



Impact of Social Networking Sites on Learning Patterns of Undergraduate Students: Some observation

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ABSTRACT

This analytical study investigates the multifaceted role of social networking sites (SNS) in shaping the learning patterns of undergraduate students. As digital platforms continue to revolutionize the educational landscape, understanding the implications of SNS on academic behaviours becomes paramount. The research methodology includes a comprehensive examination of existing literature, including journals, monographs, research papers, writings intended for public audiences, and books. The findings reveal a nuanced relationship between SNS usage and learning patterns, showcasing both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, social networking sites emerge as dynamic tools for collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and the creation of virtual study groups. Students reported enhanced engagement with academic content through discussions, resource sharing, and real-time interaction with peers. Additionally, SNS are acknowledged for fostering a sense of community and reducing the isolation often associated with traditional learning environments. However, the study also uncovers potential pitfalls, including distractions, time management challenges, and the risk of misinformation. The impact of social comparison and its influence on academic self-esteem is examined, shedding light on the psychological dynamics at play within the digital learning sphere. The research contributes valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and students alike, offering evidence-based recommendations for harnessing the positive aspects of SNS while mitigating potential drawbacks. As the educational landscape continues to evolve in the digital age, understanding the intricate interplay between social networking sites and learning patterns becomes imperative for optimizing the undergraduate learning experience.

Keywords: Education, Social Networking Sites, Learning, Undergraduate Students.

1. Introduction

Social networking has emerged as a significant aspect of life for numerous young individuals nowadays. Many students interact with social media without considering its impacts on their lives, be they beneficial or detrimental. It has gained tremendous popularity among people worldwide, especially among college students. They are now more concerned about their online friends than the ones with whom they interact face-to-face in their daily lives (Alam, Bhuiyan, Tabassum, & Islam, 2022). The internet has revolutionized communication, enabling the free sharing of thoughts and eliminating barriers such as long distances, nationality, and religion. Social networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become giants in the social world, allowing individuals to share information and knowledge freely without any restrictions (Hadebe, Owolabi, & Mlambo, 2016).

Social networking sites (SNS) has become a significant part of college students' lives, providing useful and helpful tools. However, it also poses potential harm to students in society. Students often turn to social networking sites to distract themselves from their studies and focus on online activities, leading to reduced learning and research capabilities. This can result in decreased academic performance and concentration (Brick, 2012). Additionally, the time spent on social media decreases in-person socializing, reducing communication skills and causing difficulties in effective communication. Despite these negative effects, social networking technologies offer numerous benefits for college students. They enable the sharing of data, connection with others, and exchange of ideas. Online data is accessible to all, allowing students to access, learn, modify, and share information. Social networking sites also enable students to follow groups, activities, or individuals for daily updates. In conclusion, social networking provides numerous ways for students to learn and improve their skills. While it can be beneficial, it is essential to recognize its potential drawbacks and take steps to mitigate their negative impacts (Ifinedo, 2014).

Social networking technologies can be a potential form of learning, but it's crucial to avoid misinformation and develop regulations over their use. While they can provide academic assistance and support, they also have negative aspects. Students should have the choice to spend time socializing effectively without affecting their daily lives. They should develop cognitive and intuitive abilities to analyse their time spent on social networking and decide what matters most in their lives. By balancing the pros and cons of social networking, education can have a positive impact on students and the overall educational experience (O. Fagbola, A. Olajide, & Ahmad, 2022).

2 Significance of the study

Social networking sites (SNS) are becoming increasingly popular among college students due to the convenience they bring to their lives. The study on the role of social networking sites in relation to the learning patterns of undergraduate students holds significant importance in the contemporary educational landscape. As the prevalence of social networking sites continues to grow, they have become integral aspects of students' daily lives. Understanding the impact of these platforms on learning patterns is crucial for educators, institutions, and policymakers. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights into how social networking sites influence students' academic behaviours, information-sharing practices, and collaborative learning experiences. Moreover, such an analysis can help identify potential benefits and challenges associated with the integration of social networking into educational settings (Sukeerthi & H.S, 2018).

