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## College Students' Utilization of Social Networking Sites

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## College Students' Utilization of Social Networking Sites

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### Abstract

The use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has grown in popularity in recent years, notably for college students' study and communication. This article examines college students' experiences with SNS and the strategies they employ to strengthen sociability and learning activities receiving assistance through social media platforms such as Facebook, TIKTOK, Messenger, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The qualitative study was established on primary data gathered from a semi-structured face-to-face interview with twenty college students from two urban colleges who reported the multiple strategies in learning and communicative activities and experiences received from SNS. The randomly sampled data were transcribed and thematically analysed. The results of the qualitative study showed that despite some limitations, college students use SNS for social and academic purposes. Unpleasant experiences like restlessness, low self-esteem, anxiety, physical threats, cyberbullying, online harassment, and prejudice were also noted by the participants. This study examined encouraging signs of interacting with others, sharing, and working together to learn, and building self-efficacy to use technology competently and the impact of social media on their communication and academic activities was recognized. However, SNS dependence appears to be growing and putting students' academic, social, and physical wellbeing at threat. SNS platforms have been suggested as a community center for college students. This study serves as a foundation for further investigation into the effects of social media on the welfare of high school and college students.

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### Introduction

Social media has become a tool to rapidly disseminate educational information and enable social interaction. It has been seen as a tool for peer support, group learning and increasing student engagement with online academic activities (Ansari & Khan, 2020). Besides, Price et al. (2018) investigated students' engagement with the platform worthwhile and Social Networking Sites (SNS) being a common activity in the daily schedule of many adolescents. Further, people use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace to establish and maintain relationships which have become an internet phenomenon growing popularity over the past ten years (Liu & Bakici, 2019). Also, SNS enables users to create individual accounts, interact with other users online, upload images, update statuses, as well as send private or public messages to anybody they choose.

Additionally, earlier research investigated an association between using social media and having mental health

issues because this refers to a culturally defined reality (Keles et al., 2020). Similarly, technology seems to have given people access to a global learning community where they can share ideas and interact with people from all around, which has boosted and promoted the development of new and creative approaches to teaching and learning engagement. Therefore, higher education institutions must establish a favorable online learning environment with the provision of SNS with engaging and significantly more productive and qualified instructors.

Additionally, with more students accessing social media, especially at higher levels, there has been a detrimental correlation between social media addiction and academic achievement (Arslan et al., 2022). The results of various studies suggested that youngsters' exposure to and use of social media had both positive and adverse effects on their academic performance and sociability. However, the majority of higher education institutions recognize the potential of social media as a communication tool for providing information to targeted students and promoting themselves to potential students in the institutions.

In addition, students use social media sites like Facebook to acquire and analyze information to make academic judgments ( Banat, 2021; Kaya, 2017; Lampropoulos et al., 2021, 2022; Mishra, 2020); conversely, their exposure to disaster reporting on SNS was also linked to an increase in sadness and severe distress (Zhao et al., 2020). Despite the educational benefits of using digital equipment, universities seem unconcerned about the subject which could be related to their belief that social media is more suited for socializing than for academic reasons (Raaper et al., 2022), as well as a lack of government's willingness to administer technology as learning platforms (Kim & Lee, 2020) has been unfortunate to the innovative learning.

Clearly, it has been critical to have a comprehensive understanding of what motivates students to use social media and whether their usage of social media improves their academic and interpersonal abilities. Although evidence shows that social media, such as Facebook, provides significant benefits as a student learning tool (Mishra, 2020; Raaper et al., 2022; Zimba et al., 2020), little is known about students' understanding of the use of SNS in the educational setting, whether in a classroom or for interactional purposes. Thus, the objective of this study was to examine at college students' experiences with using SNS for academic purposes, as well as to analyze how social sites benefit socializing. The following are the research questions:

- How do college students view about using social networking sites for educational purposes?
- How social networking sites are helping college students in socialization?

## **Literature Review**

Despite a lot of research on the topic elsewhere, the usage of SNS by college students in developing nations like Nepal has not been investigated thoroughly. Here is a brief overview of major publications on social networking sites (SNS) and how college students use them for social interaction and education.

