the University of Silesia in Poland, which are both participating in the international research IRNet conducted within the scope of the 7th framework program in 2014-2017, were the research file of this research.

All of the Faculties' students were asked via a bulk email to fill out a questionnaire, which was compiled by a consortium of project solvers. Considering that students' participation in the questionnaire research was voluntary, the selection of respondents was random.

A larger portion of women and students of teaching study programs in the research sample is determined by women's naturally greater interest in (the mostly feminized) teaching professions and the prevailing portion of teaching study programs at the Faculties. Moreover, in the sample the portions of students of all three levels of study and of daily attendance students and combined study students correspond to the real portion as represented at the Faculty. More than half of the Czech students consider themselves intermediate ICT users and only a small number consider themselves beginners. The level of digital literacy of the Polish students was not part of the research.

The data collecting took place in April and June 2015. The students answered the questionnaire questions through the electronic system Google Questionnaire.

Results and their interpretation

The research results were calculated using Pearson's chi-squared test.

Evaluation of the need to cooperate when solving educational problems

In this question the students evaluated the need to cooperate (when working in a group or a team) when solving an educational problem. The students were asked to choose one of the following answers:

- The need to cooperate should not be determined by the teacher;
- Teachers assign tasks that require cooperation;
- I strive to cooperate and ask teachers to assign tasks that require cooperation;
- Such competences are needed to be successful in life;
- Without such competences it is impossible to be successful in business.
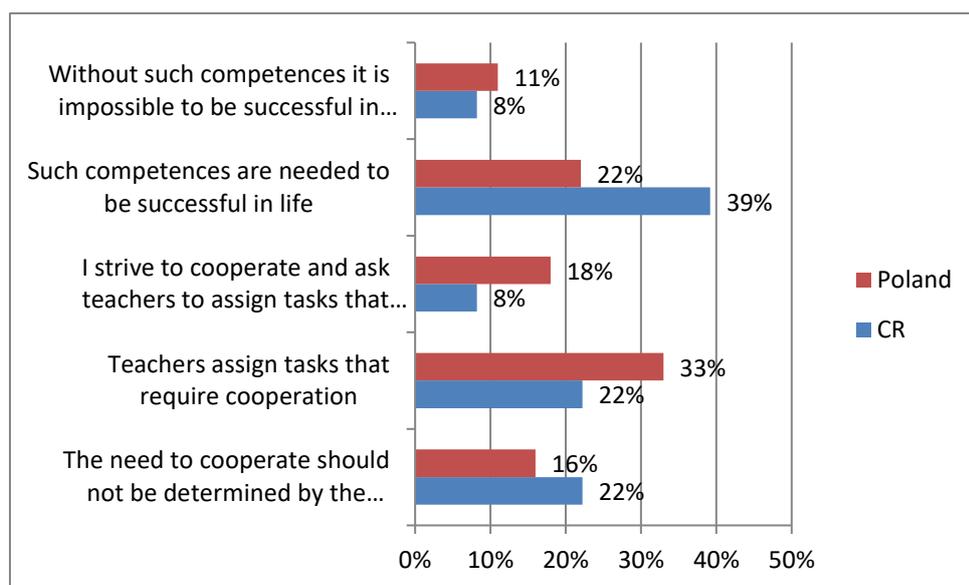
Graph 1: Evaluation of the need to cooperate when solving educational problems

The data presented in Graph 1:

- Compared to the Czech students, the Polish students cooperate with teachers and realize that without the cooperation competencies it is impossible to be successful in business more often.
- Compared to the Czech students, the Polish students state that teachers assign tasks that require cooperation more often.

- However, compared to the Polish students, the Czech students think that the teacher should not tell them when to cooperate and that cooperation competencies are needed to be successful in life more often.

Chi-Square Tests

|	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.382[a]	4	**.004**

Chart 1: Chi-Square Test Result for H1 Hypothesis

We can claim that the H1: "The University of Ostrava students and the Silesian University students differ in the need of cooperation during solving study problems" was confirmed.

