



Intercultural Communication in the Grip: Implications of the Literature Review “Social Media and Intercultural Education”

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Abstract. The presence of social media in intercultural education has become the development of intercultural competence for its users. As a contextual media, it can connect users from various regions and different cultural backgrounds. This study aims to mapping the contribution of social media to intercultural education. This article provides a literature review on the contribution of social media in intercultural education. We examined the relevant papers over the last decade and 29 deemed relevant for inclusion in the review. Results of the study provide evidence that the contribution of social media (intercultural communication, cross-culture adaption, cultural acculturation, community development, intercultural networks, intercultural friendships, information exchange, promoting global communities, and intercultural exchange) can be relied in intercultural education. From the various contributions, intercultural communication through social media has become more in the spotlight for researchers. This review offers implications that intercultural communication through social media should be welcomed by campuses and decision makers. Through the various programs that rely on social media as part of intercultural education.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication · Intercultural Education · Social Media

1 Introduction

Extreme forms of ethnocentrism and xenophobia assume that everything from the culture is true. The truth is considered universal so that groups from other cultures are enemies, as a result, they refuse people from other cultural groups to enter their territory [1–3]. This is a problem because it prevents inter-ethnic interaction and communication [4, 5]. From these problems, the importance of intercultural education as an important component of lifelong learning in order to grow an open mentality to the reality of cultural diversity [6–9]. Openness to culture becomes even more important when going on vacation and visiting [10, 11]. In the world of education, teachers are clearly seen as playing an important role in intercultural education [12]. On the other grip, the development of information technology, especially social media, allows the development of intercultural competence for its users.

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The intercultural competence through social media in the form of components of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and the most prominent is the interaction of fellow social media users [13, 14]. Interaction among social media users enables the development of intercultural competence. People from different cultural backgrounds can interact and communicate with each other. However, it has been criticized that the complex culture of social media has violated the boundaries of language and community culture [15]. Criticism of the media is natural, considering that human-computer interaction can isolate the general principle of human-human interaction [16]. Human-computer interaction now and in the future has become a necessity. Considering the development of social media has changed the culture of human-human interaction and communication.

Regardless of the debate, it is clear that social media has become an important and useful medium for intercultural education. Japanese students studying in America are a concrete example of the potential of social media as the development of competency skills needed for intercultural interaction [17]. Another example, law students in Egypt and the UK through collaborative projects utilizing closed groups on Facebook [18]. Through these activities, they not only learn about different cultures and legal systems. They also finally appreciate the socio-cultural and political complexities that underlie the creation of legal products. These two examples leave room for debate because social media also has weaknesses. Social media can only be accessed if there is internet. Collaboration will not occur if one of the cultural groups does not have internet access. For this reason, a literature review is needed to examine more previous research related to social media and intercultural education.

From the explanation above, a more comprehensive literature review is needed. We examine relevant papers over the last decade. RQ.1 What is the role of social media in intercultural education? RQ.2 What theories are the analytical tools in social media-mediated intercultural education research? There is a novelty in this research, RQ.3 What are the implications of a literature review of social media and intercultural education. This literature review study is important because of the increasing number of social media users [19], they come from different cultural and group backgrounds, and they are not limited by region/country walls. For this reason, it becomes even more interesting to see the contribution of social media in intercultural education.

2 Literature Review

A culture that was before still largely monocultural is gradually vanishing in today's globalized globe. This is where intercultural education plays a crucial role [20]. To promote intercultural understanding and prevent racist, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant speech and deeds [21]. People are given a knowledge of multiculturalism as an asset rather than a burden through intercultural education. Globalization and modern technologies have forced people to contact with one another, communicate, share ideas, and work together even when they originate from diverse cultural origins.

The fact of multiculturalism has not been universally embraced. Intercultural education needs to be implemented and practiced going forward for this reason. Intercultural education aims to prepare citizens for a world that is becoming more multicultural [22]. Because preparing people to perform well in their environment is a key goal of education. Effective intercultural education is believed to enhance multicultural societies [23]. As a result, it promotes the growth of an open-minded mindset, acceptance of many cultures, and development in a true intercultural dimension. Social media and other forms of information technology have allowed the world's population to communicate and get various advantages from one another.

Through collaborative teaching and learning program activities, intercultural cooperation can be used to use social media for intercultural knowledge competence [24]. Local and national trans communities are eventually built up into the global community through intercultural collaboration in the virtual realm of social media [25]. Social media and the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship, which promotes peace, social justice, and intercultural collaboration, serve as bridges across civilizations.