### **Social Networking Sites Access and Learning**

Numerous types of research have determined that using social networking sites (SNS) have increasingly become

relevant to learners' social and academic life (Al-Harrasi & Al-Badi, 2014; Jha et al., 2016; McCarroll & Curran, 2013). The research by Tower et al. (2014) earlier argued that SNS access and interactive learning policies in the group increased learners' self-efficacy and fostered their inventive learning strategies. Furthermore, Koranteng et al. (2020) affirmed college students' persistent use of SNS, specially to connect instructors and friends, share information and develop collaboration to contribute to students' academic engagement and achieve better results. Although the government of Nepal has a development strategy for ICT, Rana et al. (2020) in the local context concluded that there is insufficient infrastructure funding and a lack of a strong governmental commitment to investing. Further, a similar study based in India, Balamurugan and Thanuskodi (2019) found that university students utilized available social sites for academic excellence and acknowledged it as a tool for locating essential information supportive of their educational courses.

An additional study (Wichadee, 2013) in Turkey earlier revealed that students enhanced their writing skills when they shared their assignments on social media and got feedback from one another. Qureshi et al's study in Pakistan (2012), however, noted the lack of computer access, ICT knowledge, and technical language proficiency among educators and students for effective teaching-learning activities were depriving them of innovative ways of learning. Additionally, Griffiths et al. (2014) identified excessive use of social networks on the internet may lead to mental disorders and which was supported by a study (Haand et al., 2020) conducted in Afghanistan establishing a favorable correlation between social media addiction and unhappiness, which being a clear indicator of depression. In Eke and Odoh's (2014) study, the majority of Nigerian students were discovered using SNS to connect and communicate with friends for discussion on academic subjects and globally significant issues leading to self-enjoyment. However, a study (Akhter & Khalek, 2020) conducted in Bangladesh produced an unexpected result that students' persistent engagement of SNS was associated with loneliness in the absence of interpersonal contact, resulting in anxiety as a behavioral weakness. Their results also demonstrated that male participants used the SNS more problematically than females.

Regarding the engagement of youth, Giunchiglia et al. (2018) examined how the usage of social networking sites by adults may affect young people's potential to succeed academically and, as a result, lower societal productivity. Despite the fact that socializing is the primary function of social media in practice, Alabdulkareem (2015) discovered that teachers and students in Saudi middle schools were enthusiastic about the use of SNS during teaching learning activities. However, Hasan (2019) found that the usage of coping mechanisms like problem-solving and prevention was statistically significant among the internet access group compared to the non-internet user group; yet, Woods and Scott (2016) earlier found social media to be more detrimental than supportive because students spent more time on social media for reasons other than education, which causes distraction from the learning environment, disturbing their academic progress (Bekalu et al., 2019). It showed that despite having some adverse experiences students' engagement to SNS was particularly motivated to social activities and connecting with people around them.

### **Social Networks and Communication**

The role of SNS is crucial in the communication field (Donlan, 2014; Shen et al., 2016). In a related study,

Meishar-Tal and Pieterse (2017) identified that students and researchers utilize SNS to gather information, interact with people, and share ideas for acquiring professional knowledge and self-promotion. However, Zachos et al. (2018) in their study in the European setting discovered that educators in higher education institutions were less active in their application of quicker online SNS to connect learners and increase academic performance. Also, the available research (Singhavi et al., 2019) in India demonstrated that one of the greatest barriers to ICT implementation at the local level was teachers' reluctance to communicate online and implement it in the classroom. Furthermore, in the local context, Rana et al. (2018) argued that while both teachers and students recognized ICT tools as being collaborative and having the ability to share audio-visual resources, some of the teachers were still less motivated to engage innovative tools in teaching, depriving students of virtual access to ICT based learning, and particularly during crises when physical classes seem unmanageable.