Students' use of Social Media

In order to learn whether or not the students use social media when studying, we asked them the following question: Do you use social services, e.g. social networks, for cooperation and teamwork? The students were asked to choose one of the following answers:

- No, I prefer face-to-face contact;

- No, teachers do not assign tasks that require interaction;

- Yes, it is fast, convenient and modern;

- Yes, teachers assign tasks that require cooperation.
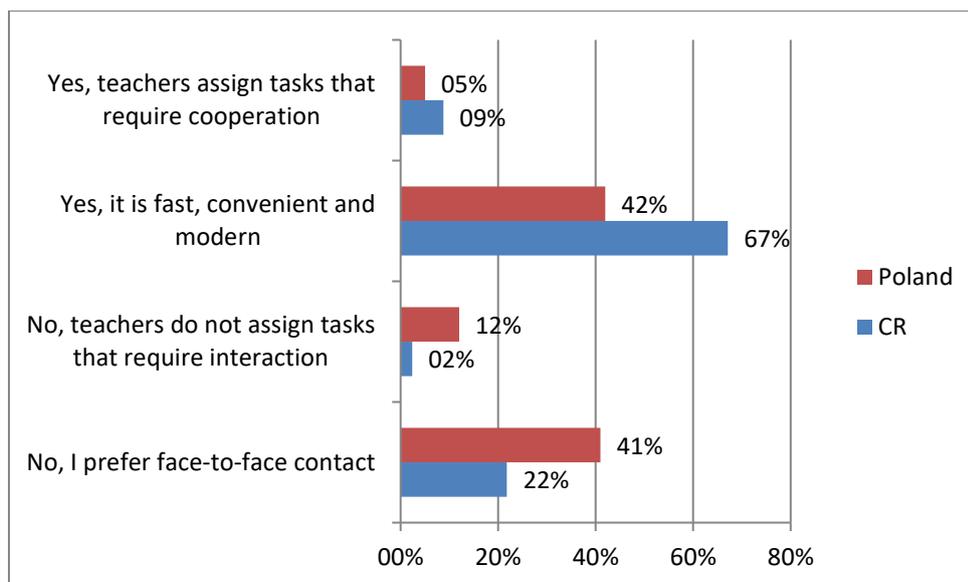
Graph 2: Students' use of social media (answers to the question "Do you use social media?")

The data presented in Graph 2 show that:

- Compared to the Czech students, the Polish students consider social services realized through social media to be fast, suitable and modern,

- The opinion of the Polish students probably reveals that they, unlike the Czech students, prefer face-to-face contact,

- Compared to the Czech academic teachers, the Polish academic teachers assign their students tasks that require cooperation less often; 12% of the Polish students (compared to 2.4% of the Czech students) state that teachers do not assign them any tasks that require interaction.

Chi-Square Tests

|	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.038[a]	3	**.000**

Chart 2: Chi-Square Test Result for H2 Hypothesis

We can claim that the H2 "The University of Ostrava students and the Silesian University students differ in the degree of use of social networks" was confirmed.

Main reasons for participation in social media

In order to learn the main reasons for students' participation in social media, we asked them the following question: What is the main reason for your participation in the student virtual communities (scientific, artistic, sports) on social networks or other Internet services? The students were asked to choose one of the following answers:

- Acquiring additional cultural knowledge (to learn about various events, to broaden my horizons, to have cultural experiences);

- It helps me in my studies (knowledge sharing, asking to help me solve a problem);

- Finding new friends

- Demonstrating my own experience, knowledge and achievements;

- Organization of my own events;

- I do not participate in such communities.
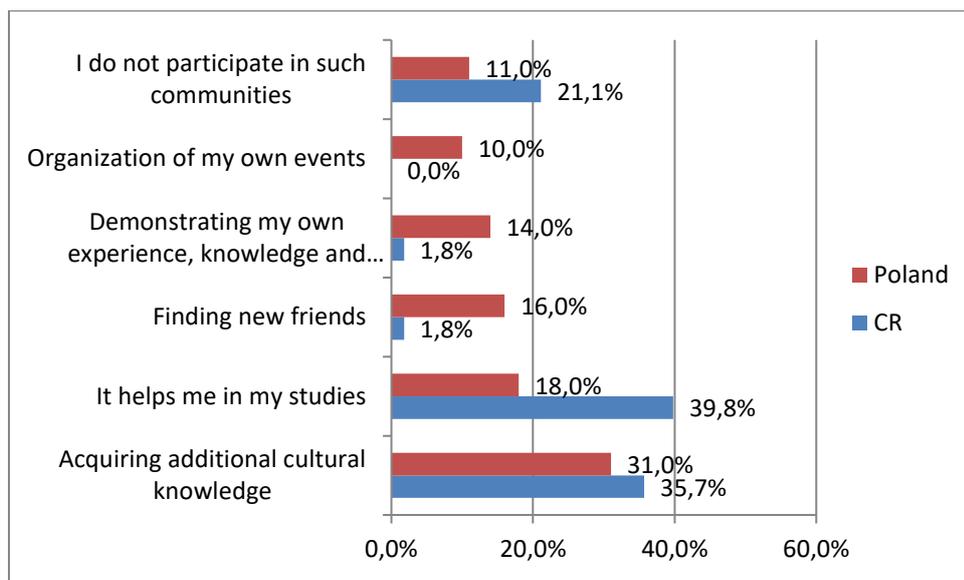
Graph 3: Reasons for students' participation in social media

The data presented in Graph 3 show that

Twice as many Czech students as Polish students state that social media help them in studying.

