The Journal of Social Media for Learning

JSML

2021 Summer Edition

OJS
OPEN JOURNAL SYSTEMS

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

Table of Contents

Editorial

Research Papers

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

Editorial

Dawne Irving-Bell, Sue Beckingham, Matt McLain and David Wooff

Welcome to our second edition of The Journal of Social Media for Learning.

This is a relatively new journal where our ethos is centred around the creation of a supportive space where all colleagues, but particularly those new to publishing, can contribute to the scholarly discourse about their academic practice, and if they so wish secure opportunities to gain experience of peer-review and journal editing.

Our inaugural edition was special in many ways, not least because it celebrated the outcomes of work presented at our 2019 Conference, but also because it came at the end of what was a most unusual year.

As we moved into 2021 the unprecedented challenges continue and as such, we are grateful to all of our authors for their continued commitment in working to share their innovations with us in this way.

The disruptions caused by the Covid-19 global pandemic have left us all at one time or another with feelings of uncertainty, and there can be no time more important than right now to continue to share our practice; to support each other and help ensure our students continue to have equity of opportunity and an outstanding student experience.

As Higher Education institutions globally have pivoted to online pedagogical approaches for delivery, sharing the most innovative learning and teaching strategies could not be timelier. Hence it is with great delight that we welcome within our second edition several papers from our international neighbours and colleagues.

The first of which is provided in the form of an insightful and thought-provoking paper written by Sara Santarossa, Paige Coyne, and Sarah J. Woodruff. Presented as a case study this study offers an international perspective on the use of Instagram to create an online learning environment. Engaging first year students in a Kinesiology class, by utilizing hashtag data, we learn how distractors, such as social media, may be used to elicit agency, deep learning, reflection, and critical thinking among students in higher education in Canada.

Capturing research published between 201-2020 our next paper presents a systematic review of the literature of the use of Social Media for Academic Purpose. In this work, selected from 76 empirical studies, Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu, Stephen Mutula and Sambo Atanda Saliu (who are based in South Africa and Nigeria respectively) examine 35 papers and offer perspectives on the promise social media technology holds for improving academic engagement, knowledge sharing and community building.

In our next paper Danielle Ligocki is 'All about the drama!'. Based at Oakland University, Rochester, USA, presenting findings from her research with pre-teens and teenagers, her paper offers invaluable international insights into the necessity of critical media literacy in public education. In a world where the lives of youth everywhere are shaped by a variety of texts and incessant media exposure, tackling the issues Danielle's study presents a critical analysis of the ways in which youth interact with media and how the images and lifestyles that are portrayed may be affecting the way they both view themselves and others.

Penned by Vanessa Parson from the University of Sunderland, UK, and Hannah Bain, from the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK, our fourth paper entitled "In it together: Staff-Student Facebook groups promote collaborative learning and formation of a cohort identity." Presents findings from their research, Vanessa and Hannah invite us to explore the use and potential of Facebook as an educational tool to support the formation of a cohort identity and to improve student engagement which can impact positively on both retention and student performance.

Then all too quickly we come to our final paper. Brining our second truely international edition to a close, we have a wonderful collaborative piece of research written by colleagues from the University of Ghana. In their work Joseph Bawa, Ebenezer Odame Darkwah, Abdul Hamid Kwarteng, Anthony Ayim and Michael Kojo Kolugu encourage us to consider the effects of social media on the academic lives of University of Ghana undergraduate students as well as their coping strategies in dealing with the social media pressures.

So, as this editorial draws to a close we hope that you will find this second issue invaluable for sharing practical innovative ideas that you can adopt and adapt for immediate use within your own practice.

Finally, we would like to recognise that while it has been another challenging year, we would like to acknowledge the time, effort and patience of all of our reviewers and authors. with particular thanks going to Catherine Dishman who oversees the OJS at Liverpool John Moore's University. Once again it truly has been a team effort with everyone pulling together on this journey to bring this issue to fruition!

Kindest
Dawne, Sue, Matt and David

Dawne Irving-Bell, Sue Beckingham, Matt McLain and David Wooff

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

A case study using Instagram to create an online learning environment

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, Detroit, Michigan, USA
[2]University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Although there is a high prevalence of personal distractions/distractors (e.g., social media) in higher education, only a few instructors are implementing them for educational purposes. The present case study explored how Instagram engaged first year students in a Kinesiology class by utilizing hashtag data. Results suggested that greater than half of the class engaged in the online learning environment. Text analysis revealed nearly half of the data was categorized as good feelings, and Instagram posts revealed that students applied course concepts and met learning outcomes. Social network analysis revealed a lack of discussion/communication amongst students, however, conversation appeared to be centralized around the opinion leader (i.e., the instructor), and extended beyond those registered in the class. This case study provided an insight into how distractors, such as social media, may be used to elicit agency, deep learning, reflection, and critical thinking among students in higher education.

Keywords

Social media; post-secondary education; learning communities; participatory learning

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

3

A case study using Instagram to create an online learning environment

Using alternative instructional strategies to maximize student learning in the higher education classroom (i.e., active learning) has developed from converging evidence that the promotion of deep and lasting student learning comes from more than just that of a lecture presentation of the course content (Eison, 2010). Student's report being easily bored with traditional learning methods (Barnes, Marateo, & Ferris, 2007) and as the structures of our society change, our classrooms and educational systems must also change, grow, and adapt to suit the needs of a new generation of learners. Pedagogies to accommodate the learning landscape for this present generation look different than the past. New generation learners have grown up with digital and cyber technologies and tend to seek independence and autonomy in their learning styles (Barnes et al., 2007) for they have always lived in a world in which they can actively acquire information. Moreover, the current generation of learners has been criticized as being distracted and for the purpose of this paper these distractors/distractions are being defined in relation to digital devices (i.e., laptops, smartphones, other media devices) and the online platforms they support (i.e., Internet, social media).

Within the literature, there are various criticisms and/or challenges in using distractions for teaching/learning. Technological devices (e.g., laptops, phones) in the classroom are thought to not only be a distraction to the person using it and those around them (Glass & Kang, 2019; Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013), but can be less effective for learning and note taking (Fried, 2008; Glass & Kang, 2019; Sana et al., 2013). Moreover, such technological devices may provide opportunities for incivility and poor behaviour (Bayless, Clipson, & Wilson, 2013), and may have accessibility and socioeconomic challenges (Schmetzke, 2001). In addition, in an era of digital distractions, the continual switching of attention may have significant implications for post-secondary students in regard to teaching and learning as the time spent switching between tasks results in lost information (May & Elder, 2018). Research suggests that students who multi-task have poorer academic performance compared to those who single-task while attending lectures (Bellur, Nowak, & Hull, 2015; McCoy, 2016; Ravizza, Hambrick, & Fenn, 2014). Further, students report using distractions for recreational purposes during class time, and the use of these distractions interfered with their learning (McCoy, 2016). Other potential pitfalls of using distractions in the classroom include privacy concerns for faculty and students such as not understanding privacy settings, the need for student education records to be kept protected, and class discussion on social media might reveal students' identification to the public (Chen & Bryer, 2012). Finding ways to help students use the distractions for learning, rather than entertainment or personal interactions exists as another potential pitfall (Chen & Bryer, 2012).

On the other hand, distractors in the classroom can provide new opportunities to increase interactivity and communication (Barak, Lipson, & Lerman, 2006; Barry, Murphy, & Drew, 2015) and provide effective tools for learning (Barak et al., 2006; Barry et al., 2015; Greenhow, Gibbins, & Menzer, 2015). Despite potential challenges that may arise, using distractions for teaching and learning is progressive and allows students to work collaboratively, construct knowledge, and engage interactively to facilitate better student learning (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010). Leveraging distractions can facilitate discussion and knowledge transfer between students and create a deeper sense of understanding of the course material. This may help students move away from strictly memorization as these distractions are potential resources to create personally meaningful learning experiences (Hamid, Waycott, Kurnia, & Chang, 2015). In addition to monitoring student progress and behaviour (Dahlstrom & Bichsel, 2014; Samson, 2010), as well as helping students develop digital self-regulation skills and digital literacies/competencies (Greenhow et al., 2012; Lindroth & Bergquist, 2010), using distractors may offer up a new high-impact practice technique for higher education. Ultimately, this method allows for self-involvement in the learning process and if structured appropriately more hands-on, inquiry-based approaches to learning.

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

However, several limitations are noted amongst the polarizing literature. Such limitations include small sample sizes (Gao, Luo, & Zhang, 2012), self-reported vs. actual measurements/ observations (Tarantino, McDonough, & Hua, 2013), and few have involved structured (e.g., integrated /constructively aligned; Hew, 2011; Luo & Gao, 2012) or academic (e.g., contributing to learning outcomes) use of devices (Hew, 2011; Moran, Seaman, & Tinti-Kane, 2011). Furthermore, limited evidence exists to determine whether all devices (or platforms) are equal, in regards to risks/benefits, and/or whether there are certain characteristics within each device/platform that are necessary. Of the studies that have looked at higher education classrooms, many do not look at leveraging students' current distractions (e.g., social media) for teaching and learning, but rather introduce new distractions such as clicker technology (Barr, 2017; Sun, 2014). In addition, much of the research in higher education is in classes, such as computer networking courses (Alioon & Delialioğlu, 2017), and/or e-learning and videoconferencing (Giesbers, Rienties, Tempelaar, & Gijselaers, 2013), where distractions would be readily available and perhaps easier to implement into the course context. However, research has shown that distractions can be utilized as an instructional medium to blend informal learning into formal learning environments (Chen & Bryer, 2012), and increase student engagement (Annetta, Minogue, Holmes, & Cheng, 2009; Chen, Lambert, & Guidry, 2010; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011), which may lead to positive student learning outcomes such as critical thinking and individual student development (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006; Pike, Kuh, & McCormick, 2011). Despite the high prevalence of personal use of distractions (e.g., social media), and possible benefits of using them for teaching/learning, a low percentage of students and instructors are implementing them for educational purposes. As a result, limited research exists on the pedagogies of incorporating such distractions, creating a lack of available resources from which educators may seek guidance, which in turn hinders the ability to know how to implement such methods into their classroom (Chen & Bryer, 2012).

Insights obtained from case studies can directly influence policy, procedures, and future research (Merriam, 2001). Thus the current case study aims to not only shed light on how distractors may help foster critical thinking skills, by creating a learning environment whereby students have to make connections between course concepts, adapt them, and extend them into a new concept (i.e., a post on social media) but also act as a resource to future educators. As the majority of young adults (18-29 years) are engaging with some form of social media (a common distractor) multiple times throughout the day (Duggan & Smith, 2014; Santarossa & Woodruff, 2017; Smith & Anderson, 2018), the course instructor, sought to create a social media-based type of assessment and learning environment that both constructively align with eliciting student performance beyond the classroom into other sites of practice. As such, beginning in 2012, various social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) were incorporated into a first year mandatory Kinesiology. While young adults' use of some social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) have remained unchanged over the last several years, their use of Instagram has continued to see significant growth (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Instagram has become a platform for visual communication and gives users the opportunity to experiment with their public personas (e.g., self-present in any way they see fit), gives a platform for sociological analysis (Baker & Walsh, 2018), and creates a global community supportive of a culture of sharing. Thus, given its continued growth, popularity among university aged individuals, and the ability to collaboratively build knowledge, the course instructor decided to adopt Instagram as the social media platform of choice in 2018, and the present case study utilized hashtag data from Instagram in order to examine how a photo-based social media site could engage first year students in a mandatory/introductory Kinesiology class. More specifically, there were two research questions (RQ):

RQ1: Descriptively, using a class hashtag on Instagram, determine what is the nature of the online learning environment, taking class concepts and extending them into a new online context?

RQ2: How many students engaged in the online conversation and what types of interactions took place?

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Methods

Case studies are a type of qualitative research that focus on a single unit or system bounded by space and time, consisting of intensive analyses and descriptions (Hancock &Algizzine, 2006). The hope of a case study analysis is to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved, which may mean examining topics surrounding individuals, events, or groups. The current research uses a case study of a first year mandatory 12-week Kinesiology course, Health and Wellness. Students in Health and Wellness are expected to accrue 10% of their overall grade for experiential learning marks. Usually, the experiential learning tasks are 2% each (pass/fail) and target a wide variety of activities that expand classroom material into real world settings (they can do up five tasks at 2% each for a total of 10% of their final grade). During the winter term (2018), 1 of the 12 possible options was to engage the instructor 15 times on Instagram with quality images or short videos using the hashtag #HK200 (course code at the time). Further instructions included that all posts must come from open/public accounts (students could create a new account if needed) and be completed by the end of classes (April 5, 2018). Finally, it was instructed that all posts should not come in succession (all in one day) and students were reminded that any inappropriate posts would result in receiving zero experiential learning marks (0 out of 10%) without question/discussion.

Data Analysis

Data were collected using Netlytic (Gruzd, 2016), an open source software, which captured #HK200 posts from Instagram from January 2, 2018 through April 11, 2018. The time period covers the entire duration of the classes, plus an additional week to account for any late posts (as all students were expected to have reached their 15 posts by the last day of class - April 5, 2018). The dataset was manually cleaned to remove any posts not associated with the class and was re-uploaded to Netlytic for analyses.

For RQ1, Netylic (Gruzd, 2016) was used to identify popular topics within the #HK200 dataset by counting word frequency. Furthermore, the software created categories of words and phrases to represent broader concepts (e.g., positive vs. negative words) and then automatically identified and organized all words into generic categories (e.g., appearance, time, size) based on synonyms (e.g., appearance – healthy, cute; time – early, young, late) to represent broader concepts within the data. In addition, to better understand the nature of the online learning environment and illustrate the ability for this experiential learning task to elicit agency, deep learning, reflection, and critical thinking, descriptions of a few #HK200 posts are provided to give examples of how the posts related to the Health and Wellness course Learning Outcomes. The course Learning Outcomes suggested that by the end of the course, the student would be able to: (1) List and describe the factors associated with health and wellness; (2) Collect, analyse, and evaluate health and wellness information; (3) Recognize the potential barriers for individuals trying to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle; (4) Identify high risk behaviour and its detrimental effect on health and wellness; (5) Design and employ interventions to help individual adopt a healthier lifestyle; (6) Illustrate the different health and wellness issues from a local and global perspective. For RQ2, Netlytic (Gruzd, 2016) conducted a network analysis, both a name network (i.e., who mentions whom) and a chain network (i.e., who replies to whom) to determine the degree of interaction among Instagram users within the #HK200 dataset
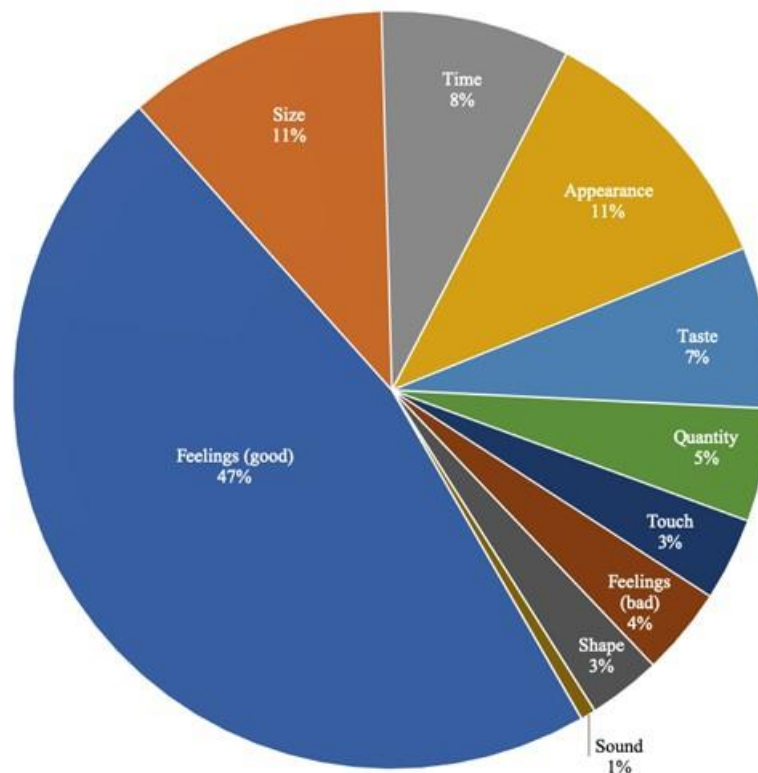
Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Results

Of the 12 possible experiential learning tasks, 'engaging the instructor 15 times on Instagram' was the second most popular task, coming in behind 'random attendance day' (i.e., the course instructor randomly chooses a day to give 2% and if the student was in class they accrued the 2% towards their final grade). Within the online conversation, there were 16,784 unique words, and Table 1 displays the 20 most commonly used words and hashtags (with #HK200 removed). The instructors handle (@[Instructors handle]) was the most common word with 977 messages (total number of messages within the dataset) and instances (total number of times mentioned within the dataset), representing 50% of the total number of posts. Figure 1 represents the most common categories of words, with good feelings being represented in 47% of the instances. Moreover, specific examples of #HK200 posts how the posts related to the Health and Wellness course Learning Outcomes are described below:

Word or hashtag	#messages	#instances
	n	n
@[Instructors handle]	977	977
time	113	129
today	112	116
good	101	111
great	100	105
healthy	92	99
love	84	86
health	82	92
week	66	76
favourite	60	61
back	58	64
stress	56	58
it's	56	59
happy	53	54
life	50	54
breakfast	50	58
studying	49	52
make	48	51
I'm	46	52
study	44	48

Table 1. Top 20 words within the #HK200 dataset

One #HK200 post titled "Effects of Sleep Deprivation" consisted of a human body with particular areas labelled (e.g., lymphatic system labelled with 'impaired immune system'): "With exams approaching always remember sleep is important! Although you may think staying up all night to study will benefit you, it can actually have a negative effect on not only your exam performance but your overall marks! #hk200 @[Instructors handle]". This particular example illustrates that the student is able to successfully 'List and describe the factors associated with health and wellness', 'Collect, analyse, and evaluate health and wellness information' as well as 'Identify high risk behaviour and its detrimental effect on health and wellness'.

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Figure 1. Categories of popular words/phrases associated with #HK200 posts

Another #HK200 post consisted of an infographic entitled "The Rise of Health and Wellness" and the caption states: "Did you know that approximately 3.2 million deaths each year are attributable to insufficient physical activity? That 43% of all adults suffer health effects as a result of stress? That yoga is a $6 billion per year industry and has increased 87% since 2004! #hk200 @[Instructors handle]". This particular example indicates that the student is again able to successfully 'Collect, analyse, and evaluate health and wellness information' but also is able to 'Illustrate the different health and wellness issues from a local and global perspective'
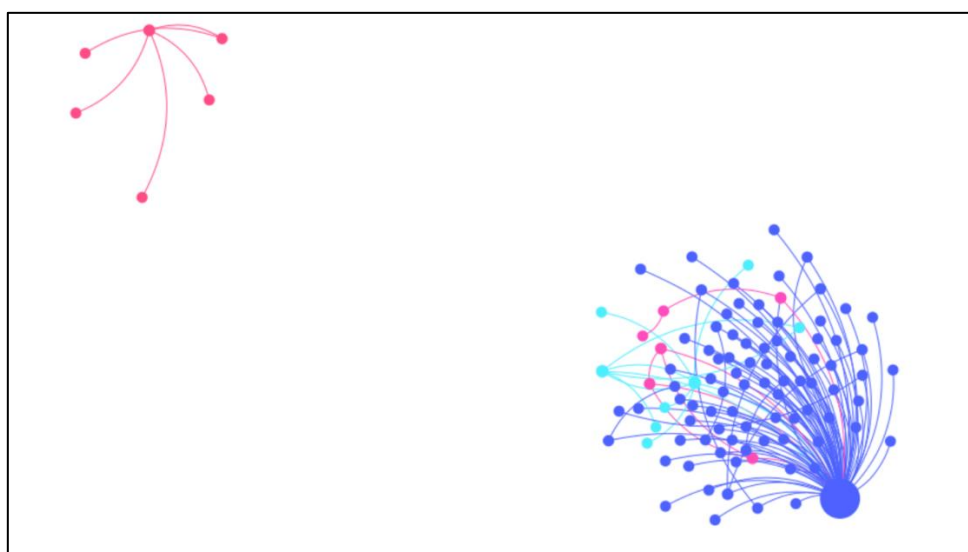
Figure 2. Name network displaying who mentions whom.
Note: The larger purple dot it the instructor of the course.

