

Student Perception toward Social Media: A Review of Literature

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Previously discussed studies indicate that educational institutions are actively using social media to improve student instruction. A discourse on the research related to students' perceptions of social media use can lead to an improvement in instructional practices and available learning tools. The perception of learners is a crucial element of research that allows revealing both positive and negative aspects of utilizing social media in education.

Social Media as a Learning Tool

Numerous studies on the topic have indicated that students maintain a positive view of social media and emphasize the benefits that these platforms offer to improve the learning process (Arslan, 2018, Montoneri, 2015, Al-Rahmi & Zeki, 2017). According to these studies, students report the benefit of multiple opportunities for accessible collaboration on academic projects and willingness to connect with peers through social media. Therefore, social media is a dynamic tool which can expedite the development of learning environments by supporting cooperation that enforces learning behavior and academic performance (Berthoud & Gliddon, 2017, Hazari et al., 2013, Maloney et al., 2014).

Hazari et al. (2013) published a study with the purpose to examine the effect of social media on learning and general perceptions of students using blogs for course material. Encompassing 102 students from a university in the Southeastern United States, the authors found that blogs helped students interact more with peers on assignments than traditional methods. By promoting the blog for collaborative learning, the study demonstrated how social media enhances the classroom experience by encouraging cooperation and greater interaction with course content. Social media encourages discourse among peer groups, increases

participation, and improves deep-learning, critical thinking, and cognitive development in a media-rich environment (Hazari et al., 2013).

Similarly, a study by Berthoud and Gliddon (2017) investigates students' perceptions towards various mediums of social media such as Wikis and Twitter to determine the extent of peer collaboration and interaction in team design projects for the fulfillment of a bachelor's degree. Student teams from various disciplines and years were provided with social media tools and the perception and usefulness of these methods were surveyed. Students indicated social media to be a useful and preferable tool in collaboration among peers for design projects (Berthoud & Gliddon, 2017). The outlined studies focused on varying social media platforms but result unanimously demonstrated the social promotion of collaborative learning among students.

Meanwhile, additional studies have indicated that social media contributes to the improvement of academic achievement, performance, and skill development among students (Arslan, 2018, Montoneri, 2015, Asif-Ur-Rahman et al., 2015). For example, the study by Asif-Ur-Rahman et al. (2015) discusses student perceptions on the influence of social networking on academic performance. Students indicated social networks have a positive impact on academic performance as they use the social platforms for educational purposes. Most students demonstrated an opinion suggesting the positive benefits of social networking which can be used for a wide variety of academic activities including reading, exchange of information, commenting of texts and discussion concerning the studied material, all of which provide the capacity to improve skills and understanding. However, some subjects of the study indicated a lack of effect of social platforms on academic performance or grades (Asif-Ur-Rahman et al., 2015).

In a study by Arslan (2018), it was found that students perceive social media as beneficial to use in instances of communication with peers regarding academic issues. This led to an improvement in academic performance including the level of contribution to class discussions, attention in lectures, group participating in supporting class activities, and completion of classwork and homework assigned in the course. A positive correlation between social media use and undergraduate student academic performance and achievement was found as well (Arslan, 2018). Both studies indicate that social media can be linked to positive impacts on academic performance. However, some students suggesting that social media has no noticeable effect presents an opportunity for further research on the topic.

Motivation is a fundamental aspect of achieving success and satisfaction in education (Su & Cheng, 2015). A number of studies have shown that many students attribute social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and blogs as an effective method of enhancing motivation and increasing interest in the learning environment (Al-Rahmi & Zeki, 2017, Soufi et al., 2015, Sheeran & Cummings, 2018). For instance, Soufi et al. (2015) conducted a study aiming to investigate the benefits of social platforms in education, particularly the impact on students' critical thinking and motivation to engage in learning. Research findings indicate that blogs can nurture critical thinking and enhance motivation among students which state that their interest about content grows by using blogs, and they are more inclined to read, write, and improve learning skills due to effects from social media. Based on these findings, the impactful influence of social media on student perceptions could be used as a motivational factor in learning environments (Soufi et al., 2015).

A similar study involving a quantitative approach by Al-Rahmi and Zeki (2017) found that students drew many advantages from social media utilization including usefulness, greater

engagement, and satisfaction of social needs. The researchers' analysis confirmed a significant positive correlation between perceived enjoyment and social media use for learning among students. Learners have a higher sense of gratification and participate in greater peer interaction which leads to enhanced academic performance (Al-Rahmi & Zeki, 2017). Both studies, using different research approaches, confirmed that social media has a positive impact on students' motivation and interest in learning.

Social media has also been praised by students for its ability to provide quick and efficient access to information which contributes to improving the learning process. Barbosa Souza et al. (2019) found that social media platforms provide support for pedagogical activities by creating a digital space for information sharing and grouping of students. There is significant practical utility in providing ease of access to published didactic material and interactively shared content among students. For learners, social media proves to be advantageous in the speed and ease of access for didactic material, allowing to use virtual content and images to assimilate the subject matter more effectively (Barbosa Souza et al., 2019).

The research literature also demonstrates that social media not only contributes to peer interaction but also builds effective communication and rapport between students and instructors (Aljaad, 2016, Raza et al., 2017, Pai et al., 2017). A quantitative study was conducted by Raza et al. (2017) focusing on undergraduate and post-graduate student faculty of a university. Students indicated that social media improves communication between instructors and learners as well as provides a variety of multimedia resources and support for the enhancement of the educational experience. The findings emphasized the usefulness of social media in courses as students could communicate among each other, ask questions from the lecturer, receive feedback, share

concerns and needs about academic issues, and establish a developing relationship with the teacher. These opportunities can greatly enhance the learning experience (Raza et al., 2017).