Slightly more Czech students than Polish students use social media to expand their cultural knowledge.

Twice as many Czech students as Polish students state that they do not participate in the virtual student communities.

Nearly eight times as many Polish students as Czech students participate in these communities to share their experience, knowledge and successes.

Many times more Polish students than Czech students participate in the virtual student communities on social networks to make new friends.

Every tenth Polish student uses the virtual student communities to plan their own events. However, no Czech student uses them for such a purpose.

It can be said that the Czech students use the virtual student communities on social networks for studying and cultural purposes while the Polish students use them for social purposes, i.e. for sharing their experience and successes, for making new friends.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.951[a]	5	**.000**

Chart 3: Chi-Square Test Result for H3 Hypothesis

We can claim that the H3 "The University of Ostrava students and the Silesian University students differ in the reasons for participating in virtual communities" was confirmed.
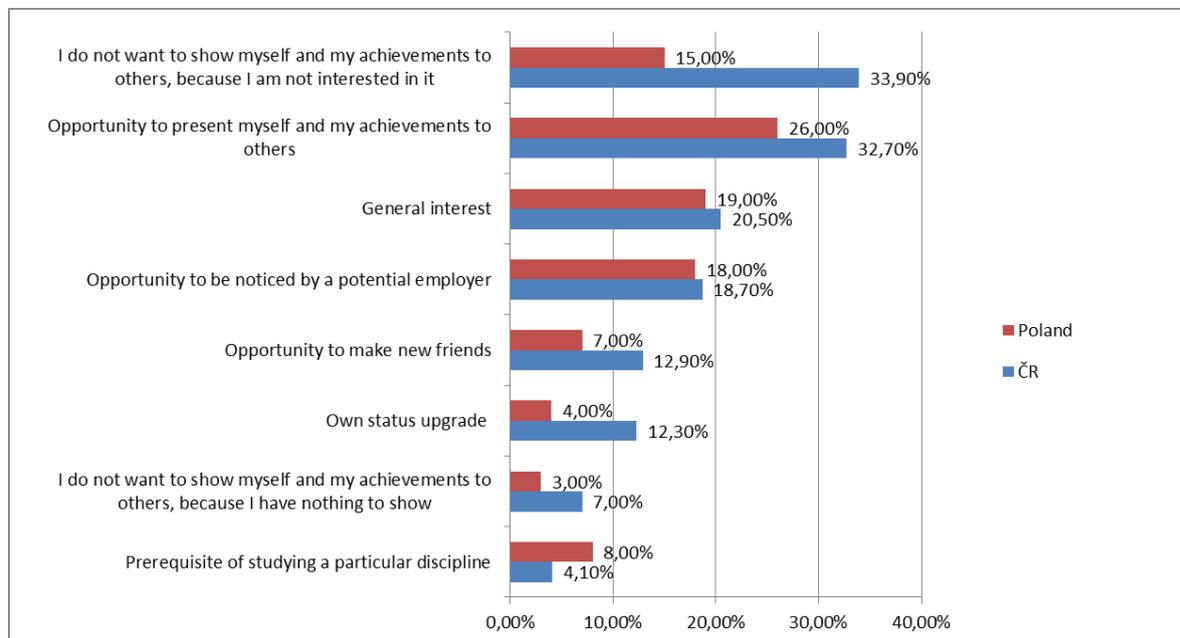
Presenting student's results

In order to learn students' motivation to present their results, we asked them the following question: Choose the reasons which motivate you to present the results of your academic, artistic or sports activities in the university electronic environment (on the university website, social networks, etc.). Students answered each of the following questions Yes or No; the number of selected answers was not limited:

- Opportunity to present myself and my achievements to others;

- Opportunity to be noticed by a potential employer;

- It can help me acquire a scholarship;

- General interest;

- To upgrade my own status;

- Opportunity to make new friends;

- I do not want to share my achievements with others because I have nothing to show;

- I do not want to share my achievements with others because I am not interested in it.