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada
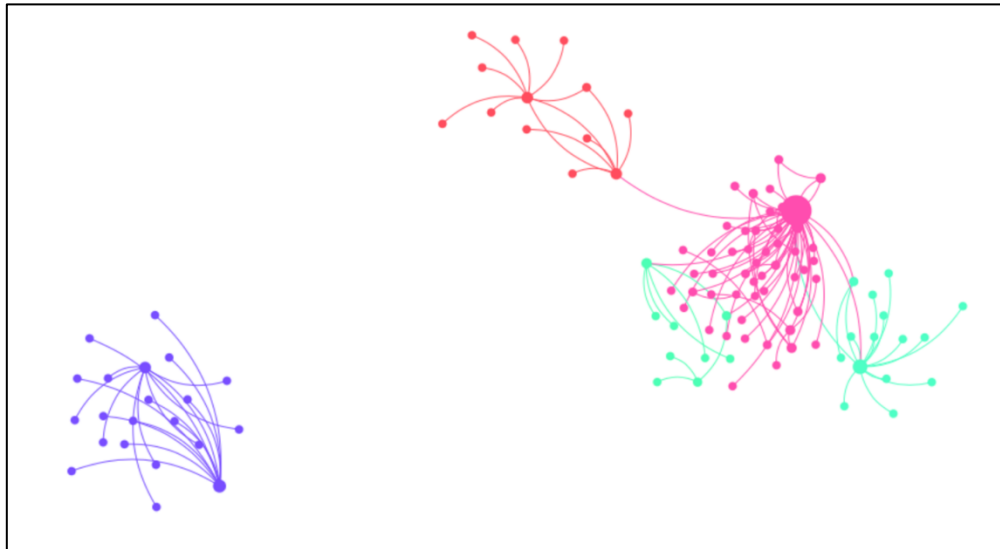
Figure 3. Chain network displaying who replies to whom.
Note. The instructor is the larger pink dot.

In regards to the number of students that engaged in the online conversation, findings suggest that out of a possible 184 students registered in the course, 102 students (55%) engaged on Instagram for grades (i.e., notified the instructor that they wanted their posts counted for the experiential learning portion of their grade). Yet, there were 234 unique posters within the dataset with a total of 1,963 posts, in which the majority were posted within the last quartile of the term. In the name network (i.e., who mentions whom) there were 134 unique personalized names with 1,503 ties (Figure 2). Within the chain network (i.e., who replies to whom), there were 235 posters with ties for a total of 617 ties (Figure 3). Detailed network properties can be seen in Table 2. The density property is close to zero for both network types, which suggests that the individuals are not connected closely to others in the network (e.g., it is not a close-knit community with people talking with each other). The posts seem to be one-sided with very little conversation generated (as noted by the low reciprocity scores). According to the degree of centrality for both the name and chain network, the low values suggest that the information flowed freely between many participants and was not dominated by a few central participants. Lastly, the modularity score was higher for the chain network, suggesting that there were clear divisions between the clusters, yet lower for the name network (suggesting that the clusters overlapped more and likely consisted of a core group of posters).

Network properties	Description	Name network	Chain network
Diameter	Calculates the longest distance between two network participants	39	13
Density	A proportion of existing ties to the total number of possible ties in a network	0.002	0.004
Reciprocity	A proportion of ties that show two-way communication (also called reciprocal ties) in relation to the total number of existing ties	0.063	0.058
Centralisation	Measures the average degree of centrality of all nodes within a network	0.199	0.122
Modularity	Helps determine whether the clusters found represent distinct communities in the network	0.055	0.743

Table 2. Detail network properties and descriptions for #HK200 on Instagram

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Discussion

This case study aimed to describe the online learning environment (via text analysis, engagement, and interactions) of a low stakes (i.e., 2%), Instagram-based, experiential learning activity for a mandatory first year Kinesiology class. Overall, the assignment was deemed successful in its ability to use a distractor to facilitate learning outside the classroom, with greater than half of the class engaging in the online assignment for part of their experiential learning grade.

Based on the top 20 words within the data, and that nearly half of the data was categorized as good feelings, the online learning environment (i.e., the content of the posts Instagram) appears to be mostly positive in nature. The positive nature of posts in the current study extends previous research which suggests that students typically perceive the inclusion of social media as enjoyable and enriching to their educational experience (Neier & Zayer, 2015; Hamid et al., 2015), thus providing evidence to the instructor of educational benefit of the assignment. Additionally, the instructor was able to use this low-stakes experiential learning activity as an opportunity for self-reflection and evaluation. Specifically, the instructor was able to see how well students were able to tie their posts with course content and even achieve or display the courses' learning outcomes. This information could then be used by the instructor to enhance and refine the assignment in the future to ensure the course continues to improve.

By providing students with an outlet to engage outside of the classroom, personal learning environments were formed (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012) and opportunities for self-directed learning and agency were created (McGloughlin & Lee, 2010). Students were able to reflect upon class concepts and past experiences to generate class content and demonstrate their understanding of class material (Fisher & Baird, 2006; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). In addition, this teaching method required students to not only make connections between what they are learning in class, academia, and broader social contexts but also to find relevant examples of class related material to share with the instructor. Thus, the current case study's social media assignment pushes students past surface level learning and into levels of deep learning and critical thinking, by engaging students in the learning taxonomies of analysis, evaluation, and creation (Krathwohl, 2002).

Furthermore, this assignment created a learning environment and assessment type that reflects performance beyond the course (Herrington & Oliver, 2000) into other sites of practice (Boud, 2009). This assignment also provided a low stakes opportunity to practice and refine skills they may be asked to use in future careers. Many students in the class will go on to pursue career in health promotion (e.g., working for a community organization or health unit), or allied health professions, at which time they may be required to utilize social media as a means to dispense information to their clients or the public at large (Lefebvre, 2009; Ramanadhan, Mendez, Rao, & Viswanath, 2013).

Yet, social network analysis revealed a lack of discussion and communication amongst students on Instagram. This was not entirely unexpected as the nature of both Instagram and the assignment was to post, not engage in discussion. As such, to improve both social diffusion and enhance the online learning environment in the future, educators might consider encouraging students to tag fellow classmates or peers in their posts and/or post questions in their captions to elicit greater conversation (Al-Bahrani & Patel, 2015). Furthermore, it may also be fruitful to establish goals and/or learning outcomes that prioritize online engagement between students and the creation of online learning communities at the onset of class.

Although discussion amongst students was limited, the total number of unique posters suggests that the online community created by this assignment extended beyond those registered in the class, as 234 unique posters were observed (with only 102 requesting marks of the 182 total students registered in the course). Thus, the instructor of this class was able to enhance students' affective learning by incorporating the underlying values of community and practicality into this assignment (Krathwohl, 2002).

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Specifically, the spread of information to those not registered in the class resulted in knowledge translation to other members of a larger online community, whereas the synthesis of knowledge and the curating of relevant, meaningful posts demonstrated students' abilities to practically apply class concepts into the real world. Moreover, with nearly 2, 000 posts added to Instagram over the 4-month class, messages of health and wellness were spread. This assignment fostered student agency by allowing students the opportunity to choose how they would like to present the ideas within this online learning environment. By giving students this choice, it may increase their sense of ownership (Turner, 2010) and their intrinsic motivation for doing the task as well as performance (Patall, Copper, & Robinson, 2008).

Finally, density results suggest that this assignment did not result in the development of a close-knit online community. As previously stated, the nature of both Instagram and the assignment are most likely the cause of this low density. However, as expected, when observing Figures 1 and 2, it is evident that the conversation appears to be centralized around the opinion leader (i.e., the course instructor). Thus, even though the density is relatively low and the interactivity between members of the learning community appears minimal, the course instructor was still able to extend their interactions with students beyond the walls of the classroom, create more personalized and meaningful student-faculty connections, and communicate with students using a language (i.e., social media) with which they are familiar.

A challenge to consider with distractions is that they are ever-changing, advancing, and evolving, thus, adaptability is important. Previous to 2018 and the use of Instagram, Health and Wellness used Twitter for a similar assignment, suggesting that distractions that may have been used at one time period may grow to become outdated. As Twitter fell out of popularity with the first year students, it became imperative to update this assignment. Thus, polling students at the beginning of the course as to which social media platform they engage with most could be useful. Furthermore, many students created new Instagram accounts to complete this assignment (thus not having many friends or followers). The reach and engagement of the posts could have been much larger had the students completed this assignment on their own personal Instagram account. Lastly, as is the nature of Instagram, creating new image-based content can sometimes be difficult and time consuming. Having a good understanding of the social media site (i.e., distractor) is imperative for successful implementation. However, the use of the distraction as part of the physical learning environment, and the conduit for instruction in higher education is an emergent area for study, with further scholarly research needed to understand the challenges and barriers associated.

Conclusion

In summary, this case study provides insight into how distractors, such as social media, may be used to elicit agency, deep learning, reflection, and critical thinking among students. This study also provides an example for future educators wishing to incorporate distractors into their courses, while also highlighting some benefits and challenges of doing so. Lastly, this study provides suggestions as to how the execution of such an assignment can be improved in the future.

For correspondence please contact: Sara Santarossa (ssantar1@hfhs.org)

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

References

Al-Bahrani, A., & Patel, D. (2015). Incorporating Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook in economicsclassrooms. *The Journal of Economic Education*, *46*(1), 56-67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2015.02.004

Alioon, Y., & Delialioğlu, Ö. (2017). The effect of authentic m-learning activities on student engagement and motivation. *British Journal of Educational Technology 50(2), 655-668.* https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12559

Annetta, L. A., Minogue, J., Holmes, S. Y., & Cheng, M. T. (2009). Investigating the impact of video games on high school students' engagement and learning about genetics. *Computers & Education*, *53*(1), 74-85. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2008.12.020

Barak, M., Lipson, A., & Lerman, S. (2006). Wireless laptops as means for promoting active learning in large lecture halls. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, *38*(3), 245-263. https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2006.10782459

Baker, S. A., & Walsh, M. J. (2018). 'Good Morning Fitfam': Top posts, hashtags and gender display on Instagram. *New Media & Society, 20*(12), 4553-4570. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818777514

Barnes, K., Marateo, R. C., & Ferris, S. P. (2007). Teaching and learning with the net generation. *Innovate: Journal of Online Education*, *3*(4), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-61350-347-8.ch015

Barr, M. L. (2017). Encouraging college student active engagement in learning: Student response methods and anonymity. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *33*(6), 621-632. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12205

Barry, S., Murphy, K., & Drew, S. (2015). From deconstructive misalignment to constructive alignment: Exploring student uses of mobile technologies in university classrooms. *Computers & Education*, *81*, 202-210. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.10.014

Bayless, M. L., Clipson, T. W., & Wilson, S. A. (2013). Faculty perceptions and policies of students' use of personal technology in the classroom. *International Journal of Electronic Business Management, 7*(3), 151-158. Retrieved from: http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/businesscom_facultypubs/32

Bellur, S., Nowak, K. L., & Hull, K. S. (2015). Make it our time: In class multitaskers have lower academic performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *53*, 63-70. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.08.026

Boud, D. (2009). How can practice reshape assessment? In G. Joughin (Ed.), *Assessment, learning and judgment in higher education* (pp. 29-44). New York, NY: Springer.

Carini, R. M., Kuh, G. D., & Klein, S. P. (2006). Student engagement and student learning: Testing the linkages. *Research in Higher Education*, *47*(1), 1-32. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-005-8150-9

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Chen, B., & Bryer, T. (2012). Investigating instructional strategies for using social media in formal and informal learning. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *13*(1), 87-104.
http://dx.doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v13i1.1027

Chen, P. S. D., Lambert, A. D., & Guidry, K. R. (2010). Engaging online learners: The impact of Web-based learning technology on college student engagement. *Computers & Education*, *54*(4), 1222-1232.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.11.008

Dabbagh, N., & Kitsantas, A. (2012). Personal learning environments, social media, and self-regulated learning: A natural formula for connecting formal and informal learning. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *15*(1), 3-8.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2011.06.002

Dahlstrom, E., & Bichsel, J. (2014). ECAR study of undergraduate students and information technology 2014 research report [PDF file]. Retrieved from:
https://www.ferris.edu/it/central-office/pdfs-docs/StudentandInformationTechnology2014.pdf

Duggan, M., & Smith, A. (2014). Social media update 2013. Retrieved from
http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/SocialMedia-Update.aspx

Eison, J. (2010). Using active learning instructional strategies to create excitement and enhance learning. *Jurnal Pendidikantentang Strategi Pembelajaran Aktif (Active Learning) Books*, *2*(1), 1-10.

Fisher, M., & Baird, D. (2006). Making mLearning work: Utilizing mobile technology for active exploration, collaboration, assessment, and reflection in higher education. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems, 35*(1), 3-30.
https://doi.org/10.2190/4T10-RX04-113N-8858

Fried, C. B. (2008). In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning. *Computers & Education*, *50*(3), 906-914.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2006.09.006

Gao, F., Luo, T., & Zhang, K. (2012). Tweeting for learning: A critical analysis of research on microblogging in education published in 2008–2011. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *43*(5), 783-801.
https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2012.01357.x

Giesbers, B., Rienties, B., Tempelaar, D., & Gijselaers, W. (2013). Investigating the relations between motivation, tool use, participation, and performance in an e-learning course using web-videoconferencing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(1), 285-292.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.09.005

Glass, A. L., & Kang, M. (2019). Dividing attention in the classroom reduces exam performance. *Educational Psychology*, *39*(3), 395-408.
https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2018.1489046

Greenhow, C., Gibbins, T., & Menzer, M. M. (2015). Re-thinking scientific literacy out-of-school: Arguing science issues in a niche Facebook application. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *53*, 593-604.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.06.031

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Greenhow, C., & Gleason, B. (2012, October). Twitteracy: Tweeting as a new literacy practice. *The Educational Forum, 76*(4), 464-478.
https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2012.709032

Gruzd, A. (2016). Netlytic: Software for automated text and social network analysis [Computer software]. Retrieved from: http://Netlytic.org

Hamid, S., Waycott, J., Kurnia, S., & Chang, S. (2015). Understanding students' perceptions of the benefits of online social networking use for teaching and learning. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *26*, 1-9.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2015.02.004

Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2017). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. Teachers College Press.

Herrington, J., & Oliver, R. (2000). An instructional design framework for authentic learning environments. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *48*(3), 23-48.
https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02319856

Hew, K. F. (2011). Students' and teachers' use of Facebook. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *27*(2), 662-676.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.11.020

Junco, R., Heiberger, G., & Loken, E. (2011). The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *27*(2), 119-132.
https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2010.00387.x

Kabilan, M. K., Ahmad, N., & Abidin, M. J. Z. (2010). Facebook: An online environment for learning of English in institutions of higher education?. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *13*(4), 179-187.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2010.07.003

Krathwohl, D. R. (2002). A revision of Bloom's taxonomy: An overview. *Theory Into Practice*, *41*(4), 212-218.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4104_2

Lefebvre, C. (2009). Integrating cell phones and mobile technologies into public health practice: a social marketing perspective. *Health Promotion Practice*, *10*(4), 490-494.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839909342849

Lindroth, T., & Bergquist, M. (2010). Laptopers in an educational practice: Promoting the personal learning situation. *Computers & Education*, *54*(2), 311-320.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.07.014

Luo, T., & Gao, F. (2012). Enhancing classroom learning experience by providing structures to microblogging-based activities. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, *11*, 199-211.
https://doi.org/10.28945/1689

Merriam, S. B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

May, K. E., & Elder, A. D. (2018). Efficient, helpful, or distracting? A literature review of media multitasking in relation to academic performance. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 15*(1), 13.
https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-018-0096-z

McCoy, B. R. (2016). Digital distractions in the classroom phase II: Student classroom use of digital devices for non-class related purposes. *Journal of Media Education 7(1), 5-32.*
Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/journalismfacpub/90

McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. J. (2010). Personalised and self regulated learning in the Web 2.0 era: International exemplars of innovative pedagogy using social software. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *26*(1), 28-43.
https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.1100

Moran, M., Seaman, J., & Tinti-Kane, H. (2011). Teaching, learning, and sharing: How today's higher education faculty use social media.
Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED535130

Neier, S., & Zayer, L. T. (2015). Students' perceptions and experiences of social media in higher education. *Journal of Marketing Education*, *37*(3), 133-143.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475315583748

Patall, E., Cooper, H., & Robinson, J. C. (2008). The effects of choice on intrinsic motivation and related outcomes: A meta-analysis of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin, 134*(2), 270–300.
https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.134.2.270

Pike, G. R., Kuh, G. D., & McCormick, A. C. (2011). An investigation of the contingent relationships between learning community participation and student   engagement. *Research in Higher Education*, *52*(3), 300-322.
https://doi.org/10.1007/sl 1162-010-9192-1

Ramanadhan, S., Mendez, S. R., Rao, M., & Viswanath, K. (2013). Social media use by community-based organizations conducting health promotion: a content analysis. *BMC Public Health*, *13*(1), 1129. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-1129

Ravizza, S. M., Hambrick, D. Z., & Fenn, K. M. (2014). Non-academic internet use in the classroom is negatively related to classroom learning regardless of intellectual ability. *Computers & Education*, *78*, 109-114.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.05.007

Samson, P. J. (2010). Deliberate engagement of laptops in large lecture classes to improve attentiveness and engagement. *Computers in Education*, *20*(2), 22-37. Retrieved from
https://www.learntechlib.org/p/35333/

Sana, F., Weston, T., & Cepeda, N. J. (2013). Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers & Education*, *62*, 24-31.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.10.003

Santarossa, S., & Woodruff, S. J. (2017). #SocialMedia: Exploring the relationship of social networking sites on body image, self-esteem, and eating disorders. *Social Media+ Society*, *3*(2).
https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117704407

Schmetzke, A. (2001). Online distance education—"anytime, anywhere" but not for everyone. *Information Technology and Disabilities*, *7*(2), 1-23. Retrieved from
https://www.csus.edu/indiv/s/stonerm/schemetzke%20article%20on%20web%20accessibility.pdf

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

Smith, A., & Anderson, M. (2018). Social Media Use in 2018. Retrieved from
https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/

Sun, J. C. Y. (2014). Influence of polling technologies on student engagement: An analysis of student motivation, academic performance, and brainwave data. *Computers & Education*, *72*, 80-89. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.10.010

Tarantino, K., McDonough, J., & Hua, M. (2013). Effects of student engagement with social media on student learning: A review of literature. *The Journal of Technology in Student Affairs*, *1*(8), 1-8. Retrieved from: https://www.studentaffairs.com/resources/ejournal/archives/2013-summer/

Turner, D. (2010). Student-centered teaching: A look at student choice in the classroom. Retrieved from http://www.usma.edu/cfe/literature/turner_10.pdf

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Sara Santarossa [1], Paige Coyne [2] and Sarah J. Woodruff [2]
[1]Henry Ford Health System, USA, [2]University of Windsor, Canada

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

Social Media Usage for Academic Purpose: A Systematic Literature Review 2010 to 2020.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
[2] Federal University of Petroleum, Effurun Warri, Nigeria

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to provide an up to date estimate global usage of social media for academic purpose between 2010 and 2020.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The researcher applied systematic literature review, to explore global literatures on social media. 76 empirical studies relating to social media within 2010 to 2020, out of which 35 literatures that met identified minimum standards were utilized for this study. Proceedings of the findings were documented and discussed in thematic analysis.

Findings: Findings revealed numerous specific SM tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Blogging, Orkut, Badoo, Sky Blog, Google, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Skype, My Space, Yahoo messenger, zoom, Academic Community Blogs, online article, bookmaking wikis, lib website for academic and social activities, SkyDrive Google group used by students. The purpose of SM usage identified as a determinant factor to academics and the impacts of social media to learning. Study further identified challenges experienced that may affect the use of SM for academic purpose.

Research limitations / implications: The article reports findings on SM usage were limited to only empirical research literatures focused on social media and students. The wider scope considered global literatures. However, resources like books and other information resources were not included in this study.

Practical implications: The study finding have practical implications in that they can be used as decision and policy model, or a developmental plan in education system to tackle pandemic or related issue in the future considering the 2020 pandemic experience on education system. Social Media use for education purpose can be redesigned into the model of learning in higher institutions.

Originality/ value: Use of social media in learning is gathering momentum among researchers globally. The purpose of SM use for academic purpose has not been explored in literature review approach. Finding of the study will, therefore, inform researchers, academics and institution decision makers on possibility of SM tools for academic purpose.

Keywords

Social Media, academics purpose, usage impact, literature review, students

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

17

Introduction

This 21st century generations of digital technology have infiltrated social media use in all aspect of life. According to Al-rahmi, Othman and Musa (2014), social media plays a significant role in boosting academics in the social sciences and across many educational fields generally. Social media are intended to support collaborative creation and disseminations of knowledge and a numbers of social media service specifically targeted at the academic community, including blogs, online comments to articles, social bookmarking sites, wikis, websites to post slides, text or videos etc. Academic according to Powell (2003), can be referred to as a place of learning or a place of education and scholarship. Information according to Dubois et al. (2010), deals with facts provided or learned about something or someone.