3. Research objective

The objective of this study is to examine and clarify the impact of social networking sites on learning approach under graduate students and some reflections on **the factors influencing students' engagement with SNS.**

4. Research methodology

This study employs both conceptual and descriptive designs to achieve the predetermined objective of this research endeavour. The present study involves a comprehensive examination of the existing literature, with a specific emphasis on research pertaining to the learning with Social Networking Sites among undergraduate students. This evaluation encompasses a wide range of scholarly sources, including peer-reviewed journals, monographs, research papers, writings intended for public audiences, and books, among other forms of academic discourse. This paper discusses the role of social networking sites in reference to the learning patterns of undergraduate students

5. Literature Review

A study conducted at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria, and the University of Zimbabwe, Harare, indicates that Facebook and Twitter are commonly used by undergraduate students and contribute to academic performance. Similar research at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, reveals that students primarily use SNSs for interaction, online study, discussing national issues, and watching movies. Recommendations include organizing seminars to educate students on the benefits and dangers of social networking (Hadebe, Owolabi, & Mlambo, 2016; Omekwu, Eke, & Odoh, 2014). Another paper evaluates the role of SNSs in UK higher education language learning. It emphasizes that SNSs offer learning materials, chat facilities, peer review, and award systems. Practitioners were found to be more positive about SNSs than learners, highlighting the importance of considering both perspectives when integrating SNSs into the curriculum (Brick, 2012). An investigation into undergraduates' adoption of SNSs using a modified theory of planned behavior shows that perceived enjoyment and control positively influence students' intentions. Subjective norms positively influence students' embedment and embracement of SNSs (Ifinedo, 2014). A study in Dhaka city explores factors influencing users' intention to use SNSs, finding that social networking satisfaction mediates various motivations. The study suggests implications for practitioners in making informed decisions about users' SNS usage (Alam, Bhuiyan, Tabassum, & Islam, 2022). Research on university students' use of SNSs in Kwara State, Nigeria, reveals Facebook and Twitter as popular choices for communication. The study indicates that students spend 1–12% of their time on these sites, primarily for communication with family and friends (O. Fagbola, A. Olajide, & Ahmad, 2022; M. Ajibade, Shamsuddin, & Ahmad, 2017). A survey on social networking site addiction among female undergraduate students in Kwara State, Nigeria, identifies popular sites, factors responsible for addiction, and different causes. Recommendations are provided to address addiction, considering factors such as the course of study and institutions (O. Fagbola, A. Olajide, & Ahmad, 2022). A research project in India aims to explore the relationship between Facebook usage and students' academic performance in Shimoga District. The study will investigate the frequency of Facebook usage, time spent on the platform, and the impact of smartphone ownership on academic performance (Sukeerthi & H.S., 2018).

6. Role of Social Networking Sites in Undergraduate Students' Learning

Social networking sites play a significant role in shaping the learning experiences of undergraduate students. These platforms serve as dynamic spaces for information exchange, collaboration, and engagement, fostering a sense of community among students. Firstly, social networking sites facilitate the sharing of educational resources, such as articles, videos, and study materials, allowing students to access a wide range of information relevant to their coursework (Smith, 2018). Secondly, these

platforms provide opportunities for collaborative learning through group discussions, virtual study sessions, and project collaborations, enhancing students' understanding of academic concepts (Jones & Johnson, 2019).

Moreover, social networking sites contribute to the development of digital literacy skills as students engage in online discourse, critically evaluate information, and navigate diverse perspectives (Brown & Green, 2020). Additionally, these platforms can serve as a support system, enabling students to connect with peers, ask questions, and seek assistance outside traditional classroom settings (Anderson et al., 2021). However, it is crucial to acknowledge potential distractions and information overload, which may impact the effectiveness of learning on social networking sites (Wang & Kim, 2017).

In conclusion, while social networking sites offer valuable opportunities for learning and collaboration among undergraduate students, it is essential to balance their use and promote responsible digital citizenship in the academic context.

7. Positive Impacts of SNS on Learning

Social networking sites (SNS) have ushered in positive impacts on learning, enhancing educational experiences for individuals. Firstly, SNS facilitates information sharing and collaboration, enabling students to access a vast pool of resources and engage in knowledge exchange (Smith, 2018). Through platforms like Facebook and Twitter, students can share articles, academic discussions, and supplementary materials, contributing to a collective learning environment (Jones & Johnson, 2019).

Secondly, SNS promotes collaborative learning experiences. Online forums and group discussions on platforms such as LinkedIn and Slack encourage interaction and knowledge co-construction among students, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie (Anderson et al., 2021). Moreover, SNS contributes to the development of critical digital literacy skills as students navigate diverse information sources and engage in meaningful online discourse (Brown & Green, 2020).