Favorably, a Canadian study (Quan-Haase et al., 2010) earlier revealed that social media satisfies a variety of users' communication needs, and additionally online interactions make communication easier by allowing users to conveniently stay in touch with friends and family, aiding in understanding social events and following the activities of other users. Due to the satisfaction they had from learning about activities and events, individuals reported feeling more like a member of a peer network as a result of this social information. Remarkably, Huang et al. (2010) recognized web-based networking as a reliable and convenient platform for two-way communication, particularly in disaster management and preparedness in the context of Taiwan. A related study (Donlan, 2014) however, revealed that students were utilizing Facebook for learning in the European environment, mainly among friends to encourage interactive involvement and foster sociability. Differently, Rostaminezhad et al. (2019) in Iran reported that students' educational outcomes were negatively impacted by spending time online and hanging out on social media, similar to the findings of Abbas et al. (2019) in Pakistan where students spent too much time on social media, had negative impacts like despair, anxiety, tension, health difficulties, and the lack of physical touch with people. Although students in a study (Pempek et al., 2009) communicated with family and friends by uploading content and spent time browsing information on web pages, they frequently engaged in lurking behaviors, such as reading other users' profiles or news websites and examining images. Even though it offers entertainment and social updates, this activity primarily involves one-way communication. Jha et al. (2016) argued the advantages and drawbacks of social networking sites, concluding that excessive use of SNS may increase the risks of online addictive behaviors and result in less time spent on academic pursuits.

Surprisingly, in the advanced American context, Mao (2014) argued that students used social media for communication and recreational activities while instructors were irregular with their use of social media for educational reasons. Additionally, the finding of a study (Baker et al., 2010) on the relationship between shy people's friendly nature and their use of online social networks demonstrates that SNS platforms offered a friendly environment for introverted people to interact with others. Nevertheless, Fang et al. (2014) in their study found students concerning about connection throughout challenging situations, such as to support their personal and professional lives, while Chawinga (2017) differently examined students in East Africa collaborating and communicating about academic resources with colleagues and educators, thereby mitigating the difficulties identified. Hence, online communication has enabled information to reach people and audiences that were previously inaccessible, and has raised public awareness of the diverse areas of the world.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study's objective was to examine college students' social networking site (SNS) usage and experiences. Following Cohen et al. (2013), it employed a qualitative interpretative research design that included semi-structured online and in-person interviews to collect qualitative data. Each interview, including some focus groups, lasted an average of 30 minutes and was recorded with the respondents' consent. The participants were informed of the study's objectives before they were exposed the prepared questions. As of Smith and Shinebourne (2012), a voluntary participation technique was employed with 20 participants (first and second years of undergraduates), randomly selected from a community college in the hilly region, and the information obtained from interviews was calculated.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Semi-structured interviews were employed to elicit open-ended responses from participants about how they utilized social media for learning and socialization. During data collection, the phenomenological approach proposed by Iser (1974) and the interview questions were self-administered based on pre-prepared prompts. The first section of the interview focused on the information and habits of university students on social media such as Facebook, including the relevance of social life, utilization, contexts and forms of social media. Based on the above framework, the second and third parts concentrated on how students used social networking platforms for communication and interaction, respectively. In addition, follow-up questions were posed to extract further information about the responses and to clarify the rationale for certain behaviors indicated. The interviews were then conducted in the participant's native language, Nepali, in person, over the phone, or online to allow for ongoing feedback and interaction between the interviewees and the interviewer following the idea of Qu and Dumay (2011). Before the interview, undergraduates were reached by phone, email, Facebook Messenger, and in-person to get their informed consent. Besides the interviews, several archived sources, journal articles, books, websites, newspapers, and government records were referenced to obtain valuable data. All interviews were recorded on a phone and a laptop, observable behaviors were documented in a notebook for subsequent analysis, and notably interview subjects voluntarily participated in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

First, the interviews' audio recordings were transcribed into Nepali, where they were then thematically categorized. Then, for the presentation, the codes and quotations were translated into English and transcript excerpts were referred to as units of utterance with distinct meanings. To create the coding framework, a grounded theory technique (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) was used to examine the transcripts repeatedly and data were reviewed and studied numerous times during the study to uncover the theme based on Braun and Clarke (2006). Finally, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) offered a framework for assessing the qualitative data critically, enabling the validation of findings and their consequences.

## **Findings**

The data acquired through online and in-person interviews with undergraduate students demonstrate that students perceive SNS as both a challenging and useful tool for creating an interactive learning environment and encouraging student participation and sociability. The data-driven findings analysis has been explored on the following themes: SNS as a means of interaction, social networking sites as a learning alternative, and hurdles generated by SNS.