The following are the different types of social media:

- ✓ Facebook
- ✓ Instagram
- ✓ Twitter
- ✓ Pinterest
- ✓ LinkedIn
- ✓ Snapchat
- ✓ Whatsapp
- ✓ Blogging and publishing networks
- ✓ Social shopping networks and more

According to Nández and Borrego (2013), social media are among the most recent developments in the creation and communication of information in electronic format. The social media refers to a set of web technologies that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (OECD, 2007). According to Edosomwan et al. (2011), social media have evolved over the years to the modern-day variety which uses digital media. It started with telephone through phone phreaking. Phone phreaking, the term used for the rogue searching of the telephone network, began during the 1950s (Borders, 2010). This process was accomplished through the use of homemade electronic devices that facilitated unauthorized access to the telephone system to make free calls. Phreaks were able to find telephone company test lines and conference circuits to complete their task (Edosomwan, 2011). Brett Borders stated that phreaks were able to hack into corporate unused voice mailboxes to host the first blogs and podcasts. This extended through the 1960s; and in the 1980s and 1990s, email and internet was developed as original method to exchange messages from one computer to another, but both computers were required to be online. Today, social media has been widely accepted as an official means to allow users to transmit messages and access information globally (Rimskii, 2011; Ritholz, 2010). Particularly, SM impacts to academics.

Today, the world is celebrating the improvements in communication technology which has broadened the scope of communication through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Ufuophu and Ayobami (2012) observe that the ICTs include internet, satellite, cable data transmission and computer assisted equipment. All these are ICTs resources that can be used by students and researchers worldwide for academic purposes. Buhari (2013) notes that internet provides many benefits to its users, including access to information from distant databases that can be studied to improve knowledge. The internet has enabled or accelerated new forms of human interactions through internet messaging, internet forums, and social networking (Hassan and Jacob, 2012). Internet facilities help to connect learners, teachers, educators, scholars, researchers, scientists, artists, industrialists and other individuals who enrich learning process (Ogunlade, et al, 2013). The social media is one of the services that can be found on the internet.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Kietzmann (2011) also defines social media as primarily internet-based and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information by users. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also viewed social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Web 2.0 was coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 to describe interactive social websites which allow users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue. The technological foundations of the social media include blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms, and virtual worlds. These tools social media foster social interactions and learning in academic communities. The SM use and its contribution to learning is significant in our present time.

Statement of Purpose

According to Bosch (2009), the study on the use of social media for academic purposes is important because it aids teaching and learning. It further draws the attention of students and researchers to the fact that social media could also be used for academic purposes apart from the social interaction facilities that it presents. Social media has positive reports as it"s generally used for knowledge sharing (Ahmed, Ahmad, Ahmad and Zakaria 2019). Despite the positive reports on social media application, its impact on academic purposes has been scarce in literature. Therefore, the understanding of the current literatures on social media usage for academic purposes worldwide is highly relevant during the current pandemic era. This awareness could influence students and academics positively as they might decide to adopt social media to advance academic programmes.

Objectives of Study

The aim of this study is to examine the use of social media for academics, tools specifically applied, and the impact of social media on students.

Significance of the Study

The proliferation of social media and its integration for learning purposes among students of higher institutions are some of the current ways of managing the cost, time, and easy access to information. Therefore, it is vital to investigate empirical literature results on social media usage for academic purposes in particular and the common tools used. This study will reveal this information as well as provide deeper and global knowledge on social media usage. It can also be considered in decision making with regards to digital and online learning classes during the pandemic or similar situations.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This investigation confines itself to relevant literature on the use of social medial for academic purposes worldwide. The review will be limited by time as only literatures published between 2010 and 2020 are reviewed, and there are no geographical boundary or limitation.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Methodology

This study was conducted by reviewing literatures that examine and/or evaluate the use of social media for academic purposes worldwide. Articles were included if they addressed the social media use for academic purposes, while those that are focused on social media use for marketing or social network are excluded. Editorials, non-peer reviewed articles and commentaries were also excluded from the study. A comprehensive search strategy on peer review journals was conducted in November 2020 for this study. To focus on the tittle social media use for academic purposes, two main concepts were included in the search strategy - social media use relevance and educational purposes. The search involved typing "social media use", "impact" and "academic purpose" separately in Google scholar. The result from the searches yielded 14,600 articles from the period between 2010 and 2020, out of which 76 articles were retrieved and analysed, and 38 of them met the study inclusion criteria.

Review of Literature on Social Media Use

Ezeah et al. (2013) conducted a study on the use of social media among students in three universities in Nigeria and discovered that the purpose of use of the social media as indicated by majority of the respondents was varied. Most of the respondents with a mean value of 3.27 and 2.86 noted that they utilized the social media for the purpose of watching films and for discussing serious national issues like politics, economy and religious matters.

Buhari et al. (2014) examined the use of social media among students and the findings on the purpose of the social media use turned out the following mean scores:

- social media use to connect, interact and chat with friends (Mean=4.4);
- social media use for information sharing (Mean=4.3);
- social media use to access news, movies, music and photos (Mean=4.2);
- and use for religious purposes (Mean=3.6).

These two studies reveal that the social media is used basically for social purposes and seldom used for academic activities by students. Regardless of how the social media is used, the benefits associated with its use are enormous.

One of the most commonly cited benefits of social media by students is their ability to facilitate collaborative learning and communication among peers and with people outside academia (Collins and Hide, 2010; Rowlands et al., 2011). Another frequently reported advantage of social media is its remarkable ability to facilitate information distribution. Among the examples are blogging tools which are used by many students to disseminate information within their area, their peers and also to everyone globally (Bukvova et al., 2010). The ability to explore unasked questions inside a less formal atmosphere, getting a strong voice through web technology, and getting a location to go over issues within an open, public format are other provisions of social media (Kirkup, 2010). Other than communication, scholarly Twitter users cite information distribution among the primary advantages of social media and have proven to become popular especially in academic conferences (Letierce et al., 2010; Ross et al., 2011).

Ahmed and Oazi (2011) studied the academic impacts of social media networking sites from the perspectives of one thousand (1000) students in six universities in Pakistan. The study adopted the use of two sampling techniques, multistage and simple random techniques. Questionnaire was the data collection instruments used and the results showed that 91.3% of the respondents indicated that they made use of Facebook, 3.4% used Twitter and 2.2% made use of Orkut. Most of the respondents (75.3%) stated that they made use of the social media sites between one (1) to three (3) hours a day, while 19.5% used the social media between four (4) and six (6) hours a day.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Murrithi and Murrithi (2013) also examined students" motives for utilizing social networking in private universities in Dar Es Saleem, Tanzania. Findings revealed that Facebook was the most used social network as indicated by 46.1%, followed by Twitter 15.5%, Badoo 9.7%, Sky Blog 8.7%, Google+ 8.0% and LinkedIn 2.3%. In addition, social medial use was basically for student personal purpose, but has no negative effect on their academics.

Buhari et al. (2014) surveyed the use of the social media by students in Nigeria and found out that most of the respondents used the social media which has helped them to achieve academic excellence. Study revealed they use social media to share information, chat and network with friends.
Hung, H.T. and Yuen, S.C.Y. (2010) from Taiwan explored how social networking technology can be used to supplement face-to-face courses as a means of enhancing students' sense of community and, thus, to promote classroom communities of practice in the context of higher education. The study indicated that the majority of participants developed strong feelings of social connectedness and expressed favorable feelings regarding their learning experiences in the classes where social networking sites were used as a supplementary tool.

Rutherford (2010) examined how the use of social media resources can affect student engagement in Canada. Results of this study indicate that there is a positive correlation between student use of a variety of social media resources and how students perceive their relationships with their fellow students and instructors as well as how they describe the overall quality of their educational experience.

Filiz Tiryakioglu and Funda Erzurum (2011) investigated the views and attitudes of instructors in the Faculty of Communication Sciences at Anadolu University in Turkey, with the assumption that communication specialists should have more expertise and interest in social media than any other group of experts. The study finds that three quarters of instructors have a Facebook account and they spend less than half an hour per day on Facebook. There is no gender related difference among the faculty in terms of attitudes toward Facebook. Instructors who are younger than 45 years old login Facebook on daily basis, while senior faculty login several times a week. Two in every three instructors use Facebook mainly as a tool of communication with friends. Finally, two thirds of the faculty think that Facebook can provide important contributions to social interactions among students as well as to communications between instructors and students.

Nández and Borrego (2013) analyzed various aspects of an academic social network: the profile of users, the reasons for its use, its perceived benefits and the use of other social media for scholarly purposes in Spain. Their findings revealed that academics used the service to get in touch with other scholars, disseminate research results and follow other scholars.

Gupta, C. A. Pallavi; Singh, Bharti; Marwaha, Tushar (2013) assessed the purpose of usage of social media tools, specifically Facebook, Blogs, Google groups, SkyDrive and Twitter by students for academic purposes in India. The study reveals that majority of the students access various social media tools for information sharing and personal interaction.

Saw, G., Abbott, W., Donaghey, J. and McDonald, C. (2013) examined which social networking sites international students prefer for information dissemination activities. The findings confirm that there are differences in the social networking preferences between the groups of international and domestic students. In addition to social activities, international and domestic students are using particular social networking sites for a wide range of educational purposes, including group works, sharing and gathering of information.

Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) conducted assessment of students" use of social media and its effect on academic performance of tertiary institutions students in Ghana. The study revealed that majority of the respondents had mobile phones which also had internet facility on them and had knowledge of the existence of many social media. Also, that most of the respondents visit their social media using their phones and spend between thirty minutes to three hours per day.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

In addition, the study revealed that the use of social media had affected academic performance of the respondents negatively and that there was direct relationship between the use of social media and academic performance.

Harrison, Burress, Velasquez and Schreiner (2017) attempted to address emerging themes among the University Libraries‟ social media pages in some states in Midwest region of the United States. The study presented social media postings included ten different codes: archives; collections; events; exhibits; facility; library community; sentiments; services; site management; and university community. Libraries create a sense of outreach and advocacy with the goal of establishing community connection, providing an inviting environment, and access to content as needed or desired.

ALAwadhi and Al-Daihani (2019) examined the use of social media in the marketing of academic library resources and services in Kuwait and identifies the factors related to the use of social media applications in marketing academic libraries. Their findings indicated that social media tools are useful in marketing library information resources and services, in raising awareness and in providing needs analysis and satisfaction assessments. The study shows that academic libraries have positive perception toward the use of social media.

Cheng, Lam and Chiu (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of using social media as a platform in marketing through a questionnaire on the Facebook page of the University of Hong Kong Libraries (HKUL). The study indicated that: (1) the marketing practices of HKUL's Facebook page generally did not receive adequate attention and reactions from users; (2) students were more engaged than faculty members in HKUL's Facebook page, as students use more varieties of library services than faculty members; (3) user needs, social media content, and interactions generally affected user acceptance of the library's Facebook marketing. The purpose of use by institution does not confirm that marketing information resources via social media impact academic performance.

Alwagait, Shahzad and Alim (2015) undertook survey on university students in Saudi Arabia with regards to social media usage and their academic performance. The survey also explored which social network is the most popular amongst Saudi students, what students thought about their social media usage and factors besides social media usage which negatively affect academic performance. The results demonstrated that there was no linear relationship between social media usage in a week and GPA score. Students highlighted that besides social media use, time management is a factor which affects students „studies negatively.

Talaue, G.M., AlSaad, A., AlRushaidan, N., AlHugail, A. and AlFahhad, S. (2018) examined the impact of social media on the academic performance of university students in Nigeria. The findings show that social media usage among students is not for academic purposes. It also found that the following social media are often used by students: Facebook 40(40.81%), WhatsApp 20(20.40%) 2go/Skype 14(14.28%). On the other hand, Myspace, Twitter, Badoo, Blogs/Web Scholars, Google+/ Social Bookmarking are not often used by undergraduates in the four universities selected for the study. The study also showed that students‟ use of social media for reaching out to close/distant friends and for general information about life, determines the impact of social media on the academic performance of students.

Tarek A. El-Badawy1 and Yasmin Hashem (2015) sought to determine the impact of social media on the academic performance of students. The findings of their study demonstrate that there is no relationship between social media and academic performance; this is clearly projected in their overall grade average.

Boateng and Amankwaa (2016) examined how social media has impacted students‟ academic life in China. The result reveals that social media is widely used by students of higher institutions and that participants are in support of the idea that social media contribute a significant quota to the development of their academic life.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Habes, Alghizzawi, Khalaf, Salloum and Ghani (2018) attempted to highlight the impact of social media on students in the higher educational universities and its impact on the students" academic performance in Dubai. The study indicated that a large number of university students are using social media with more focus on Facebook, which in turn negatively affects their academic results.

McLaughlin Christopher J. and Sillence Elizabeth (2018) investigated the role played by social support in postgraduate taught students" adjustment to university, and how social media contributes to this support. According to the study, Facebook groups showed potential as a platform for building supportive peer networks. However, the heightened visibility of communications on this platform led some participants towards Facebook Messenger as a medium for peer contact. Study also indicated that participants benefitted most from specialized support from peers dealing with similar academic challenges.

Klar S, Krupnikov Y, Ryan JB, Searles K, Shmargad Y. (2020) examine whether there are systematic differences in the types of scholars who most benefit from social media and the extent to which there are gender differences in the dissemination of research via Twitter from America. The study finds revealed considerable evidence that, overall, article citations are positively correlated with tweets about the article.

Rahman, Ramakrishnan, and Ngamassi (2020) examined higher education students' perceptions of social media use (SMU) and the impact of SMU on their satisfaction in the United State of America. The study revealed that: (1) perceived usefulness of social media has positive effect on the use of social media in student learning; (2) perceived risk of using social media discourages the use of the tool; and (3) SMU has positive effect on student satisfaction.

Chawinga, W.D. (2017) investigated how social media facilitates teaching and learning in Malawi. The results indicated that if appropriately deployed, Twitter and blogs are catalysts for the much-hyped learner-centered approach to teaching because using these technologies, it emerged that students shared and discussed course materials, posted their course reflections and interacted amongst themselves and with their lecturer at all times of the day.

The study by Acheaw and Larson (2015) also found out what earlier studies discovered. Students of the Polytechnic of Koforidum in Ghana were surveyed, and results showed that 66.4% of the respondents identified Facebook as the most used social media, followed by Whatsapp 19.9%, Twitter 6.2%, Skype 3.3%, Myspace 2.6% and Yahoo Messenger 1.3%. As regards the frequency of use, majority of the respondents 66.3% expressed that they made use of the social media sites between 30 minutes to 1 hour; 33.2% chose between 2 to 3 hours and 1.5% between 4 to 5 hours. The results from these studies established that even though polytechnic students utilize different types of social media sites, Facebook was the most used and most of them spent considerable time using these social media. The study revealed that the use of social media sites had affected academic performance of the respondents negatively and that there was direct relationship between the use of social media sites and academic performance. This is probably because the tool was used here by student for personal pleasure which have negative impact on academic return. Social media technology is an academic advantage tool but not without its own challenges.

Challenges of Social Media Use

Not minding the benefits in the use of the social media by students and researchers, Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) identified the challenges that students face in the use of social media as lack of awareness, bandwidth problems, technophobia, lack of maintenance culture, unreliable power supply, and copyright issue. Sanusi et al. (2014) noted that the constraints that students face in the use of the social media for learning include lack of basic amenities, lack of conducive environment, lack of access to computer, cost of internet connection and lack of enthusiasm on the part of instructor.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

The study by Yin and Agostinho (2014) on the engagement of social media technologies by students in Malaysia revealed that most of the respondents (81.48%) indicated that the most paramount challenge that they faced in the use of the social media for academic purpose was the blocking of some applications by the university. While 62.96% expressed that they experienced slow internet connection/low bandwidth, 44.44% identified privacy issues as constraints, 38.27% stated that all activities were being monitored and 22.22% said their social media accounts were hacked. These are some of the challenges that confront students in the use of the social media.

Therefore, since social media are intended to support collaborative creation and disseminations of knowledge. The scholars have explored their use for academic purposes. Based on the foregoing, Procter et al. (2010) reveals that there are numbers of social media services specifically targeted at the academic community, including blogs, online comments to articles, social bookmarking sites, wikis, and websites to post slides, text or videos etc.

Discussion and Recommendations

The emergence of the social media has spawned quite a lot of interest from students. The findings from the reviewed literatures showed that social media sites benefit the students and scholars based on purpose of use, by providing the podium which foster communication and lifetime learning, and also ease of access to knowledge and open education, e-learning resources, e-library as well as knowledge for pleasure. This study has further revealed that teachers that impart knowledge to students also benefit from the use of the social media as they often share academic resources, exchange opinions, follow each other's research, keep up with current research trends as well as build up their professional networks.

The literatures on social media use for academic purposes that were reviewed for this study have provided a pathway of discovery. The study has found several positive impacts of social media use for academic purposes, despite the identified challenges such as: lack of awareness by users, internet issues, technophobia, maintenance culture, electricity, copyright issue, and lack of basic amenities. Other challenges to social media use have been identified to include, conducive environment, access to computer, cost internet connection, lack of enthusiasm, privacy issues, monitoring of activities, hacked account (insecurity), blocking of applications, and relevance of the social media to academic works. The SM was found to have enhanced academic performance in higher institutions among students at all levels and their instructors. Negative impact of SM in academic performance is directly influence by individual factors, given that if the SM is used for academic purpose, it usually yields positive results, while it is if applied carelessly for pleasure, socialization and poor time management, it will definitely yield negative result. Furthermore, the study revealed various SM tools that are used for various purposes such as: Twitter, Facebook, Blogging, Orkut, Badoo, Sky Blog, Google, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Skype, My Space, Yahoo messenger, zoom, Academic Community Blogs, online article, bookmaking wikis, lib website for academic and social activities, SkyDrive Google group. Finally, the study further revealed that studying, movies, music, photos, political, economic and general news, religion, peers communication, blogging, networking, scholarly research articles, information sharing, and group work are the main activities and purposes of SM usage amongst students. The impact of the SM uses heavily determined by the users intention.

Given the above findings, it is important that the academic managers seek to strategically select the best social media tools suitable for their academic delivery purposes, define their SM services purposes, develop policies that can guide participants and advocate strongly for academic use of such social media, as well as identify the SM use challenges and ameliorate for positive returns.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Conclusion

Conspicuously, SM use purpose amongst students is a vital statement in academics issue. The SM impact on student academics is seen to be determined by their personal values for social media, which is in turn dependent on individual factors, time factor and facilities factors. If SM is used for academic purposes, it will definitely yield positive result and if used for pleasure it certainly led to negative result. Although there appears to be a growing number of research articles on the use of social media among student of higher institutions for academic purpose, primary research regarding the impacts of social media on student use and education is scarce. The few articles included in this review do show promise in the student use of social media for academic purpose on various levels. We may need to come to grips with the idea that the SM has challenges that can also affect academic output. If we need continuous positive return, measures have to be in place to counter the technology challenges for maximization of its potentials, and advocate for positive purpose with the use of social media amongst students. Academics must identify the goal that lies ahead with the use of SM and somehow expect positive academic output, and to be able to recognize possibilities that can channel us to it. However, social media technology holds promise for improving academic engagement, knowledge sharing and community building. Social media has a future in education, basically with higher institution students.

For correspondence please contact: Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu (njinwawih@yahoo.com)

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

References

Ahmed, I. and Qazi, T.F., 2011. A look out for academic impacts of Social networking sites (SNSs): A student based perspective. *African Journal of Business Management*, *5*(12), pp.50225031.

Ahmed, Y.A., Ahmad, M.N., Ahmad, N. and Zakaria, N.H., 2019. Social media for knowledge sharing: A systematic literature review. *Telematics and informatics*, *37*, pp.72-112.

AlAwadhi, S. and Al-Daihani, S.M., 2019. Marketing academic library information services using social media. Library Management 40 (3/4): 228-239.

Alwagait, E., Shahzad, B. and Alim, S., 2015. Impact of social media usage on students' academic performance in Saudi Arabia. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *51*, pp.1092-1097.

Anyanwu, E.U. and Ossai-Onah, O.V., 2013. Use of Internet by Higher National Diploma (HND) Students of Library and Information Science Students in Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Imo State Nigeria. *Journal of Library and Information Sciences*, *1*(1), pp. 1-8.

Barnes, R.W., Grove, J.W. and Burns, N.H., 2003. Experimental assessment of factors affecting transfer length. *Structural Journal*, *100*(6), pp.740-748.

Boateng, R. and Amankwaa, A., 2016. The impact of social media on student academic life in higher education. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, *16*(4), pp.1-8.

Bosch, T.E., 2009. Using online social networking for teaching and learning: Facebook use at the University of Cape Town. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, *35*(2), pp.185-200.

Bryer, T. & Zavattaro, S. (2011). Social media and public administration: Theoretical dimensions and introduction to symposium. Administrative Theory & Praxis, 33(3), 325- 340

Buhari, S.R., 2013. Internet access and use by academic staff and students in a Nigerian Polytechnic. *ICCMTD-2013*, pp. 1-144.

Buhari, S.R., Ahmad, G.I. and HadiAshara, B., 2014, April. Use of Social media among students of Nigerian Polytechnic. In *International Conference on Communication, Media, Technology and Design*, pp. 24-26.

Bukvova, H., Kalb, H. and Schoop, E., 2010, June. What we blog? A qualitative analysis of researchers' weblogs. In *ELPUB*, pp. 89-97.