	Czech Republic	Poland
Prerequisite of studying a particular discipline	4.1%	8.0%
I do not want to show myself and my achievements to others because I have nothing to show	7.0%	3.0%
Own status upgrade	12.3%	4.0%
Opportunity to make new friends	12.9%	7.0%
Opportunity to be noticed by a potential employer	18.7%	18.0%
General interest	20.5%	19.0%
Opportunity to present myself and my achievements to others	32.7%	26.0%

I do not want to show myself and my achievements to others because I am not interested in it	33.9%	15.0%

Table 2: Students' motivation for presenting their results

Graph 4: Students' motivation for presenting their results

Note: The average of favourable answers of the Czech students was 1.42 while the Polish students always selected only one favourable answer which best described their opinion on the particular question

		Country		sig. chi-square
		Czech Republic	Poland	
Opportunity to present myself and my achievements to others	Count	56	26	.243
	%	32.7%	26.0%	
Opportunity to be noticed by a potential employer	Count	32	18	.884
	%	18.7%	18.0%	
Prerequisite of studying a particular discipline	Count	7	8	.175
	%	4.1%	8.0%	
General interest	Count	35	19	.770
	%	20.5%	19.0%	
Own status upgrade	Count	21	4	**.023**
	%	12.3%	4.0%	
Opportunity to make new friends	Count	22	7	.132
	%	12.9%	7.0%	
I do not want to show myself and my achievements to others because I have nothing to show	Count	12	3	.163
	%	7.0%	3.0%	
I do not want to show myself and my achievements to others because I am not interested in it	Count	58	15	**.001**
	%	33.9%	15.0%	
Total	Count	243	100	-
	%	142.1%	100.0%	

Chart 4: Chi-Square Test Result for Partial Hypotheses within H2 Hypothesis

The data presented in Chart 4 and Graph 4, respectively show that:

The hypothesis H4 as a whole cannot be accepted as there is not a statistically significant difference between the Czech and Polish students in 6 of the 8 parts of this question. In the two national groups of students, a statistically significant difference was found in two reasons that (un)motivate students to present their results. The students: wanted to present their results to improve their status (more often stated by the Czech students); did not want to present their results because they were not interested in it (more often stated by the Czech students).

Discussion

The results acquired from the questionnaire showed that the Czech and Polish university students (both universities are humanities-oriented and relatively geographically close) have different needs regarding cooperation and the use of social media. When they use social networks, they do it for different reasons. In both groups, only one third of students use social networks to present themselves or the results of their academic activities to their peers or public. As far as using social networks for self-presentation is concerned, the reasons of both the Czech and Polish students are similar. The Czech students seem to be more individualistically-oriented. They use social media mainly to individually solve the assigned tasks. Half of the students are willing to share their results and present them to others, including their future employers. The Polish students, on the other hand, are more cooperative in solving the assigned tasks. They wait for the teacher to encourage them to use social media for cooperation and interaction. They prefer face-to-face communication and use social media mainly to make new friends and to share their successes with them.

The conducted comparative research calls for discussion about its results as the field, geographical and economic proximity of the two departments focusing on educational and ethnological studies suggests the answers to individual questions should have been less different than they turned out to be. The fact that three hypotheses assuming differences in approaching social media and its use may point to different relationships of students to their peers and to different relationships of teachers to their students and their study and social needs, which may be the result of differently defined or differently perceived roles shared by the community. Different structures of the two electronic environments may also have been behind the different results of the two groups.

Our research did not factor in the individual social media. As a result, it is impossible to compare our data with the data of the researches aimed at the use of the individual social media. However, due to the globalization of the user environment, it can be assumed that there would not be significant differences. The University of Ostrava uses the following social media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, Instagram, LinkedIn and RSS.

Conclusion

In the university environment, social media is gaining in importance as it represents an effective means of communication within the university and between the universities and their

surroundings. The majority of universities, including the Czech ones, already use a number of established media. At the same time, they are designing their own specialized networks with a variety of functions supporting cooperation between teachers and students and among students. The positive effects of social networks can be seen in study results or performance, social integration, sharing of information, students' adaptation to the university environment. However, even in the university environment risks arising from the use of social media can be found, e.g. violation of privacy, career threat, plagiarism. Knowing about them makes it possible to prevent them. The results acquired from the questionnaire showed that the Czech and Polish students have different needs regarding the use of social media, different reasons for (not) using it and that they differ in how often they use it for social and studying purposes. As far as using social networks for self-presentation is concerned, the reasons of both the Czech and Polish students are similar. The future researches should be aimed at the study, emotional and interpersonal effects of social networks, which will factor in the data related to study results, students' behaviour and the data describing the individual's place in social media based on the analysis of social media, all of which can be seen in the recent researches.

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