### **Social Networking Sites as a Means of Interaction**

A social network or group of people connected by significant social interactions and patterns of behavior, such as family, friends, and neighbors, can survive for years and maintain a community. We can now reach a far wider audience by using social media networks to communicate our ideas. Before the invention of the internet, people seemed to have no other choice but to communicate with others directly. During the interview, the majority of university students claimed that they connected by smartphone with an expensive data connection, with only a few owning laptops or desktop PCs and Wi-Fi services. Further, it was discovered that their parents were unable to afford expensive laptops and desktop computers and that some struggled to manage smartphones for their online services. Similarly, students in the conversation communicated that they frequently used free mobile apps such as Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Google, Wikipedia, and Opera for communication and exploration. Kamal, for example, stated:

Facebook has made it easier for me to interact and share information with my friends, family, and teachers. I've installed apps like Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, as well as browsers like Google, Wikipedia, and Opera. Before social media, our options for communication were incredibly constrained, and they were mostly limited to the people we knew in person. They have now made it simple for me to contact friends, teachers, and family members remained abroad.

His reaction highlighted the fact that SNS has served as a flexible educational, informational, and communication tool for students. It was also discovered that internet access outside of colleges was expanding, offering connectivity because access inside the institution was insufficient to sustain their online involvement. Others, however, claimed that they were particularly interested to access social sites like Facebook and TikTok as well as instructional websites while they were online. They have, moreover, found it favorable to connect to the outside world as a result of SNS access, and surprisingly students having access to technology were collaborative and communicative. In contrast, the experiences of some participants reflected the greatest barrier to contacting friends and teachers, was due to their limited availability of internet connection. For example, Chiran expressed:

I use YouTube videos for extra knowledge such as to search course materials, and Google and Wikipedia to search for information. I help friends in some subjects like English, Maths, and Economics using Zoom and discussion forums. However, all of my friends do not have the access to good Wi-Fi. I have saved my cost in data because even my college has provided free Wi-Fi where I can chat with my brothers studying abroad.

His expression clearly replicated his desire to share his knowledge with his peers. It was also observed that the parents of financially secure and educated students have managed high-speed Wi-Fi and allowed their children to

go online to search and engage in productive activities. Similarly, those having internet access were found to have higher levels of technical expertise than students without it, and they have low-cost interactions with individuals around the world. One of the study's participants, Girish, was observed using his classmates' phones to play games and claimed that he didn't have access to the internet at home and had to borrow a device from a friend because he didn't have a connection. This demonstrates that access to the virtual world may be restricted for learners, especially given the financial situation of their families. However, later participants in the discussion disagreed and highlighted how they valued in-person relationships over virtual social media contacts. For example, Bhima, one of the participants, gave an example of how some excluded people from their digital networks who they no longer considered to be true friends and stated:

The majority of online followers are inactive and rarely communicate. While social media sites allow for more connection and virtual community with discussion boards, as well as providing me more friends, I believe I have also lost genuine friends. Because I believe that many of my internet acquaintances are false. However, it has become a reliable source for me to acquire information on my college activities when I am not in class.

As the speaker demonstrates, social media has increased its accessibility to a greater spectrum of people, even strangers. Moreover, they benefit from being connected to the institutions and receiving updated information on time. However, the online community is not commonly recognized as a space for active interaction. During the interviews, some participants indicated receiving messages and group chat invitations from strangers on social media was common. It is worthwhile to analyze the interesting truth presented by the results, that some students often felt isolated being engaged in SNS and missed their physical interactions with friends and families.

### **Social Networking Sites as Learning Alternatives**

Social media serves as a learning platform for students to readily engage with their peers and academic staff, particularly during crisis events when students and teachers are unable to interact in regular classrooms. This yields increasingly good results by observing students' various experiences with SNS both inside and outside of institutions. One of the students, Bimal, enjoyed the usage of SNS to research national and international hot topics and as a rapid and cheap means of communication. This strengthens his mental ability to confront numerous job-related examinations. Similarly, a majority of respondents in a group discussion stated that the SNS may be used to learn about burning issues, share ideas, and have speedy communication and others may benefit from the internet video content, online learning resources, and current academic materials to supplement their syllabuses. Chetan, for example, expressed:

Because I couldn't attend physical sessions during COVID-19, I took an online bridge class to continue my education. They supplied me with online learning materials that were rich in interactive features, and they administered assessments regularly. I was able to complete my allocated tasks on time. I am glad about the online platform. It was a wonderful alternative educational option for me.