Chawinga, W.D., 2017. Taking social media to a university classroom: teaching and learning using Twitter and blogs. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *14*(1): 3-19.

Cheng, W.W.H., Lam, E.T.H. and Chiu, D.K., 2020. Social media as a platform in academic library marketing: A comparative study. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *46*(5), p.102188.

Collins, E. and Hide, B., 2010, June. Use and relevance of Web 2.0 resources for researchers. In *ELPUB* (pp. 271-289). https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8145/c065a16ec4f12bfdd0813fa4dea2a00553fb.pdf.

Coscia, M., Giannotti, F. and Pensa, R., 2009, July. Social network analysis as knowledge discovery process: A case study on digital bibliography. In *Social Network Analysis and Mining, 2009. ASONAM'09. International Conference on Advances in* (pp. 279-283). IEEE. http://www.michelecoscia.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/cosciaasonam09.pdf.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Dubois, É. Heymans, P., Mayer, N. and Matulevičius, R., 2010. A systematic approach to define the domain of information system security risk management. In *Intentional Perspectives on Information Systems Engineering*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, pp. 289-306.

Edosomwan, S., Prakasan, S.K., Kouame, D., Watson, J. and Seymour, T., 2011. The history of social media and its impact on business. *Journal of Applied Management and entrepreneurship*, *16*(3), pp.79-91.

Edosomwan, S., Prakasan, S.K., Kouame, D., Watson, J. and Seymour, T., 2011. The history of social media and its impact on business. *Journal of Applied Management and entrepreneurship*, *16*(3), pp.79-91.

El-Badawy, T.A. and Hashem, Y., 2015. The impact of social me results reveals that social media is widely used by students of higher institution and that participant are in support of the idea that social media contribute a significant quota to the development of their academic life.dia on the academic development of school students. *International Journal of Business Administration*, *6*(1), p.46-52.

Ezeah, G.H., Asogwa, C.E. and Obiorah, E.I., 2013. Social media use among students of Universities in South-East Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSRJHSS)*, *16*(3), pp.23-32.

Ezeani, C.N. and Igwesi, U., 2012. Using social media for dynamic library service delivery: The Nigeria experience. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2011&context=libphilprac.

Gupta, C. A. Pallavi; Singh, Bharti; Marwaha, Tushar 2013. Relationship between Social Media and Academic Performance in Distance Education. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, v1 n3 pp. 185-190

Habes, M., Alghizzawi, M., Khalaf, R., Salloum, S.A. and Ghani, M.A., 2018. The relationship between social media and academic performance: Facebook perspective. *Int. J. Inf. Technol. Lang. Stud*, *2*(1), pp.12-18.

Harrison, A., Burress, R., Velasquez, S. and Schreiner, L., 2017. Social media use in academic libraries: A phenomenological study. *The journal of academic librarianship*, *43*(3), pp.248-256.

Hassan, A.B. and Jacob, B.P., 2011. The Use of Internet in Teaching and Learning by Staff of Faculty of Science and Technology Bingham University. *ARPN Journal of Science and Technology, 3(7): 600-60.*

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. and Smit, B., 2004. *Finding your way in qualitative research* (pp. 19-22). Pretoria: van Schaik. http://www.infocenter.nercha.org.sz/taxonomy/term/3128.

Hung, H.T. and Yuen, S.C.Y., 2010. Educational use of social networking technology in higher education. *Teaching in higher education*, *15*(6), pp.703-714.

Jagero, N. and Muriithi, M.K., 2013. Extent of Social Networking Sites Usage of Students in Private Universities in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. *International Journal of Academic Research in Economics and Management Sciences*, *2*(3), pp. 1-10.

Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M., 2010. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, *53*(1), pp.59-68.

Kietzmann, J.H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P. and Silvestre, B.S., 2011. Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business horizons*, *54*(3), pp.241-251.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Kirkup, G., Zalevski, A., Maruyama, T. and Batool, I., 2010. Women and men in science, engineering and technology: the UK statistics guide 2010.
http://oro.open.ac.uk/29517/1/UKRC_Statistics_Guide_2010.pdf.

Klar S, Krupnikov Y, Ryan JB, Searles K, Shmargad Y (2020) Using social media to promote academic research: Identifying the benefits of twitter for sharing academic work. PLoS ONE 15 (4): e0229446. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal. pone.0229446

Letierce, J., Passant, A., Breslin, J. and Decker, S., 2010. Understanding how Twitter is used to spread scientific messages.
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c9d5/d81311973b22f6b18a7f050ee976fef74dfb.pdf.

Luzón, M.J., 2009. Scholarly hyperwriting: The function of links in academic weblogs. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *60*(1), pp.75-89.

McLaughlin, C.J. and Sillence, E., 2018. Buffering against academic loneliness: The benefits of social media-based peer support during postgraduate study. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, p.1469787418799185.

Morgan, N.A., Anderson, E.W. and Mittal, V., 2005. Understanding firms' customer satisfaction information usage. *Journal of marketing*, *69*(3), pp.131-151.

Mouton, J., 1996. *Understanding Social Research. Pretoria, JL van Schaik Publishers*. ISBN 0627-02163-8. https://www.amazon.com/Understanding-Social-Research-JohannMouton/dp/0627021638.

Nández, G. and Borrego, Á. 2013. Use of social networks for academic purposes: a case study. *The electronic library*, *31*(6), pp.781-791.

Nández, G. and Borrego, Á., 2013. Use of social networks for academic purposes: a case study. *The Electronic Library*. 31 (6): 781-791.

Okereke, C.E. and Oghenetega, L.U., 2014. The impact of social media on the academic performance of university students in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *5*(33), pp.2124.

Owusu-Acheaw, M. and Larson, A.G., 2015. Use of Social Media and Its Impact on Academic Performance of Tertiary Institution Students: A Study of Students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *6*(6), pp.94-101.

Owusu-Acheaw, M. and Larson, A.G., 2015. Use of social media and its impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students: A study of students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana. Journal of Education and Practice, 6(6), pp.94-101.

Polit, D.F. and Hungler, B., 2004. Nursing research: Principles and research, 2(3), pp. 1-54.

Powell, T.B., 2003. All colors flow into rainbows and nooses: The struggle to define academic multiculturalism. *Cultural critique*, (55), pp.152-181.

Procter, R., Williams, R., Stewart, J., Poschen, M., Snee, H., Voss, A. and Asgari-Targhi, M., 2010. Adoption and use of Web 2.0 in scholarly communications. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, *368*(1926), pp.4039-4056.

Rahman, S., Ramakrishnan, T. and Ngamassi, L., 2020. Impact of social media use on student satisfaction in Higher Education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, *74*(3), pp.304-319.

Rimskii, V., 2011. The influence of the Internet on active social involvement and the formation and development of identities. *Russian Social Science Review*, *52*(1), pp.79-101.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

Ritholz, B., 2010. History of social media. *The Big Picture, 3(4), pp. 44-52.*

Ross, C., Terras, M., Warwick, C. and Welsh, A., 2011. Enabled backchannel: Conference Twitter use by digital humanists. *Journal of Documentation*, *67*(2), pp.214-237.

Rowlands, I., Nicholas, D., Russell, B., Canty, N. and Watkinson, A., 2011. Social media use in the research workflow. *Learned Publishing*, *24*(3), pp.183-195.

Rutherford, C., 2010. Using online social media to support preservice student engagement. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, *6*(4), pp.703-711.

Sanusi, B.O., Omowale, A. and Kayode, O.J., 2014. Adapting social media for formal learning in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)*, *3*(9), pp. 1-9.

Saw, G., Abbott, W., Donaghey, J. and McDonald, C. 2013. Social media for international students-it's not all about Facebook. *Library Management*, *34*(3), pp.156-174.

See Yin Lim, J., Agostinho, S., Harper, B. and Chicharo, J., 2014. The engagement of social media technologies by undergraduate informatics students for academic purpose in Malaysia. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, *12*(3), pp.177-194.

Talaue, G.M., AlSaad, A., AlRushaidan, N., AlHugail, A. and AlFahhad, S., 2018. The impact of social media on academic performance of selected college students. *International Journal of Advanced Information Technology*, *8*(4), pp.27-35.

Tiryakioglu, F. and Erzurum, F., 2011. Use of social networks as an education tool. *Contemporary educational technology*, *2*(2).

Ufuophu, E. and Agobami, O., 2012. Usage of information and communication technologies and job motivation among newspaper workers in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, *4*(1), pp. 1-12.

Van Deursen, A., Klint, P. and Visser, J., 2000. Domain-specific languages: An annotated bibliography. *ACM Sigplan Notices*, *35*(6), pp.26-36.

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M.G., Davis, G.B. and Davis, F.D., 2003. User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS quarterly*, pp.425-478.

Vickery, G. and Wunsch-Vincent, S., 2007. Participative web and user-created content: Web 2.0 wikis and social networking. *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)*, 3(1), pp. 1-13.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Njideka-Nwawih C. Ojukwu [1], Stephen Mutula [1] and Sambo Atanda Saliu [2]
[1] University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, [2] Federal University of Petroleum, Nigeria

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

It is all about the Drama!
The Necessity of Critical Media Literacy in Public Education.

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Rochester, Detroit USA

Abstract

This paper draws on the experiences of pre-teens and teenagers and their relationships with reality television. Using the lenses of liquid modernity and critical media literacy, I will examine interactions with reality television, and the ways in which young people construct their own meaning and understanding of different forms of media.

Introduction

Today the lives of youth everywhere are shaped by a variety of texts and incessant media exposure. The media that they consume and the ways in which they interact with it in all forms underscore their world. According to Nielson, during the 2007-2008 television season, 77 percent of viewers watching the top ten television programs were choosing to watch reality television shows (Nielson, 2011). Additionally, from 2000 to 2010, the number of reality television shows on the air increased from four to 320 (Ocasio, 2012). In spite of these numbers, there are some viewers and critics who choose to dismiss media and electronic texts as simply entertainment. However, there are researchers and scholars such as Jennifer Pozner, Susan Murray, Shirley Steinberg, Jeff Share, Douglas Kellner and more who realize the direct and indirect impact these texts have on the lives, thinking, and even well-being as global citizens of young people. Because media saturates the world in this way, the need for a greater understanding of the ways in which youth interact with media, as well as the deeper effects that media may be having on these young viewers, has never been more imperative. Unless educators want to allow the media to continue to "control the 'bewildered herd', meaning the U.S. citizenry, in a state of quasi-perpetual stupidification" (Macedo, 2009, XXV), it is important to explore the ways in which youth make meaning out of media and specifically, reality television.

The purpose of this study was to critically analyse the ways in which youth interact with media and how the images and lifestyles that are portrayed on reality television may be affecting the manner in which youth view both themselves and others. Because adolescence is a time of self-discovery and identity formation, there is much to be discovered in terms of how the viewing of reality television may be playing a role in this process. Shirley Steinberg (2009) makes clear that media affects all of us, for better or worse, and the goal of this study was to gain a clearer understanding of those effects on young people, their identities, and their views of others.

Theoretical Framework

Zygmunt Bauman's theory of liquid modernity framed this study. Bauman describes the liquid modern era as a time "in which time flows, but no longer marches on. There is constant change, but no finishing point" (2007, p. 121). No longer are there important oppositions that aid in understanding and defining life as we know it; instead, we live in a time when, for Bauman, creation and destruction are the same. Because there is no longer a beginning or an end, but rather a "society in which networks replace structures, and an uninterrupted game of connecting to and disconnecting from those networks" (Bauman, 2011, p.14), we are engrossed in a time where we do not stand still long enough to make any solid bonds. This constant movement and refashioning of ourselves and our world, along with the lack of any feeling of belonging has resulted in human bonds being seen as a threat, rather than as something positive.

The lack of bonds, of secrets, of sacred knowledge, and of a lack of a proverbial centre has led Bauman to describe the world as one where we have blurred the lines between public and private spaces and lives to the point that there no longer is a line. Bauman makes a powerful statement that we are living in a "confessional" society, where,

> A heretofore unheard-of and inconceivable kind of society in which microphones were fixed inside the confessionals, those eponymical safeboxes and depositories of the most secret of secrets, the sort of secrets that would be divulged only to God or his earthly messengers were perched on public squares, places previously meant for the brandishing and thrashing out of the issues of common, shared interest, concern, and urgency

(2012, Pg.21)

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

This confessional society and the blurred lines between public and private spaces lend themselves well to exploring reality television and the ways in which these shows may be affecting young people.

The confessional society described by Bauman perfectly illustrates the types of television shows that all people, but young people especially, are viewing. On many of these shows, characters or contestants often find themselves in small rooms, monitored by a camera and a microphone, pouring out their private thoughts and feelings. However, instead of spilling these secrets to one best friend or one trusted advisor, this person is instead divulging their innermost thoughts to however many viewers are out there watching. What were once considered private, special thoughts and feelings, meant to be shared with a select few in private spaces are now readily shared for the entire world to see and hear. Because of this, Bauman theorizes that we currently inhabit a space where everything is meant for public consumption, yet we are lacking a concept or definition of what 'community' means anymore. Today's liquid modern time focuses more on the next best thing and how quickly people can dispose of whatever they now currently possess, view, or take interest in.

This concept of disposability speaks to reality television. One look at some of the most popular shows such as *Big Brother, Survivor, The Voice, The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette,* illustrates how disposability has not only made its way into mainstream television, but is also embraced and celebrated by today's viewers. As Bauman explains, "All these shows are public rehearsals of disposal: the disposability of humans and things" (2007, p. 123). With this in mind, that everything and everybody can be and will be disposed of, the trials for youth of navigating their own identity and attempting to understand others becomes that much more difficult.

In trying to understand the ways in which youth are interacting with reality television and the effects of the blurred lines between public and private spaces, Bauman's work is indispensable. By using this lens to better understand the contemporary phenomenon that is reality television, I can dig deeper into how this type of media is intertwined with the shifting idea of community; the chaos and struggle between the public and private; the lack of value for anything secret or sacred, and the conflict between autonomy and belonging. Reality television is invading our private spaces, our homes. It is touting the "confessional society". Thus, Bauman's liquid modernity will aid in providing a deeper, more distinct understanding of how youth are both engaging with reality television, as well as potentially being affected by it.

When one thinks of the way that young people are interacting with different forms of media and specifically reality television, critical media literacy must be considered. Critical media literacy has been defined by Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share as a method of instruction that, "focuses on ideology critique and analysing the politics of representation of crucial dimensions of gender, race, class, and sexuality; incorporating alternative media production; and expanding textual analysis to include issues of social context, control, resistance, and pleasure" (2007, p. 62). While this approach to classroom instruction has become prevalent in places like Australia, Great Britain and Canada, it has not reached the United States yet. Yes, there are pockets of amazing teachers scattered throughout schools, working hard with their students on different types of critical thinking and questioning, but the reality is that this approach to media literacy is not status quo in schools in the United States.

Instead of critical media literacy, what is often in place are three other approaches to media literacy instruction that simply do not support the necessary development of critical thinking skills that our students need in order to become informed consumers of media, as well as critical global citizens. Kellner and Share (2007) describe three approaches to media literacy that all fall short of engaging students in critical thought. While each may have elements that contribute to the field of critical media literacy, as stand-alone practices they are not enough. The first approach is the protectionist approach, which works to protect kids from the power and dangers of media. The second approach is described as the media arts approach, which helps students develop an appreciation for the aesthetics of the arts and their own ability to create new media. The third approach has taken the shape of the media literacy movement, which focuses students' attention on accessing, analysing, evaluating, and communicating.

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

Critical media literacy, however, pulls a thread from each of these approaches, but takes them a step further by critically questioning and engaging with ideas of power and control in various forms of media.

Methods and Methodology

Critical Qualitative Research and Case Study Inquiry

I used a critical qualitative case study model for this project. This approach, along with Phil Carspecken's (1996) methods of data analysis and interpretation aided my exploration of social issues and human phenomena. Critical qualitative research allowed me to explore aspects of youth identity and their relationship to reality television in a way that quantitative research would not allow. Additionally, because there is an element of power in terms of the relationship between media and those who interact with it in various ways, taking a critical qualitative approach lent itself well to examining the deeper layers of reality television and its potential effects. I view this work as that of a critical scholar because, as Phil Carspecken writes, "Criticalists find contemporary society to be unfair, unequal, and both subtly and overtly oppressive for many people. We do not like it, and we want to change it" (1996, p.7).

Generation of Data

Focus groups and one-on-one interviews with 8th grade students grounded this study. Seven students met as a focus group over three different days to begin the study. Within this time, I led semi-structured focus groups, where the students directed much of the dialogue around reality television by responding to each other, as well as to my questions. The dialogue during this time was completely confidential, within the confines of a classroom, and all students knew that they were recorded for data collection purposes. Following the focus groups, I met with each student for an approximately 40-minute interview, where we followed up on some of the comments that he or she had made during the focus groups. Once all data was collected, I analysed and interpreted it, first creating a primary record, then using both low and high coding methods. Finally, I used Carspecken's methods for meaning reconstruction and horizon analysis.

The participants for this study were diverse in a number of ways, including the make-up of their family, the location of their home, their race, gender and social class, and even their cognitive abilities as they relate to academics. All seven of the participants were eager to have these conversations, but some participants were more vocal than other participants. A brief description of each participant is provided here.

Jasmine was a 14-year-old African American female who came from a two-parent household. She watched a great deal of reality television, specifically those that are on MTV. Jasmine was quite vocal during the interviews and worked to start pushing back against stereotypes, specifically those around African Americans. Malaysia was also an African American young woman, who was 12-years-old at the time of the study. Her background was quite different from Jasmine's though. Malaysia lived in a single-parent household, with a mom who was significantly older than her and she had no siblings at home. Malaysia's neighbourhood was the type that did not allow for safe playing outside, so reality television made for a great after-school companion. Marty was slightly different from some of the other participants, specifically because he did not have as strong of a relationship with his peers as the rest of the group members. Marty was of Mexican descent and shared a home in a working class neighbourhood with his brother and two parents. In terms of emotional maturity, Marty was not quite at the level of his peers and this disconnect came through in some of the focus group interactions. Also of Mexican descent was Brian, who lived with both of his parents and a college-aged sister in a nicer, middle-class neighbourhood.

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

Another of the young, male participants was John, who lived with his single mother in a working class neighbourhood. John did not possess much in the way of capital – social, cultural, or financial – and so his fixation with reality television focused on the potential to win prize money and the ways in which people can and will interact with others in order to win. This view appeared to facilitate his desire to one day appear on a reality television show. In addition to John, Jake and Brittany were the other two Caucasian participants. Jake was a 13-year-old male who was well liked by his peers. He lived with both of his parents in a middle class home and was one of the more active participants in our discussions. Brittany, on the other hand, lived with her mom in a working class area and she was an avid watcher of reality television with her mom. Brittany seemed to form very personal bonds with reality show characters, to the point that her friends remarked that she talked more about these characters than about her real life. All of these participants and their various backgrounds and interests made for very rich focus groups and interview sessions.

Analysis and Conclusions

"So I'm like, why do they automatically assume they're like these stereotypes? I don't understand, like—you should come to my house, because my house is very clean. And my father's in it. I only have two siblings. My mother is not a crack head."

- *Jasmine, 14-years-old*

"I think girls are trying to be the people they see on T.V."

- *Malaysia, 12-years-old*

"Reality is not as exciting as it is on T.V."

- *Brian, 12-years-old*

"I feel that they feed the stereotypes so that people believe that stereotype even more."

- *Jake, 13-years-old*

" . . .and it's like, that's how kids are going to think they're supposed to be when they get older. So it's just making our society worse."

- *Marty, 13-year-old*

". . .how there is stereotypes on Hispanics and, you know, their speaking and their personality and sometimes even their intelligence, and their drinking habits, or their family traditions . . ."

- *Brian, 12-years-old*

"I think that's actually how they are in real life."

- *John, 14-years-old*

"Well, it's like, in most shows it's mostly drama, and I feel like when you watch it, like you – I don't know. It's kind of funny to watch how people act in their TV life, and its like, when you watch drama, like, you get entertained by how they act and it's like – when I watch them, I laugh at it. So I feel like it's funny to most people and it's entertaining."

- *Brittany, 13-years-old*

"A lot of people my age, I feel like when they see that, they're like, oh, this is how the world's supposed to be and this is how people are supposed to act."

- *Brittany, 13-years-old*

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

> *"Because it's easier for someone to believe something – or to – yeah, to believe something on TV that they already know or think is true . . ."*
>
> - *Jake, 13-years-old*

The above statements came directly from the young participants in this study. All of these statements were made during either our focus groups or the one-on-one interviews, and they are indicative of the main ideas that came to life as we discussed reality television programming. Interestingly, as I prepared to conduct this study, there was very little research in terms of young viewers of reality television. Studies exist that show a link between adult viewers of reality television and potential implications, but little research focused on pre-teen and teenaged viewers of reality television.