There are some gaps in the use of social media for intercultural education. Lack of intercultural education has resulted in hate speech and a bad reputation for other cultures [26, 27]. Social media users that misrepresent other civilizations as being corrupt, impoverished, and unfree. Naturally, it will significantly impede cross cultural communication and be viewed as a failure of cross-cultural education. This makes the findings more crucial as we work to improve intercultural competence through social media.

3 Method

This study uses the Literature Review [28, 29]. Journal articles were searched from Elsevier, SAGE, Taylor & Francis, Springer Nature, and ERIC databases. Using the keywords "Social Media" AND "Intercultural Education", obtained journal articles for further research. Journal articles are excluded if only one topic appears and the research findings are not in line with the objectives of the literature review. There are keywords that emerged explaining that social media and intercultural education gave rise to various themes and concepts (See Table 1 and Fig. 1). The literature review also uses the snowball technique in looking at the theories and models used from the journal articles. The results of the literature review are discussed further.

Table 1. Various themes and concepts “social media and intercultural education”

N. 29	Themes and Concepts
Yang, C. (2018); Pang, H., & Wang, J. (2020); Hofhuis, J., et al. (2019); Raman, P., & Harwood, J. (2016); McKelvy, L., & Chatterjee, K. (2016).	Cultural Acculturation
Lang, A. (2012); Liu, N., & Zhang, Y. B. (2020); Ding, H. (2020); Ndiaye, I. A., & Ndiaye, B. (2014); Chen, H.-I. (2016); Wang, L. H., & Metzger, M. J. (2021); Akhmadieva, R. S., et al. (2020).	Intercultural Communication
Pang, H. (2020); Rui, J. R., & Wang, H. (2015); Sandel, T. L. (2014); Alamri, B. (2018).	Cross-culture Adaption
Gannon, J., et al. (2016); Jones, B., et al. (2019).	Intercultural Collaboration
Li, C. (2014).	Cultural Symbols
Qiu, L., et al. (2013).	Cultural differences
Peters, A. N., et al. (2015); Waters, R. D., & Lo, K. D. (2012).	Cultural Influences
Liu, Y. (2016)	Intercultural Exchange
Ngai, P. B., et al. (2020); Yousaf, S., & Xiucheng, F. (2018).	Stigmatized
Sobré-Denton, M. (2016); Li, C., et al. (2019).	Virtual intercultural
Cao, C., & Meng, Q. (2020); Shiao, H. C. (2016).	Intercultural Networks

**Fig. 1.** Mapping wordclouds using (WordArt.com).

4 Result of Research

4.1 The Role of Social Media in Intercultural Education

Social media is known as a contextual intercultural communication tool that connects users from different cultures [1, 30–32]. Language and culture are challenges in making friendships. The presence of social media not only answers these challenges, it is even better that social media can maintain friendships from different countries and cultures [33]. Communication through social media to students studying abroad improves global

skills and attitudes, as well as social capital [34]. Finally, social media not only provides students studying abroad for language practice but can also practice intercultural knowledge, interpretation skills, intercultural discovery, attitudes, and cultural awareness different from the home country. Chen [35], emphasized that it is not the quality of social media that allows intercultural communication to occur, but the combination of interlocutor reactions such as comments and discussions and intercultural understanding that creates cultural experiences on social media.

On social media users can interact which has an impact on intercultural exchanges, building virtual communities and intercultural collaboration [24, 25, 36–38]. Social media is also known to contribute to cultural acculturation [39, 40, 40]. Besides being used to build and create relationships in new communities as a process of cultural acculturation, social media also allows users to express their identity [41]. Cultural acculturation can occur if the intensity of using social media more often and responses from other cultures can lead to better adaptation [40, 41]. The process of cultural adaptation can be optimal if social media users are proficient in using the host language and regularly communicate with them through social media [43, 44].

4.2 Theories in Social Media Research and Intercultural Education

The theory of cultural acculturation and theory of cultural adaptation is relatively often used as an analytical knife in social media research and intercultural education. Acculturation is conceptualized as a gradual transformation of cultural change resulting from cross-cultural communication [46]. Berry formulated four acculturation strategies, namely integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization to categorize people who have just come to a place or country by bringing their cultural identity against the local indigenous culture [47].