His experience is analogous to others having SNS access as well as good internet services to engage. It can be implied that online learning helped to meaningfully engage distance learning, which was manageable and provided students with easy access to instructors and learning resources. However, many other students,



particularly those from rural regions, may not have developed an understanding of how the SNS access may be used to learn from home. They could have missed the revolutionary provision, which would have led them backward in updated information. Yet, some participants stated that readily available tutorials and animated movies as additional materials which enhanced their study. Moreover, students with high ICT abilities facilitated academic communication between peers and educators as well as collaborative learning in the virtual model. For example, Muna, a participant, said:

During the crisis, normal physical school classes were postponed. Our teachers, although, were able to aid students by teaching subjects via ZOOM or Messenger. This encouraged friends in becoming acquainted with the online form of studying. It fostered digital literacy because we had no option to learn. However, many of my colleagues do not have access to the internet or a good smartphone. I wish every one of my friends could connect with me online.

Her statement obviously entails that alternative ways for sharing learning experiences during COVID-19 were established among students having internet access. Such activities increased learners' technical knowledge as well as their online involvement as a source of entertainment in their busy schedules. Some participants indicated how the internet has improved online learning cultures by providing training courses and educational resources that are useful in everyday life. Hritesh, for example, articulated comparable experience:

Social networking sites assist us in maintaining social relationships. This helps me decide on my future occupation. I look for information about my homework and discuss my concerns with friends and professors. Colorful visuals and video content on the internet make concepts much clearer and more memorable. They are visually appealing and well-explained.

His expression clearly suggested that employing technology created a constant connection and positive participation in digital learning. Furthermore, he enjoyed the availability of online learning resources that could be freely available during the crisis. His statement implies that learning in a different modality can be more efficient and profitable. It appears that engaging students with interactive activities, conversations and digital tools enhanced academic attainment when compared to traditional lectures and lessons. It fosters the growth of practical skills and can be an efficient approach for youth to learn the value of teamwork, improve their comprehension, and expand their practical abilities.

### **Hurdle generated by Social Networking Sites**

According to existing study, adolescents using social media excessively have a variety of concerns such as sleeplessness, eye fatigue, anxiety, depression and cyberbullying. Further, an analysis of the data tends to indicate that, when it comes to using social media in higher education, confidentiality, time-wasting behavior, misuse of the tools during class and antisocial behavior have become the major impediments. Similarly, SNS can develop negative thoughts such as inadequacy about your existence or appearance. The majority of SNS users, in particular, have reported feeling uneasy and upset as a result of publicly available images or anonymous remarks on their posts. The study's findings shed new light on how simple it is to become addicted to social media resulting in their educational achievement and personal lives suffering. For example, Shila stated:

The fact that users can remain anonymous on social media is undoubtedly the worst part. They don't consider their actions to have an impact on others, but then ...they might leave a rude remark on a photo

that an early teen girl posted, which lowers her self-esteem...., Some have even gone into depression due to that...So, I'll just post funny comments and reasonable ones.

The speaker clearly indicated that unidentified commenters and their offensive posts on social media platforms have a wide range of impacts on youngsters. However, some respondents appear to be aware of posting funny and pleasant comments and posts, which may be safe and appropriate to share on SNS. This demonstrates that common people still require technology literacy and an understanding of online interaction. In line with this, the student stated dissatisfaction with how social media content is publicly discussed and criticized, with public figures and other people's social media profiles being deluged with harsh comments about their appearances. The statement of some participants represented the user's understanding of the positive and negative aspects of SNS. The current study confirmed the findings that they may be able to put in a comfortable phase by improving their health and refining their attitude toward SNS, but the participants' motivation appears to address individuals who are not properly engaged with social media and instruct them on its relevancies and make intellectually rigorous. Surprisingly, some users reported unpleasant experiences with SNS, casting a harsh light on the human tendency to use social media. For instance, Avinash stated:

We've all felt the effects of SNS in our lives. Every day, some girls or boys are trolled online because of their opinions, clothing, culture, religion, or even heritage. These days fake news has the worst effect on people who will accept anything if it is presented in an appealing image. When you disseminate a lie or rumor, people begin to believe it without having to investigate the truth. It is dumbing people. Spreading misleading news in the name of business or else... and gathering likes and comments have become current trends, which is unfortunate.