Throughout the course of the study and the subsequent coding and analysis of the transcripts, six major themes emerged. All participants addressed each of these themes, either during the one-on-one interviews, during the focus groups, or both. While some respondents were more passionate about one topic over another, each of the following six themes appeared often enough to warrant further discussion. The themes are notion of drama, extent of reality, influence on lives and identity, concept of disposability, creation of media selves, and emphasis on stereotyping.

The two most dynamic, frequently discussed concepts were those of stereotyping and drama. Both of these garnered the most emotion and input from all participants, and they were especially interesting because not all viewpoints were the same when it came to these ideas. The notion of drama was the driving force behind viewing reality television shows. While the participants never distinctly defined their concept of drama, this term was used repeatedly when describing shows that capture the interest of viewers, the participants included. Additionally, while characters that were shown in stereotypical ways stirred up some of this drama, the stereotypes had the kids talking. For the pre-teens and teenagers I spoke with, the stereotyped portrayals of certain groups of people on these television shows brought about emotional reactions, confusion, and frustration.

In addition to the recurring themes of drama and stereotypes, the respondents also often discussed how real they felt these shows were, with debate at times over differing opinions. Whether real or not, it became clear through discussion that the participants felt as though reality television does, in fact, have a certain level of influence over viewers, their perspective of other people and the world around them. Additionally, while the terms "media selves" and "disposability" were never uttered by the young participants in this study, through dialogue and careful discussion it became clear that these are issues that come to light when viewing and thinking about reality television. The participants mentioned how some of these characters act a certain way on the show and then realize that, when they go off the air, they may still be in the spotlight, which means that they need to carry on with the character that they enacted while on the show. Additionally, many of the students showed very little empathy, if any at all, for the characters on these shows. One participant even remarked that, "every reality star crashes and burns". This was said with no regard who this person may be outside of the television show or what this production may mean to his or her life. Characters on these shows are disposable, just like the disposability we see of marginalized folks in the world outside of television.

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

Significance

The importance of this study is paramount to understanding the ways in which young people are relating to others and making meaning out of the constant media messages that consume their daily lives. By gaining a greater understanding of the effects that reality television has on young people, scholars can continue to develop tools based in critical media literacy that may act to arm youth with the critical thinking skills that they need, in order to make sense of the message at the site of consumption and analyse how certain television shows may be affecting the views that they hold of both themselves and others. Additionally, by acquiring a clearer understanding of how youth engage with reality television, educators can gain knowledge that might better allow young people to engage with social realities and the knowledge that will serve to both help them deconstruct their own lives, as well as enrich the lives of others.

For correspondence please contact: Danielle Ligocki   (danielleligocki@oakland.edu)

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

References

Adorno, T. (1957). Television and the patterns of mass culture. *Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television*, *8*(1), 213–235.

Allen, K. & Mendick, H. (2012). Keeping it real? Social class, young people and 'authenticity' in reality TV. *Sociology*, *47*(3), 460–476.

American Heart Association. (2008, March 14). Many teens spend 30 hours a week on 'screen time' during high school. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved November 15, 2015 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080312172614.htm

Arnett, J. (1995). Adolescents' uses of media for self-socialization. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *24*(5), 519–533.

Barker, C. (2010). *Cultural studies: Theory and practice.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Bauman, Z. (2007). *Consuming life.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2011). *Culture in a liquid modern world.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2007). Liquid arts. *Theory, culture and society*, *24*(1), 117–126.

Bauman, Z. (2012). *Liquid modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2011). Privacy, secrecy, intimacy, human bonds−and other collateral casualties of liquid modernity. *The Hedgehog Review*, *13*(1), 20–29.

Carspecken, F. P. (2013). Critical ethnography in educational research. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Carter, B. (2010, September 13). Tired of Reality TV, but Still Tuning In. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/13/business/media/13reality.html?_r=0

Collins, S. (2014, December 28). Reality TV facing its own reality: A ratings slump. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/la-et-st-reality-television-20141228-story.html

Couldry, N. (2009). Teaching us to fake it: The ritualized norms of television's "reality" games. In S. Murray & L. Ouellette (Eds.), *Reality TV: Remaking television culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Giroux, H. (1994). Doing cultural studies: Youth and the challenge of pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, *64*(3), 278–308.

Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production, and social change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M. (2009). In search of critical pedagogy. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader.* New York: Routledge.

Ibraham, A. & Steinberg, S. (2014). *Critical youth studies reader.* New York: Peter Lang.

Jost, F. (2011). When reality TV is a job. In M. Kraidy & K. Sender (Eds.), *The politics of reality TV.* New York: Routledge.

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

Kalmus, V. (2009). Socialization in the changing information environment. In D. Macedo & S. Steinberg (Eds.), *Media literacy: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang.

Kellner, D. & Share, J. (2009). Critical media literacy, democracy, and the reconstruction of education. In D. Macedo & S. Steinberg (Eds.), *Media literacy: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang.

Kellner, D. (1995). *Media culture: Cultural studies, identity, and the politics between the modern and the postmodern.* New York: Routledge.

Kellner, D. & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy is not an option. *Learning Inquiry*, *1*(1), 59–69.

Kraszewski, J. (2009). Country hicks and urban cliques: Mediating race, reality, and liberalism on MTV's *The Real World.* In S. Murray & L. Ouellette (Eds.), *Reality TV: Remaking television culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Leistyna, P. & Alper, L. (2009). Critical media literacy for the twenty-first century. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader.* New York: Routledge.

Lenhart, A. (2015, April 9). Teens, social media & technology overview 2015. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/

Macedo, D. (2009). Deconstructing the corporate media/government nexus. In D. Macedo & S. Steinberg (Eds.), *Media literacy: A reader.* New York: Peter Lang.

Massing, M. (2005). Off course: How the hip and ambitious coverage of pop culture at our most influential newspaper manages to miss half the story. *Columbia Journalism Review*, July/August, 28–34.

McCarthy, A. (2009). "Stanley Milgram, Allen Funt and Me": Postwar social science and the "first wave" of reality TV. In S. Murray & L. Ouellette (Eds.), *Reality TV: Remaking television culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Melnick, M. (2011, October 8). What reality TV teaches teen girls. *TIME*. Retrieved from http://healthland.time.com/2011/10/18/what-reality-tv-teaches-teen-girls/

Nielsen (2005). *Nielsen 2005 Report on Television.* New York: Nielsen Media Research.

Neilsen (2011, September 21). 10 years of primetime: The rise of reality and sports programming. Retrieved from http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2011/10-years-of-primetime-the-rise-of-reality-and-sports-programming.html

Ocasio, A. (2014, December 18). Reality TV by the numbers. *ScreenRant.* Retrieved from http://screenrant.com/reality-tv-statistics-infographic-aco-149257/

Ouellette, L. (2010). Reality TV gives back: On the civic functions of reality entertainment. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, *38*(2), 67–72.

Patino, A., Kaltcheva, V., & Smith, M. (2011). The appeal of reality television for teen and pre-teen audiences. The power of "connectedness" and psycho-demographics. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *51*(1), 288–297.

Peek, H. (2014, August 14). The impact of reality TV on our teens: What can parents do? *The Clay Center for Healthy Young Minds* [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.mghclaycenter.org/parenting-concerns/teenagers/impact-reality-tv-teens-can-parents/

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

Pew Research Center (2012). Teens fact sheet. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/teens-fact-sheet/

Pozner, J. (2010). *Reality bites back: The troubling truth about guilty pleasure TV.* Berkeley, California: Seal Press.

Rose, R. L. & Wood, S. L. (2005). Paradox and the consumption of authenticity through reality television. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *32*(3), 284–296.

Sanneh, K. (2011, May 19). The reality principle: The rise and rise of a television genre. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/05/09/the-reality-principle

Stack, M. & Kelly, D. (2006). Popular media, education, and resistance. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *29*(1), 5–26.

Steinberg, S. (2011). *Kinderculture: The corporate construction of childhood.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Steinberg, S. (2009). Reading media critically. In D. Macedo & S. Steinberg (Eds.), *Media literacy: A reader*. New York: Peter Lang.

Winant, G. (2014). Dirty jobs, done dirt cheap: Working in reality television. *New Labor Forum*, *23*(3), 66–71.

Wolfman, A. (2005). Kids research meets reality TV. *Young Consumers*, *6*(2), 60–62.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods.* London: Sage.

Disclosure statement

Danielle Ligocki
Oakland University, Detroit USA

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

"In it together": Staff-Student Facebook groups promote collaborative learning and formation of a cohort identity.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Abstract

Facebook has the potential to be used as an educational tool that supports the formation of a cohort identity, improving engagement which can potentially positively impact on retention and performance. An in-house initiative created staff-maintained Facebook groups for each cohort within the Psychology suite of programmes, utilising staff engagement to add an additional learning resource for students during the duration of their course. The groups were positively received by 99% of students, showing that students immensely valued the additional learning resource available to them. Thematic analysis revealed key positive themes sense of community and support, ease of communication and the breaking down of barriers between staff and students; key negative themes involved concern around the potential for students to miss out on a valuable resource. The staff-maintained Facebook groups achieved their aim of creating a socially-oriented learning space that fostered a sense of community and cohort identity; the groups have been integrated into the permanent provision within the School of Psychology. This type of initiative has the potential to improve engagement, performance and retention in a world where blended learning is increasingly utilised.

Keywords

Facebook, collaborative learning, student support, social media, cohort identity

Introduction

In an age of increasing digitisation within Higher Education (HE), finding suitable tools that support the development of collegiate connection and foster a sense of community among students and staff is more important than ever. Facebook is one such commonly used social media tool (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010; Thai et al, 2019; Statista, 2020), that some have appropriated for use within learning, with mixed results.

While many faculties and academic services already support the use of social media (Dabbagh & Kirsantas, 2012; Hendrix, Chiarella, Hasman, Murphy, & Zafron, 2009), there are limited studies available where staff-maintained Facebook groups have been set up to directly support student learning and integration at University. However, there have been a number of studies which have investigated student opinion towards using social media, specifically Facebook, in learning.

Typically, findings show that Facebook has the potential to positively impact collaborative and cooperative learning (for example: Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javed, 2013; Irwin, Ball, Desbrow, & Leveritt, 2012, Thai et al, 2019, Awidi et al, 2019, Moghavemi et al, 2019), but that its potential has not been realised within academia due to a reluctance among academic staff to integrate social media into their teaching (Manca & Ranieri, 2016), potentially due to concern that students would perceive it as reducing credibility of academic staff. While inappropriate self-disclosure is rightly felt to be unprofessional (Mazer, Murphy, Simonds, 2007), appropriately monitored social media use can potentially be beneficial (Irwin et al, 2012; Junco, 2012).

The Mazman and Usluel (2010) model for educational usage of Facebook identified three distinct educational uses of Facebook: communication, collaboration and the sharing of resources, with their findings supporting the idea that these different pedagogical dimensions can occur within social networks simultaneously and the shift to this informal, flexible and comfortable environment is one which students are willing to make. In support of this, Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javed (2014), found Facebook was most effective when students used it to establish or maintain contact with people with shared interests, specifically classmates.

The primary aim of most individuals who use social media is to use it as a purely social resource (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). While social tools are important for connection with fellow students (Alario-Hoyes, Pérez-Sanagustín, Delgado-Kloos, Muñoz-Organero, & Rodríguez-de-las-Heras, 2013), some of the academic concerns regarding social media use comes from perception of it being purely social interactions with no learning benefit (Hew, 2011; Schroeder, Minocha, & Schneider, 2010). However, Facebook has many features which lend themselves well to an online study group (Eid & Al-Jabri, 2006, Moghavemi et al, 2017, Awidi et al, 2019), such as file sharing, announcements, discussion, information-seeking, formation of a cohort identity, plus the potential to provide peer support.

Social interactions are an important factor for UG students (Sánchez et al, 2013). In a world of increasing digitisation of HE, social tools such as Facebook could enhance the learning experience, facilitating the formation of student communities and helping create a cohort identity (Gafni & Deri, 2012; Schroeder et al, 2010; Irwin et al, 2012; Cho et al, 2010) when face-to-face connection is not always possible. Creating a sense of community in students where all students feel they are "in the same boat" (Amador & Amador, 2017, p199) can aid the formation of a cohort identity. Giving students a more informal, socially-oriented, group with which to source support and release "academic emotions" (Amador & Amador, 2017, p199) is an invaluable tool to utilise. Indeed, facilitating a situation whereby interpersonal communication is continuous and supportive can positively impact students feeling a sense of social intimacy (Park & Lee, 2019) that may encourage help-seeking behaviour. Including academics in social media groups can be perceived as adding formality to an informal space, but the evidence suggests that students adapt well to this (Amador & Amador, 2017), and appropriate, educationally-focused help-seeking behaviour increases as a result.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Without involvement from academic staff, social media is typically a very weak learning resource that could potentially negatively impact educational achievement (Kirschener & Karpinski, 2010; Junco, 2012, Gafni & Deri, 2012) as it can be a distraction from academic engagement (Feng, Wong, Wong, & Hossain, 2019). Social interactions and scrolling can lead to a lack of focus on educational activities which negatively impact engagement in the learning process (Datu, 2019) and, as a result, educational achievement (Gafni & Deri, 2012, Feng 2019). In student-led groups, it is easy to see how social interactions can distract from educational focus, thus negatively impacting learning progress (Feng 2019): the lack of academic moderating presence can lead to inaccurate information transmission, social distractions and an overall lack of focus, which can lead to poor performance when students prioritise social interactions and advice from peers over educationally-relevant interactions with academic tutors (Datu, 2019). The professional and moderating presence of academic staff could significantly impact the educational validity of a Facebook group, resulting in accuracy of information transmission and a group that is a supportive, and educationally sound, resource, that can support learning and performance (Lambić, 2016; Marker, Gnambs, & Appel, 2018).

Zimmerman's model of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) (2009) states that forethought, performance and self-reflection work in a cyclical loop that continues until independent learning goals are successfully completed. Social media fits neatly into the self-reflection aspect of this model (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012) and has the potential to facilitate self-reflection while also providing connections with peers and the formation of a cohort identity that all positive contribute to SRL and a sense of connectedness (Cho et al, 2010, Zimmerman, 2000, Thai et al, 2019); vital elements for performance and retention.

Social media has the potential to be used as a resource enabling students to take ownership for their own learning, facilitating their independent learning abilities (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). Where there is deliberate academic focus within the social media usage, academic performance can be positively impacted (Lambić, 2016; Marker et al, 2018), demonstrating that utilising social media as a learning tool, as part of educational development, can be beneficial to academic performance. Indeed, due to the presence of academic tutors, a high engagement in course-related social media could directly predict an increase in perceived learning and course satisfaction (Richardson & Swan, 2009).

For a digital initiative to be successful, students must perceive it as having added value (Garcia & Silva, 2017). While some students justifiably feel that academics joining these Facebook groups is unprofessional and an invasion of their social territory (Mazer et al, 2007), groups are set up by academics for the sole purpose of facilitating a social learning environment, tend to be perceived as valuable and receive a favourable reaction from students (Irwin et al, 2012; Garcia & Silva, 2017). Indeed, where educators are involved in a specific social media group, set up to facilitate learning, the teaching presence can be high and potentially beneficial to learning (Irwin et al, 2012). This is particularly pertinent, since consistent communication with those at graduate level or higher has been shown to improve performance in UG students (Junco, 2012).

Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) are typical in all HE establishments, and include a myriad of tools to facilitate learning and interaction. However, these tools are all provided under the watchful eye of the University itself. While Universities are not in the habit of snooping on their students' conversations, this does not dispel the sense of formality that comes with using a VLE. Having social spaces within the University itself is traditionally where interaction occurs, fostering the sense of collegiality and community, alongside classroom interaction, that is so beneficial for creating a cohort identity that can positively impact on retention [Kahu & Nelson, 2018, Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004) and student wellbeing (Iyer, Jetten, Tsivrikos, Postmes, & Haslam, 2010; McNeill, Kerr, & Mavor, 2014). Fostering this social element in a digital format requires a separate system from the VLE, enabling there to be a perceived digital barrier between the formal university systems and more informal cohort interactions. Adding moderating advice from course-specific academics facilitates accuracy of information transfer, but allows students to interact in a more informal digital space. Course-specific academics are already privy to classroom interaction, so are well-placed to be a moderating, but not formal and overbearing intermediary who can facilitate learning support within a toll that supports development of cohort identity.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Investigating Facebook as a useful social tool to facilitate learning is beneficial; particularly in an era where retention of UG students is such a challenging feature of academic life, when cohort identity, sense of belonging, and staff support can contribute to positive retention outcomes (McKendry, Wright, & Stevenson, 2014). Students are faced with ever more demands on their time, such as commuting from home locations, leading to traditional study groups and a sense of community forming more slowly, if at all. This can have a significant impact on retention, particularly in the vulnerable Foundation and Stage 1 cohorts, where students are at higher risk of dropping out of University altogether. Additional resources, particularly those which are readily available and accessible, to facilitate the sense of community within the HE community can only be of benefit to students.

The rationale for this study was to clarify the position in the literature about whether Facebook groups are really beneficial for students as a resource for collegiate and cohort identity development during their academic course. Facebook is still the most popular social media site (SNS), with 2.6 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2020). However, there has been a misperception that use of Facebook is declining among the younger generation, but in fact usage is increasing. In 2010, Facebook was the most commonly used social media network, with 73% of all adults holding a profile, dropping slightly to 71% among 18-29 year olds (Lerhart, 2010). However as of May 2020, the rates in the US, which is similar in profile to the UK, showed an increase to 79% of adults aged 18-29% (Statista, 2020), along with 79% and 68% of 30-49 and 50-64 year olds respectively.

However, with the misperception of declining use, academics have been reluctant to engage in developing a resource that students may not use. So, despite the clear potential benefits, the question of whether Facebook is a valid method of support for a current student population remains a pertinent topic for investigation. Facebook is a social network that is capable of forging communities and relationships in an online learning environment (Moghavemi et L, 2017, Thai et al, 2019, Awidi et al, 2019); investigating how well use of SNS options work in an academic context is of continued interest as learning is increasingly situated within a virtual space.

As a trial within the School of Psychology, a series of staff-maintained Facebook groups were set up in 2015/16, one for each Stage of the UG programme. The aim was to use these to disseminate information, encourage discussion and promote a sense of cohort identity, in addition to providing an academic learning space within social media that would be an easy-to-use, but academically beneficial, resource for students. After two academic cohorts of seemingly very successful use, a bespoke feedback questionnaire (collecting both quantitative and qualitative data) was designed to garner opinion and see if the project was worth continuing. During 2017/18 this questionnaire was run and feedback gathered across the UG programme.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the Facebook groups and determine whether they provided a sense of community among students that they considered a valuable resource during their degree. The aim was not to link with performance, but to look at whether sense of community was perceived positively. The hypothesis for the quantitative aspect of the study was that a staff-maintained Facebook group would be received positively among students. This is based on previous research finding that students find interactions with staff via social media beneficial to their studies (Irwin et al, 2012; Junco, 2012; Lambić, 2016; Marker et al, 2018), and the observations over two years of running these groups within the School of Psychology. The research question for the qualitative element of the study was to look at whether students felt the Facebook groups were beneficial to their sense of collective identity and their overall academic experience within the School of Psychology. This question was determined by the plethora of information suggesting that this indeed might be the case (Gafni & Deri, 2012; Schroeder et al, 2010; Irwin et al, 2012; Cho et al, 2010) but also that reframing a social space as an *academic* social space might improve perceptions around the benefits of engaging with academics outside of scheduled time.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Methods

Participants

A total of 110 students completed the anonymous feedback questionnaire (Stage 1 = 26, Stage 2 = 36, Stage 3 = 48). Students were recruited through a voluntary sample from the existing Facebook groups set up within the School of Psychology, via an advert and questionnaire link posted in the groups. The age range of students was 18-49 years. Broad categorical data was recorded, so no specific mean age is available. However, 79.63% were in 18-25 years category (60.19% 18-21 years). Gender was not recorded.

Materials

The questionnaire was a bespoke questionnaire to garner opinion about the Facebook group, covering their views on the sense of community, sharing a space with academic staff, the perceived benefits of the groups and how they used the groups. Example questions can be found in the results section. The questionnaire for this paper was generated using Qualtrics software during April 2018 (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) and disseminated through the staff-maintained Facebook groups directly.

Design

This was an exploratory study. The design was mixed methods with both qualitative and quantitative, categorical, data being recorded. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Procedure:

The Facebook groups were created as private cohort groups, and willing staff members joined these. Only staff and students within the School of Psychology were permitted to join. The groups were advertised to students at the start of their courses, as a voluntary option, and a snowball effect of uptake then occurred, with increasing uptake over the first few weeks of the academic year. The groups were used for discussion of class topics, announcements and reminders, notifications about assignment returns. Students were encouraged to ask questions about all aspects of the course and discuss with both staff and students. Adverts for Stage 3 projects were permitted, but no external advertising or page links were permitted. Staff with admin access monitored the posts, but there were no significant problems reported. Students often shared class-related jokes and memes, and there was plenty of light-hearted discussion as well as more serious course-related discussion. All course-related material shared on Facebook was shared through normal communication channels, so no student was disadvantaged academically.