Kim proposed a cross-cultural adaptation theory in explaining the adaptation process experienced by immigrants to reduce the level of psychological stress due to cultural differences [48]. This theory explains that individuals who come to a new place experience stress dynamics that encourage adaptation practices such as communication with the local community. Despite the similarities between the two theories. A clear difference in focus, acculturation focuses on shifting self-claimed cultural identity from the home culture to the host culture, whereas adaptation concentrates on acquiring social skills and enhancing psychological well-being. Culture shock theory can explain the occurrence of acculturation and cultural adaptation [49]. Culture shock refers to the type of anxiety that occurs in an individual when he or she arrives in a new place and culture [50]. Uses and Gratifications theory [51] and virtual cosmopolitanism model [25, 52] bridge social media interventions in intercultural education research.

4.3 Implications Literature Review of the Social Media and Intercultural Education

Intercultural communication is the most common theme in the study of social media and intercultural education. This implies that intercultural communication is in the “grip”. Social media users can communicate with different cultures with them. Can be done anywhere, not limited to distance and location. Allows users to express opinions, share

information and knowledge, and of course interact with each other [53] to get to know other people's cultures and traditions. Because social media is at grip, it can reflect intercultural experiences through their understanding of the existing cultural diversity. As Chen [35] emphasized that a person's knowledge, attitudes, and understanding of culture can be reflected through social media.

Intercultural communication will continue to be very important because we live in a multi-ethnic and multicultural world. For this reason, social media exists as a bridge between cultures so that they can communicate and interact with each other. However, social media does not always have a positive nuance in intercultural education. Social media can also influence one's stereotype of others [26]. One example is during the COVID-19 outbreak, people in Singapore have negative stereotypes about immigrants from Tiongkok [54]. The very fast spread of information on social media, allows everyone in the world to know where the outbreak came from. So that it has an impact on limiting oneself so as not to interact and communicate with certain groups. Stereotypes of other cultures also have an impact on privacy management on social media [55], by protecting and limiting contact with people from negatively stereotyped cultures. However, in general, social media is very useful for intercultural education, especially intercultural communication.

Maximizing the potential of social media for intercultural communication can be done with a variety of collaborative programs and projects [30, 31]. Governments, campuses, and organizational groups can use social media for intercultural education purposes. Carry out activities and cooperation with other cultural groups. As exemplified by Jones [18], utilizing social media Facebook as a collaborative project from two countries with different cultures. Collaborative programs and projects will certainly be more cost effective. Unlike student exchange programs, which require a large amount of money. Social media is only based on a stable internet connection and can be followed wherever you are. It means that distance and location are also not a barrier to collaborative programs and projects. Apart from collaborative programs and projects, social media users can learn self-taught to know and communicate with people from different countries and cultures. Ome TV followed by Youtube is a real example of individuals being able to maximize intercultural communication [56]. People from different cultures, regions and countries can communicate with each other. Increase a friendship relations, without having to claim each other that the culture is the most superior. For this reason, social media at grip should be maximized. In a multi-ethnic and multicultural world to get to know each other and make friends.

5 Conclusion

The presence of social media in intercultural education raises many themes and contributions, such as intercultural communication, cultural acculturation, cultural adaptation, cultural collaboration, community building, intercultural competency development, information exchange, promoting global communities, and intercultural exchanges. Interestingly, from the many themes that emerged, intercultural communication through social media became more in the spotlight for researchers. For this reason, communication in the "grip" (social media) should be optimized by stakeholders in intercultural

education. For example, it does not deny the role of student or student exchange programs with other countries in shaping intercultural education competencies. Through programs and collaborations that utilize social media, it is clearly more efficient and saves costs. Especially when faced with the problem of a pandemic that requires staying at home, social media will certainly become increasingly important in intercultural education learning. In-grip communication can also be maximized by individuals as social media users. To create a world community that knows each other and is friendly. Not mutually claiming the most superior culture. This study has limitations, in that the journal articles are limited to only five databases and are in the last decade. For this reason, future studies are expected to be more comprehensive. Intercultural research and the presence of social media are very important and must continue to be carried out because cultural pluralism has become a necessity. More efficient and saves costs. Especially when faced with the problem of a pandemic that requires staying at home, social media will certainly become increasingly important in intercultural education learning. In-grip communication can also be maximized by individuals as social media users. To create a world community that knows each other and is friendly. Not mutually claiming the most superior culture. This study has limitations, in that the journal articles are limited to only five databases and are in the last decade. For this reason, future studies are expected to be more comprehensive. Intercultural research and the presence of social media are very important and must continue to be carried out because cultural pluralism has become a necessity.

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