Aljaad (2016) conducted a study aiming to identify the role of social media as a communication tool in education using students' perspectives. The results demonstrated that social media enhanced communication with others in academia and raised awareness of social responsibility. Students indicated that social media platforms allow to follow and obtain new information regarding academic specialty or gain access to specialized scientific consulting. Furthermore, social networks provide opportunities to network and form relationships with other students or scholars in their respective scientific fields, allowing for an efficient exchange of information and experience (Aljaad, 2016). Conclusively, the studies demonstrate the important role of social media in establishing and enhancing communication among peers and between students and instructors. The majority of literature discussed in this section emphasizes the benefits of social media platforms, with students' perceptions being positive regarding the implementation of social networking education. However, there are also concerns and negative perceptions which should be addressed in order to form a more comprehensive understanding of social media in education.

Social Media as a Distraction

The aforementioned research findings indicate that students consider social media a learning tool which allows them to achieve educational goals. Social media enhances and promotes students' learning and performance. However, several studies indicate that students do not perceive social media as an educational tool, with evidence suggesting a negative impact on the learning process. Students stated that social media serves as a distraction rather than a

learning tool. It diverts attention away from academic activities and learning processes instead of enhancing their education (Flanigan & Babchuk, 2015, Nadelson et al, 2017).

Studies have shown that students indicate social media serves as a distraction through activities such as uploading photos, chatting, and engaging in social activity, which harms the learning process. Social media allows to easily shift attention to other entertainment websites through links. Therefore, it reduces attention and focus on learning. For instance, McCarthy and McCarthy (2014) conducted a study attempting to determine whether social media aids students in learning or serves as a distraction. While some students indicated its benefits, numerous students noted that social media such as Facebook serves as a distraction from studying, requiring a specific set of skills to stay focused.

Students believe that the primary issue is that utilizing social media for education will lead to distractions such as games and numerous social activities available via Twitter and Facebook. In turn, it would lead to attention being diverted to external websites with engagement focused on them rather than the learning features of social media (McCarthy & McCarthy, 2014). Similarly, according to Wise et al. (2011), students have expressed concerns regarding social media being used as an education tool. Students indicate that social networking can negatively impact attention, distracting from completing the task at hand, as well as being a threat to privacy (Wise et al., 2011). Therefore, there are mixed results regarding the benefits of social media in learning, with some students indicating positive impacts, while others are affected by distractions, indicating further research is necessary.

While literature earlier in this paper has demonstrated a positive impact of social media on academic achievement and performance, there are also studies which indicate that social networking can reduce performance and negatively impact academic achievement as well.

(Flanigan & Babchuk, 2015, Talaue et al., 2018). In a study by Flanigan and Babchuk (2015), perceptions of university students on the impact of social media on educational experiences were examined. Consistently, students reported achievement was lowered due to social media use during educational activities by increasing the time consumed on completing tasks and decreasing information retention from the course. Students noted that social media provides temptation for a distraction from learning and had an overall negative effect on the ability to complete educational tasks, serving as a barrier to improving academic performance or achieving success (Flanigan & Babchuk 2015).

Meanwhile, a mixed method study by Talaue et al. (2018) found that students have differing perceptions regarding using social media to facilitate academic achievement. Students choose to utilize social networks such as Facebook for communication and entertainment rather than learning. It leads to engagement in non-educational activities rather than focusing on the learning task or enhancing their skills. The majority of students indicated that Facebook usage during class reduces achievement and negatively impacts academic performance (Talaue et al., 2018).

Other perception studies on the subject matter determined that students find social media leads to wasted time and procrastination (Mohammad & Tamimi, 2017; Nadelson et al., 2017). Nadelson et al. (2017) conducted a study which investigated student perceptions on social media and subsequent engagement with it for learning purposes. Researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of undergraduate students. One of the most prominent responses was the negative effect of social media on time consumptions. Students indicated poor time management for learning activities and tasks when engaged with social media, even for educational purposes. Social platforms present distractions for students which take away from

time devoted to educational activities, all while reducing the focus on tasks or content and decreasing academic success (Nadelson et al., 2017). Similar findings were outlined by Mohammad and Tamimi (2017) which discovered that although some students drew on benefits of social media such as networking and information-sharing opportunities, numerous students objected to utilizing it, viewing it as the unnecessary consumption of time. Students noted that social media negatively affected their motivation and engagement with learning environments. Therefore, social networking is considered wasteful because individuals lack competent time management skills, thus choosing to dedicate more attention and time to online gaming, spending money, or acquiring inaccurate information which is common on social media platforms (Mohammad and Tamimi, 2017).

Conclusion

The theme examined in this section focuses on student perceptions of social media in education. A number of studies were provided as evidence demonstrating the benefits and challenges of utilizing social media in learning environments. The benefits focused on improving communication, access to information, and generally enhancing motivation and interest in learning, all contributing to academic success. Meanwhile, negative perceptions emphasized the distracting nature of such online platforms which reduces attention, leads to poor time management and use, as well as lower academic performance.

Examining these findings from a critical perspective, it can be argued that the perceptions and outcomes depend on the type, purpose, and extent of social media use in a particular learning environment. For example, most studies with blogs showed positive perceptions, while studies focusing on popular platforms such as Facebook saw mixed or negative outcomes. It may also depend on the type of student, as some students thrive in social environments and others find it

distracting as evidence from various studies demonstrates. Overall, the literature examined in this section demonstrated consistency and reliability. Despite varying perceptions, the findings were not directly contradictory but rather require further research to examine the specific scenarios and student profiles which may benefit from social media implementation in educational environments.

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