Questionnaire data was gathered in line with normal feedback procedures. An advert was placed in each Facebook group, telling students that their views were sought about the use of the Facebook groups. Students were directed, through the advert, to a Qualtrics site (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). All students voluntarily completed the anonymous feedback questionnaire. As many students have now graduated, in line with ethical procedures, an advert was placed in each of the relevant Facebook group to notify students their anonymous feedback was forming part of a paper, students were given a month to respond with objections, but none were received. Quantitative results are be reported in descriptive form, and the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Results

The aim of this project was to evaluate whether the Facebook groups provided a sense of community among students that they considered a valuable resource during their degree. The hypothesis for the quantitative aspect of the study was that a staff-maintained Facebook group would be received positively among students and the research question for the qualitative element of the study was to look at whether students felt the Facebook groups were beneficial to their sense of collective identity and their overall academic experience within the School of Psychology. The overwhelmingly positive feedback, both quantitative (Table 1) and qualitative (Tables 2 and 3), received confirmed that this was a successful project which should be continued.

<p align="center">Table 1: Quantitative responses</p>

Question Topic	% students agreeing with statement
The groups were a good idea and should continue	94.46%
Sharing a social media space with lecturers was a positive experience	99.05%
Sharing a Facebook space with staff made them more approachable	52.38% *
The Facebook group facilitated positive discussion with students	89.52%
The Facebook group was a positive source of support	91.43%
Already had a Facebook account	93.58%
Joined Facebook to specifically be part of the groups	6.42%
Checked the Facebook group more than once a day	86.36%**
Were happy with how the Facebook groups were managed	95.24%
The response time on the Facebook groups from staff was good	92.31%
Notifications helped stay up to date with group activity	88.46%***

Notes:

* For 47.61% Use of Facebook did not make a difference with their level of comfort around staff, because they already felt comfortable with staff.
** 12.75% checked the Facebook group more than once an hour
*** 2.88% around deadlines only

Students saw the benefit and found the space to be beneficial to their academic experience (see Table 1). Reassuringly 79.34% of students still felt the VLE was the core source of information during their course, showing that the Facebook was seen as an additional resource by the vast majority of students. Only 13.08% relied on the Facebook group for information, 70.09% used the Facebook group as one of the many resources available to them. Students were split by where they asked their questions, with 45.98% opting to go straight to the Facebook group, where there were a greater number of staff in a single location, while 54.02% preferred to email or see staff face-to-face.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Only one person (0.91%) thought the groups were a bad idea. Two students (1.82%) thought they were good, but just not for them; this is very positive as students visibly saw the benefit to the staff-maintained Facebook groups, even if they felt they did not want to take part.

The qualitative data came from two questions relating to the positive and negative aspects of the Facebook groups, and one question where students could share any additional views. Thematic analysis was conducted to look at the semantic themes evident in the data. The authors used the reflexive approach, and combined identified clusters of responses into larger themes using inductive reasoning (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Initially themes were constructed in line with semantic information, then latent meaning was identified within the semantic information to clearly differentiate between the themes. These were then split into positive and negative themes (see Tables 2 and 3), although the predominant message in the responses was one of positivity for the use of Facebook groups.

Overall, there were 120 positive comments provided (69.77% of all comments provided), and only 29 negative ones (16.8%). There were 11 comments (6.4%) that related to FOMO (fear of missing out), with students wanting to see more staff involved, and 12 comments (6.97%) related to complaints that other students were relying on Facebook instead of the VLE first, or leaving their work until the last minute.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Table 2: The benefits of having a staff-maintained online space
directly linked with degree and cohort.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Examples
Ease of Communication	Using a social media platform to create quick responses on Facebook	*'Fast and Efficient'* *'quick replies'* *'a lot quicker than emails'* *'seems to be a quicker way of contact'*
	Students enjoyment of using a social media platform as a way of communication	*'It's nice to have multiple platforms of contact when I need help'* *'Most people check Facebook more frequently'* *'It's a lot easier and faster to contact lecturers… through the Facebook group'* *'Makes it a much more enjoyable learning environment'* *'Good place to get info'*
Efficient resource for discussion and clarity	Increasing productivity within a group setting on Facebook	*'questions are answered I sometimes wouldn't even think to ask'* *'more efficient on Facebook'* *'Fast and Efficient'*
	Facebook as a means of providing information to students	*'Quick source of information'* *'available information and discussions between students'* *'up to date information such as returned work or something to do with timetables'*
	Facebook as a means of explaining points further	*'is great to clarify any points'* *'I can find the answer to a question I was going to ask myself'*
	The Facebook group as a platform for unit discussion	*'allows for question and discussion'* *'lecturers are there to clarify things during a discussion'*
	Prevention of Issue Development	*'it's easier to avoid misunderstandings between students'* *'Prevented the spread of rumours'*
Promoting sense of community and connection	Facebook connecting both students and lecturers together	*'a more relaxed setting to interact with lecturers'* *'close contact with lecturers'* *'direct responses from other students and lecturers'* *'shared student knowledge'* *'available information and discussion between students'*
	Facebook providing a sense of community with both students and lecturers	*'shared student knowledge'* *'able to discuss with lecturers and other students in a shared social space'*
	Facebook group providing an informal atmosphere	*'approachable space'* *'less formal'* *'you feel more comfortable with staff'*
	Facebook highlighting the approachability to staff and fellow students	*'interaction beneficial…who would perhaps not approach staff otherwise'* *'building a relationship with the staff'*
	The Facebook group creating togetherness	*'it has made me feel more involved and included'*
	Staff and students interacting harmoniously on Facebook	*'eased communication between members of staff and students, as well as between students in the same stage'* *'Easy to contact lecturers'* *'Able to talk to staff and other students more openly about subjects'* *'Quick wide/spread communication with people and lecturers on course'*
Support	Facebook providing online support to individuals	*'Fab if confused or need support'* *'being in constant contact with staff members and students'*

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Table 3: Concerns of the use of Facebook as an educational resource

Theme	Description	Example
No apparent negative	No negative aspect of Staff-maintained Stage Facebook group	*'No negatives'* *'I don't see any negatives'* *'Don't have any issue with the Facebook group'*
	Positive feedback instead of negative on the Facebook group	*'it's extremely helpful in a crisis'* *'anything that shouldn't be on the page was immediately deleted'*
Barrier of Facebook	The Facebook group creating issue with those who don't already have Facebook	*'some people don't use Facebook'* *'people who don't have Facebook are missing out'*
Potential for neglect of course materials	The Facebook group becoming relied upon	*'silly questions that can be answered using Sunspace or Module Guide'*
		'students make pointless questions' *'It can appear students are lazy'*
Lack of clarity	The Facebook group creating issue between students	*'Conflicting answers from students'*
	The Facebook group still not completely clear on information	*'some of the posts were a bit vague'* *'sometimes don't get exact answers you want'* *'think we all just like a bit of clarification'*
	The Facebook group not providing accurate information	*'Contradicting answers given in comparison with sunspace or guides'*
Notifications	The Facebook group overwhelming individuals	*'Having notifications on constantly even for information that wasn't relevant'*
	The Facebook group confusing individuals	**'**Every time I get a notification I think oh god what have I missed'*
Exclusion	The Facebook group creating exclusion within the year	*'some people may be too scared to ask questions in front of the whole group'* *'they should answer questions with the counselling side too'*
	Lack of staff presence on the Facebook group	'Not all staff are on there' 'Not all lecturers use it'
Expectation of 24/7 contact with tutors	The Facebook group not as immediate as intended	*'Sometimes slow responses from the tutors'* *'weren't always answered quickly'*
Inappropriate relationship between staff and students	Staff being inappropriate on the Facebook group	*'Staff came across rude on discussions'* *'Not appropriate relationship'*
	The Facebook group allowing inappropriate comments on the page	*'I feel that students may pass the border between lecturers'* *'Inappropriate comments'*

Discussion

The aim of this study was to evaluate if the Facebook groups created a sense of community among students. We hypothesised that the groups would be positively received and that students would find these groups beneficial for their sense of collective identity and overall academic experience within the School of Psychology. The results show that students overwhelming found being part of the Facebook groups a positive experience, both social and academic. The groups achieved the aim of creating a sense of community and cohort identity among the students. A positive additional finding was that the Facebook groups help foster positive communication between both staff and students.

In this particular institution and School, almost half (47.61%) of our students reported being comfortable interacting with staff. The current, collegiate, environment within the School of Psychology at this institution is clearly one which lent itself to integrating social media spaces into academic support provided. While we may want to interact with our students to the best of our ability, there is still a perceived barrier between tutor and student, that can negatively impact a sense of collegiality. The results show that we did break down this barrier, with almost all the remaining students (52.38%) finding the Facebook group removed perceived barriers to communication with staff.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

> *"[I] love the page overall, it has meant that I have learnt that lecturers are not scary to talk to and are in fact very friendly, helpful and approachable people"*

Students found Facebook a straightforward resource to use, facilitating communication between students and staff, highlighting that it was a useful, and enjoyable, central resource that they were already in the habit of checking. Students often set notifications (88.46%) to ensure they gained full advantage from what the group had to offer, ensuring they were fully immersed in the experience. While there are pros and cons to the use of notifications, this is evidence that students felt part of the community of learners in their cohort, seeing this as a positive experience overall.

Electronic propinquity (Walther & Bazorova, 2008)] states that increased contact and communication between individuals, via computer-mediated communication (CMC), fosters emotional closeness and formation of interpersonal bonds; sense of community can foster cohort identity that is beneficial to students' sense of engagement (Gafni & Deri, 2012; Schroeder et al, 2010; Irwin et al, 2012; Cho et al, 2010, Thai et al, 2019, Datu, 2019). This increased engagement through sense of community and cohort identity facilitates SRL and independent learning (Cho et al, 2010; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Zimmerman, 2000), proving beneficial to performance and retention. Academically-focused Facebook groups can add an extra level of CMC to students' educational arsenal, which in our study facilitated electronic propinquity and fostered a sense of community within the cohort, helping to establish a cohort identity.

Social media, like VLEs, has the capacity to support synchronous and asynchronous CMC (Hrastinski, 2008) in addition to being in a format which students are familiar with prior to attending university. The speed of information transmission afforded by Facebook was seen as beneficial for clarity of communication, preventing inaccurate information spread from rumours unsubstantiated by academic staff. Students also highlighted that the shared question-answer experience was a beneficial learning resource, and one that aided them in their studies, along with creating a sense of community encompassing students and academic staff.

> *"It's like a community of people who have the same thoughts and worries as me that I can't really talk to anyone outside of Uni about."*

The sense of community and connection came out very strongly in the data, in line with previous studies (Amador & Amador, 2017, Thai et al, 2019) and theories (Mazman & Usluel, 2010), with students viewing the shared tutor-student interactions as beneficial, reducing the perceived barriers typically in place in an educational setting. The lack of formality provided through Facebook ensured students reported feeling comfortable with the staff they interacted with; enabling them to ask questions they might not have done in traditional settings, facilitating their learning experience (Irwin et al, 2012; Junco, 2012; Lambić, 2016; Marker et al, 2018).

The sense of 'togetherness' was evident throughout the analysis, with students viewing the building of collegiate relationships with staff as extremely beneficial and supportive for their learning experience (Awidi et al, 2019,Thai et al, 2019). However, this was not universal, with a tiny proportion of students (0.91%) feeling that a more formal relationship should be held with staff, and the group, despite being clearly marketed as being maintained by staff, overstepped the traditional academic relationship boundaries. Providing a less formal digital environment where students and staff can communicate about academic-related material can be a positive initiative, providing both staff and students engage with the space (Mazman & Usluel, 2010; Sánchez et al, 2014; Amador & Amador, 2017; Park & Lee, 2019, Thai et al, 2019). Clarity of purpose, and maintenance of boundaries are clearly a vital part of marketing Facebook groups as a supportive and educational resource to students who may be more wary of interacting with staff in a social space.

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

When properly implemented, social media, specifically Facebook, clearly has the potential to positive facilitate collaborative learning, which can have a positive impact on formal learning outcomes (Lucas & Moreira, 2009). Collaborative learning combined with autonomy and the potential for asynchronous and synchronous learning, provides a distributed learning environment which can support knowledge building (Hrastinski, 2008; Lucas & Moreira, 2009). When combined with academic oversight and the social aspect providing cohort identity and a sense of community (Amador & Amador, 2017; Mazman & Usluel, 2010), it is clear that social media, and in particular Facebook, has the potential to support formal learning activities and have a positive impact on the student experience.

In the current trial there were no particular problems encountered, and no complaints took place, however a small minority of students found there were some negative aspects to the use of Facebook as a support tool. The negative themes typically arose mainly around how others might perceive and behave on Facebook. Students expressed concern for those who might feel excluded if they do not use Facebook; while all course-related information was provided via formal channels, students felt that those not accessing Facebook were missing out on the whole experience, showing that they clearly perceived the benefits of the group.

Concern was also raised that some individuals might rely on the Facebook groups at the expense of reading the educational and informational provision through formal channels, a visible indication that students perceived social-loafing to be taking place. While students perceived this as a negative, it can be argued that the Facebook groups are therefore a potential benefit in terms of student retention. While we may wish students to use official channels, if a small minority of students rely on staff-maintained Facebook groups rather than the VLE, they are potentially getting information they would not otherwise have read, and therefore this is reducing their risk of disengagement and poor performance impacting their educational experience. This is a powerful argument for having staff-maintained Facebook groups, where information accuracy can be controlled, unlike student-led groups where there is no academic oversight.

However, it was clear that students perceived there to be an occasional mismatch between information on the VLE and the Facebook group, something that was not observed from a staff perspective. This may simply be that students did not always get the answer they wanted, something that is true of all platforms and situations where questions are asked in educational settings, so not unique to the Facebook groups. It is also possible that this perception of mismatch is due to timing, whereby information was in the process of being updated, so announcements via the Facebook groups predated changes on the VLE.

It was gratifying to see a theme of 'nothing negative' emerge, with the vast majority of students perceiving that the groups were a good resource and should continue (94.46%), and almost all students feeling that sharing a social space with staff was a beneficial experience (99.05%). Given previous studies (e.g. Mazer et al, 2007) have found that students do not wish to share a social space with staff, it is clear that given the right circumstances and formatting of the social space, students are very willing to engage with such groups, providing they feel it is a positive addition to their learning experience in HE.

Within our results we received multiple requests for the groups to continue, and as a result of this initial trial, these Facebook groups are now a permanent part of the School of Psychology support network provided to students, and in 2019/20 it was expanded to incorporate Foundation students. These Facebook groups had such a positive impact on both staff and students, that they been added into the new programme specifications for the Psychology suite of programmes, demonstrating the value staff have placed on this platform as a positive resource to support our community of learners. From an administrative perspective, a new group is now created for each new cohort, and the Stage 3 group is deleted following the winter graduation. The vast majority of our cohorts go on to join our Alumni Facebook group (created in 2015 just prior to the undergraduate Facebook groups), where the sense of community continues. The current membership of the Alumni group stands at 449 (as of June, 2020).

> *"I felt more included and more connected and comfortable with everyone."*

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

One thing that was not looked at within this study, was the direct impact on performance and retention. A key area to investigate in the future is looking at how immersion and cohort identity impacts retention and performance within this social media setting. Social media is increasingly being utilised by HE providers, so using it to provide maximum benefit is a logical focus of future studies.

Despite anecdotal misperceptions about declining Facebook use, this study confirms that students still utilise Facebook as a social resource which they are willing to utilise in a learning context. Those that do not already use SNS are often willing to join in order engage with their fellow students. Where staff, and students, maintain boundaries and work as a team the results of this study suggests that Facebook groups are a great source of support for students that facilitates a sense of community within the department of study. Students tend to not adopt what they perceive as a gimmick, they wish to learn during their time in HE (Knill, 2007; Author A & Author, 2017), so staff buy-in is, we believe, an important feature of this resource, ensuring that a sense of purpose and validity is attached to the space, ensuring that students engage in a goal-driven manner.

> *"I think it's an excellent idea that improves channels of communication between staff and students and breaks down some of the traditional barriers social convention tends to impose."*

Conclusion

The staff-maintained Facebook groups created a sense of academic community within the School of Psychology, providing a space separate from the VLE that facilitated collegiate interaction and the development of cohort identity. Facebook is a potentially invaluable tool in an increasingly digital educational world; facilitating the connections between staff and students and fostering a sense of community that has the potential to improve retention and benefit the student experience both online and offline. It will be interesting to see how beneficial initiatives like this are, in a world where blended/online learning has an increasing prominence.

For correspondence please contact: Vanessa Parson   (vanessa.parson@sunderland.ac.uk)

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

References

Alario-Hoyos, C., Pérez-Sanagustín, M., Delgado-Kloos, C., Muñoz-Organero, M., & Rodríguez-de-las-Heras, A. (2013, September). Analysing the impact of built-in and external social tools in a MOOC on educational technologies. In *European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning* (pp. 5-18). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-40814-4_2

Amador, P. V., & Amador, J. M. (2017). Academic Help Seeking: a Framework for Conceptualizing Facebook Use for Higher Education Support. *TechTrends*, *61*(2), 195-202. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-016-0135-3

Awidi, I. T., Paynter, M., & Vujosevic, T. (2019). Facebook group in the learning design of a higher education course: An analysis of factors influencing positive learning experience for students. *Computers & Education*, *129*, 106-121. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.10.018

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Dabbagh, N., & Kitsantas, A. (2012). Personal Learning Environments, social media, and self-regulated learning: A natural formula for connecting formal and informal learning. *The Internet and higher education*, *15*(1), 3-8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2011.06.002

Datu, J. A. D., Yang, W., Valdez, J. P. M., & Chu, S. K. W. (2018). Is facebook involvement associated with academic engagement among Filipino university students? A cross-sectional study. *Computers & Education*, *125*, 246-253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.06.010

Eid, M. I., & Al-Jabri, I. M. (2016). Social networking, knowledge sharing, and student learning: The case of university students. *Computers & Education*, *99*, 14-27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.04.007

Feng, S., Wong, Y. K., Wong, L. Y., & Hossain, L. (2019). The internet and Facebook usage on academic distraction of college students. *Computers & Education*, *134*, 41-49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.02.005

Gafni, R. & Deri, M. (2012). Costs and Benefits of Facebook for Undergraduate Students, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge and Management*, 7, 45-61

Garcia, L. S., & Silva, C. M. C. (2017). Differences between perceived usefulness of social media and institutional channels by undergraduate students. *Interactive Technology and Smart Education*. 14(3), 131-141 https://doi.org/10.1108/ITSE-01-2017-0009

Hendrix, D., Chiarella, D., Hasman, L., Murphy, S., & Zafron, M. L. (2009). Use of Facebook in academic health sciences libraries. *Journal of the Medical Library Association: JMLA*, *97*(1), 44. https://dx.doi.org/10.3163%2F1536-5050.97.1.008

Hew, K.F. (2011). Students' and teacher's use of Facebook, *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 27, 662-676 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.11.020

Hrastinski, S. (2008). Asynchronous & Synchronous E-Learning, *Eduserv Quarterly*, 4, 51-55.

Irwin, C., Ball, L., Desbrow, B., & Leveritt, M. (2012). Students' perceptions of using Facebook as an interactive learning resource at university. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *28*(7). https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.798

Iyer, A., Jetten, J., Tsivrikos, D., Postmes, T., & Haslam, S. A. (2009). The more (and the more compatible) the merrier: Multiple group memberships and identity compatibility as predictors of adjustment after life transitions. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *48*(4), 707-733. https://doi.org/10.1348/014466608X397628

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Junco, R. (2012). Too much face and not enough books: The relationship between multiple indices of Facebook use and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *28*(1), 187-198. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.08.026

Kahu, E. R., & Nelson, K. (2018). Student engagement in the educational interface: Understanding the mechanisms of student success. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *37*(1), 58-71. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1344197

Kirschener, P.A. & Karpinski, A.C. (2010). Facebook and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 26, 1237-1245 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.03.024

Knill, O. (2007). Benefits and risks of media and technology in the classroom. *Talk given at ICTM*.

Lambić, D. (2016). Correlation between Facebook use for educational purposes and academic performance of students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *61*, 313-320. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.052

Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010). Social Media & Mobile Internet Use among Teens and Young Adults. Millennials. *Pew internet & American life project*.

Lim, T. (2010). The use of Facebook for online discussions among distance learners. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, *11*(4), 72-81.

Lotkowski, V. A., Robbins, S. B., & Noeth, R. J. (2004). The role of academic and non-academic factors in improving college retention. *ACT policy report*, *1*.