The remark depicts many ways in which individuals have abused SNS. From this statement, it may be inferred that social media has been greatly maltreated by the general people while being a fantastic learning tool. According to the findings, social media is not only misused by students but also by other professionals like businesspeople and employees. Adults, meanwhile, can use technology to connect with their friends and families. Today's students, although, largely utilize it for amusement and leisure, misusing it more often than using it. Hence, social media is used to distribute misleading information because it is simple for content to go viral and users have a tendency to share content without verifying the accuracy of the information.

## **Discussion**

The research established that social networking sites (SNS) were widely used by college students for both social and academic purposes. Further, college students have expressed a strong interest in researching material online, being encouraged for independent study, and setting aside time to discuss ideas with peers and the public outside of the classroom. Students are accustomed to using SNS for socializing, academic learning, and skill development. Despite certain disadvantages such as high costs, addiction, depression, and low self-esteem, the majority of college students appear to be aware of the good impacts of SNS technologies. According to the study, nearly all college students use some form of social networking website, demonstrating how social media can be utilized to learn about and raise awareness of innovative tools of concerns impacting university students. SNS enables users to follow groups and individual collaborations that are important to their friends, family, and teachers, which helps

students stay informed about events both internally and externally and engage in meaningful discussion.

The majority of college students utilized their smartphones to connect with their families, friends, and teachers using free apps such as Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Google, Wikipedia, and Opera. It is the identical result of the study (Quan-Haase et al., 2010) carried out in the advanced context earlier representing the idea that SNS serves multiple communicative functions in students' daily life. They have shown that using social media to engage in debates and discussions may implicitly increase students' ability to critique in other circumstances. When comparing our results to those of older studies (Koranteng et al., 2020), it must be pointed out that, SNS tools have educational, informational, and communication benefits. Furthermore, it was observed that internet access outside institutions was increasing providing easy connectivity because access within the institution was limited to support students' studies. Some participants, on the other hand, detested virtual communication and underlined the significance of face-to-face communication to develop interpersonal skills. Additionally, the study determined that students use online instructional videos as a learning resource, where parents seem to be supportive of their children, allowing them to access, locate and participate in constructive activities online. Whereas a previous study (Rana et al., 2020) in the local context discovered different results of insufficient infrastructure, less funding, and a lack of a strong governmental commitment to investing in ICT, which is also similar circumstance identified in the Pakistani study (Qureshi et al., 2012).

Similarly, students with internet access demonstrated higher levels of technical ability, exchanged educational materials, and fostered interactive learning with colleagues more easily than those without it. However, problems with fake identities and anonymous social media links aggravated the situation. Some students also borrowed a friend's device, demonstrating their low financial status and depriving them of better innovative opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in contrast to Wichadee's (2013) findings in Turkey, where students advanced their writing skills when they shared their assigned tasks on social media and received feedback from one another. Surprisingly, while having negative experiences with objectificational content, several of the participants in the study felt lonely online and lacked physical contact with peers and teachers, and were uncomfortable missing direct involvement in socialization. Griffiths et al. (2014), on the other hand, had already established that prolonged use of social networks leads to psychological illnesses which are similar to the study (Haand et al., 2020) in Afghanistan and both approve the finding of current study. According to the result of an existing research, long-term SNS engagement can cause a variety of problems, including sleeplessness, eye fatigue, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, bullying, and many health related issues. Also, SNS can foster negative emotions such as addiction and dissatisfaction with one's surroundings.

Further, the findings determined that users viewed SNS as a tool for receiving and investigating both local and international hot topics, as well as a streamlined quick communication service that enlarged their mental strength. Likewise, the SNS user expressed gratitude for receiving training on international concerns, as well as preparing for many exams related to their job opportunities. However, such commutative and intellectual support for SNS was contradicted by the finding of Giunchiglia et al. (2018), who discovered that adults using social networking applications may hinder the ability to flourish academically, potentially it limiting society's productivity and dynamic skills and experiences needed for them.