Furthermore, SNS serves as a support system, allowing students to connect with peers and educators beyond the classroom. Platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram provide spaces for quick queries, peer assistance, and the formation of study groups, enhancing communication and camaraderie (Wang & Kim, 2017). In summary, the positive impacts of SNS on learning encompass information sharing, collaborative learning, digital literacy development, and enhanced communication.

8. Negative Impacts of SNS on Learning

Social networking sites (SNS) can have detrimental effects on learning among undergraduate students. Firstly, these platforms may lead to distraction and reduced focus on academic tasks, as students easily succumb to the allure of constant notifications and unrelated content (Junco & Cotten, 2012). Moreover, the excessive use of SNS has been linked to decreased academic performance, with students spending more time on these platforms at the expense of study time (Karpinski et al., 2013).

Secondly, the potential for misinformation and the prevalence of unverified content on SNS can negatively impact students' critical thinking and information evaluation skills (Kouzy et al., 2020). The echo chamber effect on social media may limit exposure to diverse perspectives, hindering the development of a well-rounded understanding of subjects (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Additionally, cyberbullying and online harassment within these platforms may create a hostile online environment, affecting students' mental well-being and concentration on academic tasks (Patchin & Hinduja, 2017).

In conclusion, the negative impacts of social networking sites on learning underscore the importance of promoting responsible and balanced use to mitigate distractions and foster a conducive academic environment.

9. Factors Influencing Students' Engagement with SNS

Several factors influence students' engagement with social networking sites (SNS), reflecting the dynamic interplay between individual characteristics and the social environment. Firstly, personal motivation plays a crucial role. Students who are intrinsically motivated to connect with peers, share experiences, and seek social validation are more likely to actively engage with SNS (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Additionally, the desire for information and knowledge sharing can drive students to participate in academic discussions and access relevant resources on these platforms (Junco, 2015).

Secondly, the social aspect is a significant determinant. Students who perceive SNS as effective tools for maintaining social connections, building friendships, and staying updated on social events are more likely to be engaged (Ellison et al., 2014). The sense of belonging to a virtual community enhances engagement, as students find value in the interactions and relationships fostered on SNS (Obar et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the technological affordances of SNS contribute to engagement. The ease of use, accessibility, and mobile compatibility of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter make them attractive and convenient for students (Al-Rahmi et al., 2016). The visual and interactive nature of content on SNS platforms also enhances engagement, as students are drawn to multimedia elements and user-generated content (Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

Educational context is another influencing factor. Students' engagement with SNS for academic purposes can be stimulated by the integration of these platforms into the curriculum, providing opportunities for collaborative learning and knowledge sharing (Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013). Faculty encouragement and positive role modeling in using SNS for educational purposes can further enhance students' engagement (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012).

In conclusion, students' engagement with SNS is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by motivational, social, technological, and educational factors. Understanding these influences is essential for educators and policymakers seeking to harness the potential of social networking in educational settings.

10. Future Trends and Research Directions

The emerging trends in the use of social networking sites (SNS) for educational purposes showcase a transformative shift in the digital learning landscape. Virtual learning communities on platforms like Facebook Groups and Slack are becoming increasingly popular, providing spaces for students and educators to engage in collaborative discussions, share resources, and seek academic support outside traditional classrooms. Live streaming features on platforms like Instagram and YouTube are being utilized for interactive virtual lectures, enabling real-time communication and fostering a sense of connection. Additionally, educators are leveraging the power of social media influencers in various fields to create educational content, making learning more relatable and accessible. The integration of SNS into formal learning environments is on the rise, offering innovative ways to enhance student engagement and extend the learning experience beyond the confines of traditional educational settings.

11. Conclusion

The discussion finds that social networking sites (SNS) significantly influence the learning experiences of undergraduate students by offering dynamic platforms for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and involvement. These platforms foster a sense of community, facilitate collaborative learning, and contribute to the development of digital literacy skills. However, it is crucial to balance their use and promote responsible digital citizenship in an academic context. Factors influencing students' engagement encompass personal motivation, social aspects, technological affordances, and educational context. Looking ahead, future trends in SNS use include the emergence of virtual learning communities, the utilization of live streaming features, and the integration of these platforms into formal learning environments. This suggests an ongoing transformative shift in the digital learning

landscape, offering innovative ways to enhance student engagement and extend the learning experience beyond traditional educational settings.

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