Lucas, M., & Moreira, A. (2009, September). Bridging formal and informal learning–A case study on students' perceptions of the use of social networking tools. In *European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning* (pp. 325-337). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-04636-0_31

Manca, S., & Ranieri, M. (2016). Facebook and the others. Potentials and obstacles of social media for teaching in higher education. *Computers & Education*, *95*, 216-230. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.01.012

Marker, C., Gnambs, T., & Appel, M. (2018). Active on Facebook and Failing at School? Meta-Analytic Findings on the Relationship between Online Social Networking Activities and Academic Achievement. *Educational Psychology Review*, *30*(3), 651-677. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-017-9430-6

Mazer, J.P., Murphy, R.E., Simonds, C.J. (2007). I'll see you on "Facebook": the effects of computer-mediated teacher self-disclosure on student motivation, affective learning, and classroom climate, *Communication Education*, 56(1) 1-17 https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520601009710

Mazman, S. G., & Usluel, Y. K. (2010). Modeling educational usage of Facebook. *Computers & Education*, *55*(2), 444-453. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2010.02.008

Mckendry, S., Wright, M., & Stevenson, K. (2014). Why here and why stay? Students' voices on the retention strategies of a widening participation university. *Nurse Education Today*, 34(5), 872-877. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2013.09.009

McNeill, K. G., Kerr, A., & Mavor, K. I. (2014). Identity and norms: the role of group membership in medical student wellbeing. *Perspectives on medical education*, *3*(2), 101-112. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-013-0102-z

Moghavvemi, S., Sharabati, M., Paramanathan, T., & Rahin, N. M. (2017). The impact of perceived enjoyment, perceived reciprocal benefits and knowledge power on students' knowledge sharing through Facebook. *The International Journal of Management Education*, *15*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2016.11.002

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

Park, Y. W., & Lee, A. R. (2019). The moderating role of communication contexts: How do media synchronicity and behavioral characteristics of mobile messenger applications affect social intimacy and fatigue? *Computers in Human Behavior*, *97*, 179-192. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.03.020

Author A., & Author. (2017). An investigation into cooperative learning in a virtual world using problem-based learning. *Online Learning*, *21*(2).

Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009). College students' social networking experiences on Facebook. *Journal of applied developmental psychology*, *30*(3), 227-238. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2008.12.010

Qualtrics. Copyright © (2020) Qualtrics. Qualtrics and all other Qualtrics product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of Qualtrics, Provo, UT, USA. https://www.qualtrics.com [version: April 2018]

Richardson, J., & Swan, K. (2003). Examining social presence in online courses in relation to students' perceived learning and satisfaction. *JALN*, 7(1), 68-88 http://hdl.handle.net/2142/18713

Sánchez, R. A., Cortijo, V., & Javed, U. (2014). Students' perceptions of Facebook for academic purposes. *Computers & Education*, *70*, 138-149. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.08.012

Schroeder, A., Minocha, S., & Schneider, C. (2010). Social software in higher education: The diversity of applications and their contributions to students' learning experiences. *Communications of the Association for Information systems*, *26*(1), 25. https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.02625

Statista (May, 2020). Facebook – Statistics and Facts. https://www.statista.com/topics/751/facebook/ accessed 5/11/2020, 17.44 GMT.

Thai, M., Sheeran, N., & Cummings, D. J. (2019). We're all in this together: The impact of Facebook groups on social connectedness and other outcomes in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *40*, 44-49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2018.10.001

Walther, J.B. & Bazarova, N.N. (2008). Validation and application of electronic propinquity theory to computer-mediated communication in groups. *Communication Research*, 35, 622-645. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0093650208321783

Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In Boekaerts, M., Pintrich, P., & Zeidner, E. (Eds). *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13-39). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012109890-2/50031-7

Disclosure statement

Vanessa Parson[1] and Hannah Bain[2]
[1]University of Sunderland, UK, [2]National Health Service, UK

The Journal of Social Media for Learning 2021

Social Media Usage and Coping Strategies among University of Ghana Undergraduate Students.

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1], Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2], Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Abstract

The emergence of the internet has propelled the influence of social media among tertiary students all over the world. This study investigates the effects of social media on the academic lives of University of Ghana undergraduate students as well as their coping strategies in dealing with the social media pressures. By relying on a mixed method approach and drawing a sample of 420 students from the University of Ghana, the study shows that WhatsApp is the most used social media platform among University of Ghana students for academic purposes. Also, the study showed that social media platforms are often used by students to communicate with their families and friends rather than for academic purposes. While the use of social media positively impacts academic performance through research, the study shows that it impacts negatively on students' academic lives as well, given its addictive nature. Thus, to contain this effect, the study revealed a number of coping strategies that students employ to shove off the social media pressure. Critical among them are putting off their internet data or WIFI, limiting the number of social media applications on their phones, and deleting all social media accounts such as Facebook and WhatsApp during examination periods. It is recommended that the University of Ghana, through the Careers and Counselling Centre embarks on sensitisation programmes for students on how to balance and manage their study times vis a vis social media usage for optimal results..

Keywords

Coping strategies, Facebook, Social Media, University of Ghana, WhatsApp

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Introduction

The emergence of the internet and social media in recent years has been regarded as one of the significant transformations in the 21st century (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2011; Jenkins, 2006). Global statistical data show that the growth in the number of active social media users since January 2015 is 10% representing 219 million (Perrin, 2015). This indicates a high penetration rate of social media usage across the length and breadth of the world. For instance in Asia the total percentage of internet users is 50.3%, Europe 15.9%, Latin America/Carribean 10.1%, Africa 11.5%, North America 7.6%, Middle East 3.9% and Oceania/Australia 0.6% (Internet World Stats, 2020). Thus the role of and controversies surrounding social media at all levels of human endeavour and development is gaining much attention of both scholars and practitioners in diverse fields (Ahn, 2011; Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Indeed, social media is considered as an important feature of this digital era and a key component of the internet culture (Rashmi & Neetu, 2014). The overall impact of the evolution of internet and social media is the transformation in the communication environment of man. In fact what makes social media as a recent phenomenon different from the conventional mode of communication is its global interactive nature which allows users from any part of the globe to participate in it (Sudha and Kavitha, 2016; Ezeah, Asogwa & Obiorah, 2013). The educational sector, especially the universities (higher institutions of learning) remains one of the most important areas of human development where social media is increasingly playing a significant role. Management and authorities of higher institutions of learning are therefore investing in and exploring innovative pedagogical ways of promoting effective method of knowledge transfer, collaboration and information sharing through social media (Junco *et al.,* 2011) to connect to the wider learning or academic community. Globally, higher institutions of learning are increasingly relying on social media to promote their research, innovations and e-learning. Both educators and students in higher education continue to use social media as an effective avenue for teaching and learning respectively (Burbules, 2016). Generally, social media network platforms used for students' learning and engagements include *inter alia* Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Google+, MySpace, LinkedIn, Skype, and Blogger. Of all these social media platforms, Facebook remains the most popular one for students' engagements and as such has attracted the attention of social media research (Junco, 2011; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

The accessibility feature of social media makes it more convenient to use as they are not limited to desktops but on smart phones and internet connected gadgets such as tablets which are within the reach of students. This has made social media gained much popularity among college students (Kalpidou et al., 2011). Social media is therefore considered to be a ubiquitous phenomenon in students' academic lives and an important technological tool of their new culture of learning and engagements (Thomas & Brown, 2011; Kabilan *et al*., 2010). Student engagement, as noted by Knight-McCord *et al*. (2016, p. 22), 'represents the time and effort students invest in their education'. It is therefore not surprising that educators are being encouraged to embrace social media platforms since students learn new ways through social media networking platforms or sites (Ito et al., 2009; Lenhart et al., 2010).

Just like in other parts of the world, there is a high prevalence of social media usage among students in the University of Ghana for their learning and general academic engagements. The University of Ghana as part of meeting its vision of becoming a world class university has created an enabling environment through the provision of Information Communication & Technology (ICT) facilities and internet connectivity to enhance teaching, research and learning. With such an internet support environment, there is an increasing use of social media among its students. It is important to note that inasmuch as social media can affect the academic lives of students positively, it can equally have negative effects on their learning outcomes. Thus, there is a relationship between the use of social media and the academic performance of students as evidenced by empirical findings on social media and mass communication studies (Oueder & Abousaber, 2018; Raut & Patil, 2016; Burbules, 2016; Mensah & Nizam, 2016; Knight-McCord *et al*., 2016; ; Ahn, 2011; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2011; Junco *et al*., 2011; Jacobsen & Forste, 2011; Chen & Peng, 2008). However, what remains unclear in the literature is how social media users cope with and sustain the social media pressures in their academic engagements.

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

It can be argued that for social media to be a positive or negative tool, it will depend on the users (in this case students) albeit the contention that social media is a double-edged sword (Baran, 2018). Thus, although there are considerable literature on the effects of social media on students' academic performance, no attention has been given to the coping strategies of students in dealing with the social media pressures.

It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to investigate the effects of social media on the academic engagement of University of Ghana undergraduate students as well as their coping strategies of dealing with social media pressure in their academic work. Thus, it seeks to address how well the undergraduate students make use of social media in their learning and engagements in an internet support environment. The study therefore seeks to achieve the following objectives: (1) To examine the attitude of University of Ghana undergraduate students toward social media usage; (2) To examine the effects of social media on the academic lives of University of Ghana undergraduate students; and (3) To underscore the coping strategies of University of Ghana undergraduate students in dealing with the social media pressure on their academic engagements.

Materials and Method

Study settings and Design
The University of Ghana, by birth and size, is the oldest and largest public university in Ghana. It was founded by ordinance on August 11, 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast, with the overarching aim of providing and promoting university education, learning and research. It currently has about 38,000 student population. The study conducted a cross-sectional survey-based study from September 2019 to November 2019. In terms of research strategy, the study adopted the mixed method research strategy which included both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Sources of data
The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources included focus group discussions and the administration of structured questionnaires. The secondary sources included journal articles, news items from the internet and other published and unpublished works.

Sample size determination and sampling procedure
The study population were undergraduate students of the University of Ghana from level 100 to level 400. Using a cluster sampling method, a total of 420 study participants were randomly sampled from the 38,000 student population of the University of Ghana. The survey included both resident and non-resident students of the University of Ghana, unlike the study by Kolan and Dzandza (2018) on the effect of social media on academic performance of students in the University of Ghana where non-resident students were not part of the survey. All non-resident students were treated as a one cluster and added to the list of 16 halls of residence on campus. Out of the 17 clusters, 10 were randomly selected after adopting the lottery method, where all the names of the clusters were written on a piece of paper, folded, placed in a bowl and shuffled. Out of the 10 clusters randomly selected, Forty-two (42) study participants were sampled from each cluster using the simple random technique. For the qualitative facet of the study, participants were purposively selected for in-depth discussions on some themes that emerged out of the survey. In all, four separate focus group discussions were conducted among the four levels of study and the composition of the groups were as follows: Level 100 (8 students), 200 (7 students), 300 (7 students), and 400 (8 students).

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Instrumentation and Framework of Data Analyses

The main research instruments were structured questionnaires and an interview guide. The questionnaire consisted of questions examining socio-demographics, attitude towards social media, effects of social media on academics, and coping strategies in dealing with pressures associated with social media. The interview guide for the focus group discussion focused on specific issues relating to attitude towards social media, how social media positively and negatively affects their academic performance, and how they are able to cope with these effects. Given that a sequential explanatory mixed method approach was adopted in collecting data for the study, the survey was initially done within a three months period, and the focus group discussions were held after the survey. The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and thematic content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The results of the survey were presented in the form of tables and figures. The consents of every respondent and participant were sought before allowing them to be part of the research process. Confidentiality was thus, respected and maintained throughout the study.

Results

The results in table 1 show that 55% (N=420) of respondents were males and majority (82%) were less than thirty-one years. Also, 17% of respondents were within the ages of 31-40 years and those with the ages of 41-50 years (1%) were the least represented age group. With regards to the residential status, majority of the respondents (91%) were resident on campus and 9% were non-resident. In terms of the level of study, a relatively higher percentage were in level 300 (37%), 25% were in level 100, 20% were in level 400 and 18% were in level 200.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	232	55
Female	188	45
Total	420	100
Age		
<31	345	82
31-40	73	17
41-50	2	1
Total	420	100
Residential status		
Resident	382	91
Nonresident	38	9
Total	420	100
Level		
100	105	25
200	76	18
300	156	37
400	83	20
Total	420	100

Source: Field work, 2019

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Respondents identified various social media network sites they often use. Facebook (34%) was identified as the popular social media platform often used, followed by WhatsApp (30%), YouTube (17%) Twitter (11%), and, lastly, Myspace (8%) (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by the social media used the most
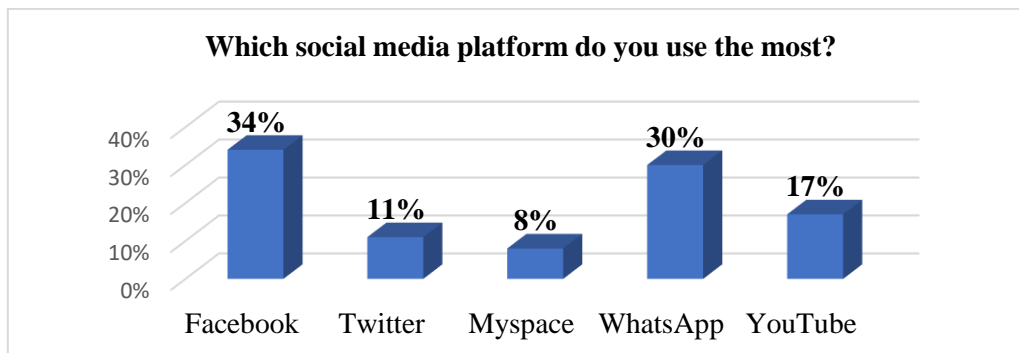
Source: Field work, 2019

Respondents were asked the number of times they log onto social media websites. It was revealed that a higher percentage (46%) visit social media websites anytime and 32% visit their respective social media websites every hour. Only 22% visit social media sites once a day. Thus, majority of students in the University of Ghana visit various social media sites any time (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by how often they log onto social media sites
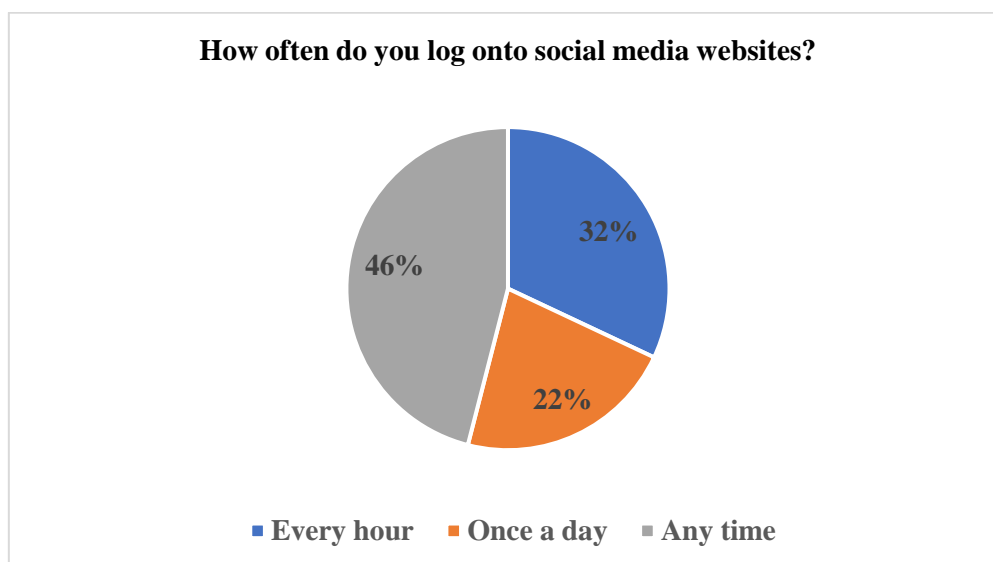
Source: Field work, 2019

The results in table 3 show the frequency on number of times spent online by students. A higher percentage of respondents (44%) spend 6hrs and above online each day, 36% spend 3-5hrs online, and 14% spend 1-2hrs online each day. Further, only 6% spend less than 1hr online each day (see table 2).

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by the number of time spent online each day

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	Less than an hour	24	5.7	5.7
Valid	1-2hrs	57	13.6	13.6
	3-5hrs	153	36.4	36.4
	6hrs and above	186	44.3	44.3
	Total	420	100.0	100.0

Source: Field work, 2019

Additionally, respondents were asked what they mostly use social media for, considering that social media is used for various purposes. The results show that 29% use social media platforms to communicate with their family and friends, 28% of respondents use social media platforms for academic purposes and 24% refer to social media for news updates. Also, 18% use social media platforms for fun and entertainment. Thus, a higher percentage of undergraduate students in the University of Ghana use social media platforms to stay connected with their friends and loved ones (see table 3).

Table 3: Uses of social media platforms

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
	Communicating with family and friends	122	29.0	29.0
Valid	Just for fun and entertainment	77	18.3	18.3
	News update	102	24.3	24.3
	Academic activities	119	28.3	28.3
	Total	420	100.0	100.0

Source: Field work, 2019

The results in figure 3 show a number of social media platforms that respondents use for academic purposes. WhatsApp (42%) was used often, followed by YouTube (31%), and Facebook (26%). Twitter (1%) was the least reported social media platform used for academic purposes.

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Figure 3: The mostly used social media platform for academic purposes
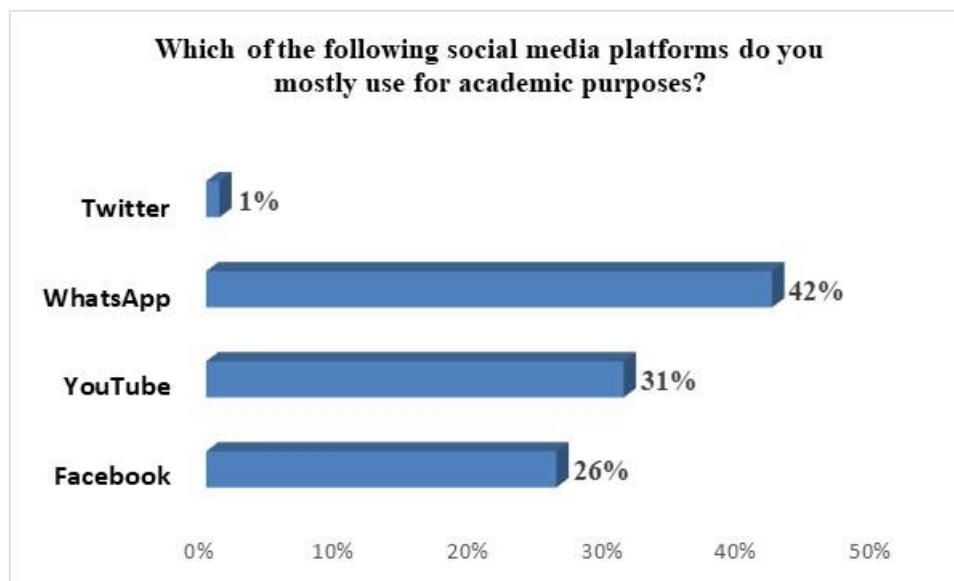
Source: Field work, 2019

The results in table 4 show respondents' level of agreement on the use of social media for academic purposes. In all, the results show that 66% of respondents agreed (27%) or strongly agree (39%) that social media platforms are used by students to discuss general issues that are not related to academics while 27% disagree that social media platforms are mostly used by students to discuss general issues that are nonacademic. Further, majority of respondents representing 39% strongly disagree that social media platforms are mostly used by students to share academic information. This is followed 36% who also agree to this statement. Also, 10% remained neutral (N). Fifteen percent (15%), however, agree that social media platforms are used by students to share academic information. Thus, majority of University of Ghana undergraduate students disagree that social medial platforms are used by students to share academic information. Respondents were also asked to show their level of agreement on the statement that students mostly use YouTube for academic related activities. Majority of the respondents representing 50% strongly disagree. Another 18% disagree to the statement that YouTube is mostly used by students for academic related activities. However, 25% were positive that students use YouTube for academic related activities.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by level of agreement on the use of social media

STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Social media platforms are mostly used by students to discuss general issues that are non-academic	8%	19%	7%	27%	39%	100%
Social media platforms are mostly used by students to share academic information	39%	36%	10%	9%	6%	100%
Students mostly use YouTube for academic related activities	50%	18%	7%	14%	11%	100%

Source: Field work, 2019

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

On the positive effects of social media, the respondents identified various ways in which they benefit from social media. A higher percentage of respondents (34%) stated that social media usage enhances further research for their studies. Also, 28% noted that discussions on social media groups enhance further understanding of what has been taught in class. Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents also indicated that social media helps them to get feedback from their lecturers and teaching assistants (TAs) on time. Fourteen percent (14%) of the respondents also indicated that social media impacts on them positively through the promotion of collaborative learning. Lastly, 9% of the respondents indicated that the use of social media helps them to have wider knowledge (see table 5).