As stated finding those from distant places, in particular, may not have established an awareness of how SNS access may be utilized to learn privately and may have missed the innovative provision pushing them backward. However, the participant comparable to the earlier study (Chawinga, 2017) claimed that easily accessible tutorials and animated videos as supplemental materials enhanced interactive and resourceful learning assisting to mitigate their problems. Even though students with strong ICT abilities were discovered to facilitate academic communication between tutors and friends and had collaborative learning in the digital environment, the majority of respondents to an earlier study (Pempek et al., 2009) engaged in lurking tendencies frequently, by reading people's profiles or news sites and observing photographs. In contrast, some SNS users in the current study have reported feeling embarrassed and anxious as a result of publicly available images or anonymous comments on their posts, leading both their academic and personal lives to deteriorate, which demonstrates that the general public still lack digital literacy and an understanding to communicate effectively online, needed to be addressed.

Notably, students expressed their dissatisfaction with people's remarks and unfavorable comments about others' appearances on social media platforms. However, earlier research (Baker et al., 2010) on how shy individuals' engagement with online social networks relates differently, indicating that these platforms provide an appealing space for introverted people to communicate with others. Even though innovative platforms offer several benefits to individuals, some people are prone to misusing them. Yet, by improving their healthy habits and refining their attitude toward SNS, some seem to be able to put themselves in a more comfortable situation. Interestingly, some enthusiastic persons were concerned with training them in related disciplines and spreading awareness about the use of SNS, which is a positive indication for nourishing human desire and utilizing innovative tools in meaningful ways.

Nevertheless, the practice of technology supports students collaborate with their classmates and teachers, unfortunately, most students use it primarily for fun and leisure and mishandle it more often than they use it. Interestingly, they communicate through their fingertips even when they are close by, and are increasingly getting more and more indolent and addicted to SNS. Also, the socioeconomic variables affecting reliable internet access, dependable internet devices, and a lack of technological or linguistic abilities are crucial to emphasize as key obstacles to SNS efficacy.

Overall, it is important to note that the present study's evidence relies on qualitative research however, a quantitative technique with a comprehensive size covering a wide location might have produced a more accurate and reliable result. Data on the students' use of social media could be better and more reliable than the students' self-reported experiences. Equally, the relevance and trustworthiness of the results may have been further enhanced by a study design that would allow for the triangulation of the information. Despite these limitations, this study has significant implications for professionals working with young people, particularly in the academic area. These findings may support the notion that the use of social media might open up new chances for discussion about their requirements for help and the study's findings might also promote a better understanding of the online experiences of young people at universities. Lastly, this study provides a beginning point for further research into how social media affects graduate and undergraduate students' well-being and to find the reason why some of the used SNS tools are most popular than other.

## **Conclusion**

The findings revealed that university students made extensive use of social networking sites (SNS) for academic and socializing purposes. Students have indicated a keen interest in exploring online information, supporting autonomous learning, and allocating time to share ideas with colleagues and the general public outside the classroom. They learned to use SNS for socialization, course learning, skill enhancement, interactions and connecting individuals, and were appreciative. Despite certain unpleasant experiences, such as unaffordability, addiction, depression, a lack of self-esteem, physical hazards and cyberbullying, most students were aware of coping with them and promoting academics and socialization. Additionally, it seemed complicated and necessary to overcome the limitations to online provisions caused by poor ICT delivery, family financial situations, less skilled educators, and a lack of appropriate digital devices.

The development of SNS addiction poses a threat to students' academic, social, and physical wellbeing, so both teachers and students must get training to ensure the optimum usage of the SNS. Additionally, educators, administrators, and accountable agencies must assess any risks associated with introducing SNS into education and create a strategy to minimize the threats and financially disadvantaged groups should be targeted for enrolment and program implementation. Understanding how college alums used social media may provide new opportunities for discussing issues with students, and the information may aid in increasing understanding of students' online experiences. Future research may concentrate on the factors that contributed to the popularity of a few applications over other SNS, and increased awareness may pave the way for more communication with teenagers about supporting needs.

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