Table 5: Benefits of Social media in students' academic life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	It promotes collaborative learning	59	14.0	14.0
	It enhances further research for my studies	141	33.6	33.6
	Discussions on social media groups enhances further understanding of what has been taught in class	117	27.9	27.9
	It helps us to get feedback from our lecturers and TAs on time	65	15.5	15.5
	It helps us get wider knowledge	38	9.0	9.0
	Total	420	100.0	100.0

Source: Field work, 2019

On the negative impacts of social media on the academic life of students, respondents were asked to show their level of agreement or disagreement on the negative effect of social media (see table 6). Social media addiction is regarded as one of the fundamental negative impacts of social media generally on users. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (92%) strongly agree that social media is addictive. The results further show 95% of respondents noting that social media takes a lot of their study time. Social media has also been identified as having some contents that distract users. Majority of the respondents representing 78% strongly agree that some of the contents displayed on social media platforms are distractive which affects their studies and academic performance. Also, 14% agree to this statement. However, 7% disagree with this statement about the negative effect of social media on the academic life of students and 1% remained neutral. Also on the negative impact of social media, 54% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that social media brings about wrong exposure. This is followed by 33% who agree to this statement. However, 11% and 1% disagree and disagree respectively. Lastly, majority of the respondents (67%) strongly agree that social media has affected their spellings and grammar usages. This is followed by 19% who agree to this statement. However, 11% and 3% disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Thus, majority of respondents representing 86% agree that their spelling abilities and grammar have been affected negatively as a result of social media.

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Table 6: Negative Impact of Social Media usage on Academic performance

STATEMENT	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Social media is addictive	1%	1%	0%	6%	92%	100%
The use of social media takes a lot of my study time	1%	4%	0%	23%	72%	100%
Some of the content displayed are distractive for learning	0%	7%	1%	14%	78%	100%
It brings about wrong exposure	1%	11%	1%	33%	54%	100%
It has affected my spellings and grammar usage	3%	11%	0%	19%	67%	100%

Source: Field work, 2019

The results in table 7 show the various coping strategies of respondents against the negative effects of social media. A higher percent of respondents (31%) revealed that they put off their mobile data or WiFi when studying. Another coping strategy identified by respondents is limiting the number of social media groups they join. This was identified by 28% of the respondents. Also about 23% of the respondents indicated that they limit the number of social media applications on their phones as a strategy of dealing or coping with the negative effects of social media on their academic lives. Furthermore, 17% of the respondents indicated that during exams they delete all their social media accounts. The last strategy in coping with the negative effects of social media identified by respondents was that they make sure they do not belong to any group on social media. This strategy was indicated by 2%. This is the least coping strategy adopted by respondents.

Table 7: Coping strategies of students against the negative effects of social media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	I put off the mobile data or WiFi whiles studying	130	31.0	31.0
	I limit myself on the number of social media groups I join	116	27.6	27.6
	I have limited the number of social media Apps on my phone	95	22.6	22.6
	During exam time I delete all my social media accounts	71	16.9	16.9
	I make sure I do not belong to any social media group	8	1.9	1.9
	Total	420	100.0	100.0

Source: Field work, 2019

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In terms of the demographic characteristics, it was revealed that majority were males. This confirms the existing statistics that males dominate the educational sector in Ghana than the females. For this reason there has been the implementation of affirmative action by the government concerning the admissions in tertiary education. For instance, the University of Ghana has an affirmative action policy for females to close the gap on the dominance of males in the educational sector. In terms of the age it was not surprising that the majority of the students interviewed were less than thirty-one years and not more that forty years. This result, therefore, confirms existing statistics that indicate that the youth, largely between the ages of 18-40 years, form the largest number of undergraduate students in Ghana. Majority of students interviewed were those in level 300. The respondents reflected students from level 100 to 400. This was to give the study varied background and responses of the students sampled.

Attitude towards Social Media Usage

In terms of the attitude of students toward social media usage, it is noted that all respondents use one social media or the other. In a focus group discussion, respondents were of the view that they are social beings and that they cannot imagine human beings not using any social media in their daily lives at this age of modernity. Studies on social media have largely shown that of all the social media platforms, Facebook is the most visited network site (Junco, 2011; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). The use of social media has been sustained due to internet connectivity. There is no social media that is not dependent on internet connectivity. Every higher institution, globally, has invested in internet so as to facilitate teaching and learning by teachers and students respectively. In the University of Ghana every hall and lecture room has internet connectivity (WiFi) to enable students' access to the World Wide Web for academic purposes. In a focus group discussion, most of the participants expressed the view that one of the reasons they chose to study in the University of Ghana was the good and reliable infrastructure like the internet services, hence they feel happy using the University WiFi.

Majority of University of Ghana undergraduate students spend much time online each day. In a focus group discussion some of the respondents were of the view that social media is part of their life now so they need to be online. This proves how important social media network sites are becoming an important component in the academic life of every student. As an academic environment, it is expected that students would use the University internet facility for academic purposes. However, it was revealed in the results that majority of University of Ghana undergraduate students use their social media platforms connected with the University WiFi more to communicate with their families and friends rather than using them for academic related activities. The implication of this is that the students are not taking good advantage of the uses of the internet provided for academic work.

Social Media and Academic Engagements

As already noted, the University of Ghana has invested in internet support infrastructure to enhance teaching and learning. It has been confirmed in the social media literature that students use social media for academic purposes which is very relevant for their academic development (Oueder & Abousaber, 2018; Burbules, 2016; Mensah & Nizam, 2016; Ahn, 2011; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2011). It was confirmed in the results that of all the social media platforms, WhatsApp is the mostly used for academic purposes. In a focus group discussion, participants largely expressed the view that although they used Facebook mostly, when it comes to learning and other academic engagements, WhatsApp is the most preferred. For instance a respondent remarked that:

> *For me WhatsApp is the best social media platform that I can use for my academic purposes. We easily create groups for our courses and follow discussions so easily. So to me, even if the internet is not stable you can easily connect to WhatsApp for updates and notifications.*

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

It was also shown in the results that majority of students preferred to use social media throughout the semester. In a focus group discussion it was noted that majority of students preferred to use social media platforms for studies throughout the semester so that they do not miss any valuable information regarding their studies. Others stated that there is nothing much to learn or study in the beginning of the semester so they rather use social media platforms for other non-academic activities such as news updates, current affairs, and for entertainment. There was a general consensus among the students that social media platforms are used to discuss general issues that are not related to academic activities. Again, it was realised from the results that majority of students do not use their various social media platforms for academic purposes. It was also revealed from the results that majority of students interviewed disagree that YouTube is used by students for academic activities. In a focus group discussion, female participants were of the view that the males use YouTube to watch sports, especially soccer and movies rather than using it for academic related activities. The males also revealed what their female counterparts do with YouTube. For instance a male respondent argued that the females use the YouTube site to learn about the latest makeups in town and also spend much time on YouTube learning how to prepare foreign and local dishes.

Positive impacts of Social Media on Students academic Performance

Study participants affirmed that social media has both positive and negative impacts on their academic lives. This position is not different from what has already been noted in literature. It was revealed in the results that social media is very relevant to student to enhance further research. In a focus group discussion, participants were of the view that after every class they use social media sites such as YouTube to download videos on topics related to their studies. Others also noted that they normally get further readings from their WhatsApp groups. The significance therefore, of social media to students' academic work in terms of aiding further reading and further research cannot be overstated. Students also noted that social media platforms are used for further discussions on what has been taught in class. Some students are very shy by nature to ask questions in class and feel very comfortable to ask their colleagues for clarifications. Thus, to such respondents, social media platforms give them the opportunity to get engaged and seek clarifications on lecture lessons. In a focus group discussion, one participant noted that:

> *In fact, I must confess that I am a very shy person so I find it very difficult to ask questions (orally) in class. So I take the advantage of my WhatsApp group to ask my colleagues questions and seek for clarifications. And this has helped me so much to improve upon my learning and discussion activities.*

Students also revealed that they use social media platforms to get prompt feedbacks from their lecturers and teaching assistants (TAs). In a focus group discussion participants noted that through WhatsApp they create course groups and add their instructors. Sometimes they create separate groups for both lecturers and TAs and see the WhatsApp platform as second lecture hall to continue with class interactions. A participant remarked that:

> *I cannot actually speak for all of us but in my view the WhatsApp platforms help me to interact with the TAs and lecturers very well on academic related issues. Some of the lecturers are very modern and they always help us with further clarifications that we might not cover for the lecture period. The lecture period is only two hours but through WhatsApp we can engage with our lecturers at any time and they give us prompt feedbacks.*

This excerpt gives credence to the view that social media platforms help students to easily connect with their lecturers for further clarity on what has been discussed in class. Collaborative learning, to a larger extent, is regarded as one of the best learning methodologies that students can embrace to enhance their learning and studies. Social media users in the University of Ghana identified that the use of social media platforms promote collaborative learning. They expressed that WhatsApp and other social media platforms have made it easier in forming study groups without meeting physically. In a focus group discussion, participants noted that they use social media platforms to discuss past questions and prepare for exams and it is helping them very well. A level 400 participant noted that:

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

> *Sometimes if I am reading and I come across a concept that I do not understand very well I just share it on the WhatsApp group and sometimes post it on our group wall on Facebook. This has been helping me since level 100 and I will continue until I graduate and even with this experience, I will continue when I start with my Masters.*

Respondents also stated that social media helps them to get wider knowledge. In a focus group discussion, respondents were of the view that they see social media platforms as an extension of the classroom and that it is a virtual classroom which they like very much. Participants were of the view that some of their colleagues normally share with them interesting materials that are relevant for a specific course of subject. Thus, it is interesting to note that social media platforms help students to connect with the wider academic environment to add knowledge to what has been taught in class.

Negative Impacts of Social Media on Academic Performance

Respondents also largely agreed with some of the negative effects of social media on their academic lives. Majority of the students agreed from the results that social media usage is addictive which negatively affects their academic lives. Though situated in the same study context, this result is at variance with the study by Kolan and Dzandza (2018) where majority of respondents from the University of Ghana noted that students were not addicted to social media. A participant in a focus group discussion observed:

> *I can say most students are addicted to social media and not only students but majority of people who use social media for specific reasons. I think social media has come to stay and has been part of students. It is only few people who are able to overcome this kind of addiction. In fact the whole day if I do not visit any of my social media sites I do not feel well.*

It was also revealed in the results that social media takes a lot of the study times of students. Majority of the respondents largely agree that this has negative impacts on their academics. In a focus group discussion, participants stated that this affects their studies and put pressure on them during revision weeks. Thus, without any personal discipline, social media network sites take the biggest attention of students away from their books and general academic activities.

Majority of the respondents agree that some contents on the social media platforms are distractive. It was revealed in a focus group discussion that sometimes some students post unnecessary things on the WhatsApp platforms which distract them and take off their attention and concentration. Some further stated that because they are on more than one social media platforms, this negative effect is exacerbated and becomes the main source of distraction. Thus, majority of the respondents agree that social media brings about wrong exposure. In a focus group discussion, a participant made this revelation about the wrong exposure of social media:

> *Some posts on social media platforms are unhealthy and highly unethical. For instance some group members abuse the group and send nude pictures. Sometimes too, on group Facebook wall, some post unnecessary news that are not good. Some are even fabrications and complete falsehoods.*

One of the growing negative effects of social media on the academic life of students, especially in higher education is the spelling abilities of students which is becoming a silent killer. Majority of the students identified this as a negative impact of social media on their academic lives. In a focus group discussion, participants largely confessed that their spelling abilities have been severely affected and this manifests during examinations, assignments, and even in taking simple notes. For instance a level 400 student noted:

> *This is very true most at times because the phone does the spellings we find it very difficult to spell certain cheap words. Some of our lecturers warn us to desist from writing short hands in exams and we do it involuntarily. I think it is a bad habit and we need to be very careful especially the level 100s.*

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2], Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

It can therefore be concluded that social media has both negative and positive effects on the academic lives of university of Ghana undergraduate students.

Coping strategies against negative effects of social media

As indicated in the literature gap, although there are considerable literature on the impact of social media on academic performance (Oueder & Abousaber, 2018; Raut & Patil, 2016; Burbules, 2016; Mensah & Nizam, 2016), no attempt has been made to investigate how students navigate and cope with the social media pressure on their academic lives. For instance the recent work on the impact of social media on academic performance among University of Ghana students by Kolan and Dzandza (2018) failed to fill this gap. This study has unraveled five main strategies that students employ to cope with the negative impacts of social media on their academic lives. The first coping strategy identified by social media users was that they put off their mobile data or WiFi during study hours to avoid or minimise any form of distractions. To such respondents, this is the most important and fundamental strategy they can use in dealing with the distraction from social media. Study participants noted that since the use of any social media platform depends on internet connectivity the best option is to cut off the source of the internet. Another coping strategy adopted by students is that they limit the number of social media groups that they join. During the focus group discussion, majority of respondents were of the view that apart from the academic social media platforms, they are very reluctant to join other open and general groups on social media platforms. For instance, a participant noted:

> *I believe social media cannot control us; we have to control it. For me I am not a fan of groups on social media especially WhatsApp. I have realised that some of the groups are created just to waste one's time. Even those that I am on, I put the notification off to avoid any distraction during studies.*

Furthermore, in dealing with the social media pressure, students in the University of Ghana limit the number of social media applications on their phones. This in their view is to limit themselves to few social media sites as a way of avoiding potential negative effects associated with having many social media apps on the phone. Also, as a coping strategy, some respondents resort to deleting all their social media accounts such as Facebook and WhatsApp during exam periods since they are the mostly used social media networks. In the focus discussion, participants expressed the view that exams periods are considered the most crucial periods of the semester, so they try as much as possible to avoid any form of distractions from social media platforms. The last coping strategy used by University of Ghana undergraduate students to deal with the social media pressures is that they make sure they do not join any social media groups apart from those solely meant for course related and other academic discourses. To those who identified this strategy, the logic is to use the social media productively to avoid any of the dangers associated with the social media addiction. For instance in a focus group discussion, a participant noted:

> *To me, I make sure Facebook and other social media platforms do not distract me in my studies. I am fully aware of the dangers such as addiction and wrong exposure. To avoid any form of unnecessary negative impacts of social media I decide to personalise the use of social media platforms. I do not join any social media group so that I will have control over them and concentrate fully on my books.*

It can therefore be deduced that the University of Ghana undergraduate students have one coping strategy or the other for dealing with the negative influences of social media on their academic lives.

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Conclusion

This study has shown that although the primary purpose for installing a free WiFi in the University of Ghana is to aid students to easily get access to the internet for information and research, most of the undergraduate students rather use the internet more for Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media activities. It is pretty much obvious that in this modern age and time, social media also forms an important aspect of people's daily lives, and as such, it would be difficult and, perhaps, near impossible to live without it. Its utility on many fronts cannot be over emphasised. However, considering the fact that undergraduate students use the University's WiFi to gain access to the internet mainly for social media activities unrelated to academics and use it less for real academic research activities, can be a call for concern. This is particularly so as this study has revealed that social media is having some negative effects on the academic lives of students. A personal observation made by the researchers also proved that almost every undergraduate student in the University of Ghana is at least familiar with three social media platforms and also know the functions of these social media platforms. Meanwhile, if these same students are asked to mention any three academic databases that are relevant to their area of study, just a handful of students would be able to do that. This implies that students are familiar with social media platforms and their purpose but have little knowledge or perhaps have no idea about academic databases where they could find relevant information that will help them in their areas of study. The question therefore is, how do we encourage these undergraduate students to use the internet more for research and other academic activities and less for "social media", since social media also has its positive aspects as far as today's modern world is concerned.

It is this regard that the research recommends that lecturers should assist students to use the internet and other social media platforms for learning and other academic activities since students spend much time on such social media platform every day. One way by which lecturers could do this is by creating or forming groups for their various courses or classes and posting information relevant to those particular courses on those platforms. They can then direct every student in the group to read and post their individual comments in the group. Based on this, the lecturer/instructor can monitor students who are actually reading the information posted on the course groups and making relevant use of it. Such regular participation by students could be scored and counted as part of their final assessments. This will motivate students to spend more of their online hours on academic activities. It is also recommended that students must cultivate the habit of discipline to limit the number of social media groups they join that are not related to their academic activities (at least when they are in school). Students must also develop the habit of putting off their internet data when studying to avoid distractions when studying. Finally, on its part as an institution, the University of Ghana through the Careers and Counselling Centre must embark on sensitisation programmes to educate students on how to balance their studies with social media usage so that they can use the internet productively. This can be part of the orientation policy of the university for newly admitted undergraduate students.

Acknowledgement

For correspondence please contact: Joseph Bawa (jbawa80@gmail.com or jobawa@ug.edu.gh)

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

References

Ahn, J. (2011). The effect of social network sites on adolescents' social and academic development: Current theories and controversies. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *62*(8), 1435-1445.

Baran, S. (2018). Introduction to mass communication: Media literacy and culture. McGraw-Hill Education.

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2008): Social Network Sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), 210-230.

Burbules, N. C. (2016). How We Use and Are Used by Social Media in Education. Educational Theory, 66(4), 551-565.

Chen, Y. F., & Peng, S. S. (2008). University students' Internet use and its relationships with academic performance, interpersonal relationships, psychosocial adjustment, and self-evaluation. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(4), 467-469.

Dabbagh, N., & Kitsantas, A. (2011). Personal Learning Environments, social media, and self-regulated learning: A natural formula for connecting formal and informal learning. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 15(1), 3-8.

Ezeah, G. H., Asogwa, C. E., & Obiorah, E. I. (2013). Social media use among students of universities in South-East Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (IOSR-JHSS), 16(*3*), 23-32.

Internet World Stats (2020). Internet world stats: Usage and population statistics. https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (Accessed: 20/09/2020).

Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., Cody, R., Stephenson, B. H., Horst, H. A., Lange P. G., Mahendran D., Martinz, K. Z., Pascoe, C. J., P., Perkel, D., Robinson, L., Sims, C., & Tripp, L. (2009). Hanging out, Messing around, and Geeking out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media. MIT press.

Jacobsen, W. C., & Forste, R. (2011). The wired generation: Academic and social outcomes of electronic media use among university students. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(5), 275-280.

Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide. New York University press.

Junco, R. (2012). Too much face and not enough books: The relationship between multiple indices of facebook use and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 28(1), 187-198.

Junco, R., Heiberger, G., & Loken, E. (2011). The effect of twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(*2*), 119-132.

Kabilan, M. K., Ahmad, N., & Abidin, M. J. Z. (2010). Facebook: An online environment for learning of English in institutions of higher education? *The Internet and Higher Education*, 13(4), 179-187.

Kalpidou, M., Costin, D., & Morris, J. (2011). The relationship between Facebook and the well-being of undergraduate college students. CyberPsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 14(4), 183-189.

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,

Knight-McCord, J., Cleary, D., Grant, N., Herron, A., Jumbo, S., Lacey, T., Livingston, T., Robinson, S., Smith, R. & Emanuel, R. (2016). What social media sites do college students use most? *Journal of Undergraduate Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 2, 21-26.

Kolan, B. J., and Dzandza, P. E. (2018). Effect of social media on academic performance of students in Ghanaian universities: A Case study of University of Ghana, Legon. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal).* 1637.

Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010). *Social media & mobile internet use among teens and young adults*. *Millennials*. Pew Internet & American life project.

Mensah, S. O. & Nizam, I. (2016). The impact of social media on students' academic performance: A case of Malaysia Tertiary Institution. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Training*, 1(1), 14-21.

Oueder, M. & Abousaber, I. (2018). Academic Performance: University of Tabuk an Example. *American Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences (ASRJETS)*, 40(1), 77-88.

Perrin, A. (2015). *Social media usage: 2005-2015.* Pew Research Center.

Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. L. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, *30*(5), 350-361.

Rashmi & Neetu (2014). The Use of social networking in academics: Benefit and opportunity. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, 3(6), 1336- 1339.

Raut, V., and Patil, P. (2016). Use of Social Media in Education: Positive and Negative impact on the students. *International Journal on Recent and Innovation Trends in Computing and Communication*, 4(1), 281-285.

Rubin, A.M. (2009). Uses and gratifications: An evolving perspective of media effects. In Robin L. Nabi & Mary Beth Oliver (Eds). *The SAGE handbook of media processes and effects*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Sudha, S and Kavitha E. S. (2016). The Effect of social networking on students' academic performance: The perspective of faculty members of Periyar University, Salem. *Library Philosophy and Practice (ejournal).* 1455

Thomas, D., & Brown, J. S. (2011). *A new culture of learning: Cultivating the imagination for a world of constant change*. CreateSpace.

Weiyan, L. I. U. (2015). A Historical Overview of Uses and Gratifications Theory. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 11(9), 71-78.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Additionally, the authors highlighted that they declare that there is no conflict of interest with the execution of the study. It was purely for academic purposes and nothing dubious or malicious.

Joseph Bawa[1], Ebenezer Odame Darkwah[1],
Abdul Hamid Kwarteng[2],Anthony Ayim[1] and Michael Kojo Kolugu[1]
[1]University of Ghana, [2]Zhongnan University of Economics and Law,