

# Recap on Social Media Impact on Education

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**Abstract** – Social media application on education is rather well investigated topic. However, due to the complexity of social media influence and other factors, its impact on education can't be pinpointed. Namely, there are positive and negative effects of social media and its use in curriculums. Whether there will a positive aspect or negative aspect of social media in education, depends on the environment and the individual teacher, learner, and groups of learners. In this paper a review on social media impact on education is conducted. In addition, guidelines and propositions regarding the use of social media in classrooms is discussed. The main goal is to review the existing body of literature and to address the ever-growing necessity for social media use in education due to the current pandemic situation. This introductory review paper aims at concisely presenting the key factors of social media presence in the education system. Overall, the paper provides a solid basis for future empirical studies and even for meta-analyses.

**Keywords:** *social media, education, impact, framework, online, social networks*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an inseparable part of students' lives across all levels of education. The impact of social media on students' behavior, and performance in school, and universities has been heavily analyzed. There is evidence that social media has a negative impact on students' attention. However, it was also noted that social networks have the potential to enhance collaboration between students [1]. The question is: *How severe is the negative impact, and do the positive aspects "outweigh" the negative?* To answer this question is not a simple task as social media influence varies across specific social media application, education levels, and even on an individual level. The use of social media platforms and its effect on student behavior and their overall education is not isolated. More precisely, other relational constructs and influencing factors can affect students. These relational constructs can be social support, social capital, and social networks [2]. Now, in another study it was noted that there is no clear evidence between social media consumption and students' academic performance [3]. In the same study it was argued that time management

plays a more crucial role when it comes to long-term academic performance. As mentioned earlier, the social media impact is complex and in this particular study the effects of other factors (in this case time management) is prevailing compared to the effects of social media use. Interestingly, the use of social networks can have positive effects such stronger and more effective teacher-student and student-student interactions. Social networks can promote after-class engagement and collaboration. However, at the same time the lack academic language use by students, and the educators' dominance can negatively affect the overall students' academic performance [4]. Therefore, it is necessary to implement standardized evaluation mechanisms that would generalize data and provide a more objective overview of how strong and in which aspects does social media affect students' and their overall education.

Now, social networks are evolving and there is an increased intensity of content creation and distribution. This can negatively affect student behavior as the majority of content is distracting [5]. It seems that social networks are developing in a direction which promotes faster and faster content sharing, distribution of information. This hyper-distribution and hyper-sharing of content can have detrimental effects on students' attention capacity. This is why adequate measures have to be put in place for preventing or reducing the negative aspects of social media use by students within their curriculums.

In this paper the impact of social media on education is reviewed. Additionally, guidelines and suggestions regarding the use of social media in curriculums are discussed. The paper includes three main sections (excluding the Introduction and Conclusion sections). The first section briefly addresses the framework of social media influence. In the second section a review of multiple studies is presented. Here, the key findings and discussions of every study are presented. Finally, in the third section, guidelines and suggestions are discussed.

## **II. FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE**

With the development of modern information-communication technologies (ICTs) social media is increasingly more versatile and includes website and online applications that enable users to communicate, and collaborate, and to publish and share various content. [6] The application of modern ICT solutions requires adequate planning and implementation strategies, especially when to content-rich medium (such as social media) introduction into classrooms.

Social media has the potential to engage students in new paradigm of human interaction. If applied correctly, social media can promote critical thinking and to increase overall student participation and engagement [7]. However, Social media and its impact should be viewed through multiple "lenses" as its effect varies in accordance with various other factors. The main framework of social media use in an academic setting involves the request for details and return of details between students and educators. The framework of this interaction includes peer learning, course engagement, knowledge discussion, learning communities, students' achievements, student mentoring, sharing, following and even news [8].

In addition to the engagement and learning aspect of social media influence, it is interesting to note that students tend to actively participate on social media platforms in order to "stay relevant". In other words, students develop a fear of missing out. This is due to the notion that social media and social networks have become a crucial and essential part of student life [9]. Social media can be viewed as potent "medicine" through which education can be improved and enhanced. However, social media can be a potent "poison" as well, distracting students and reducing their productivity and academic output.

Further, motivation and drive towards social media is an important factor that affects the outcome of the social media impact on education overall. The four primary motivational factors include integration, information, personal identity and entertainment [10]. When all of these factors are taken into consideration it is evident that social media use in the educational system is inevitable, and institutions should focus on being "ahead of the curve" meaning that they should implement optimization mechanisms sooner, than corrective mechanisms later.

Overall, the framework of social media influence on education includes the development of ICTs, student engagement, educator skills, content type, and sharing and collaboration intensity. This further implies that social media influence depends on the development of newer and more innovative ICT solutions. Additionally, the capacity in what these solutions are available for the masses (students) also plays a role. Further, educator (teacher, professor) skills are an important part of social media use in the classroom. Strict and at the same time flexibly approach is needed for students so they could utilize the positive aspects of social media platforms. In the next section, review on recent studies in the domain of social media impact on education and students' behavior are presented.

## **III. REVIEW OF MULTIPLE STUDIES**

In the review process of literature in the domain of social media influence on student behavior and overall education, the following findings were noted:

- Social media is a rather complex term that includes several tools and applications including business tools, social networking tools, blogging tools, photo sharing tools, forums, virtual worlds, video content sharing tools, service reviews, and product reviews. [11]. These tools evolve over time along with the modernization and sophistication of ICTs.
- Research showed that social media is more used for social interaction rather than for learning, teaching and for overall education [12]. In the same review study, it was noted that there was a slight resistance from students regarding online learning and the use of social media. However, after their initial response, the students adapted and had a more positive view on the course as time progressed. It can be argued that the initial resistance is not due to the unfamiliarity of students with social media, but rather due to the type of use of social media (learning instead of entertainment).
- Social media in education has been shown to have positive outcomes on students' performance. Alongside the positive effects of social media use in education, there are disadvantages as well. Namely, social media can cause distraction and it is not suitable for exams and quizzes. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers implement

other learning management systems into the curriculum [13].

- Students mainly use social media for networking and exchanging e-textbooks and other information. In addition, it was found that 3 to 4 hours a day students use social media for entertainment purposes [14]. This time of use for entertainment can cause issues later on when social media has a wider adoption in curriculums.
- From the aspect of audience size, traditional classrooms can't even compare to social media, as online classrooms or courses can address hundreds and even thousands of participants/students. With the development and wide use of smart devices, learning materials are easily accessible and are practically on-demand [15]. It was also noted that the success of social media use in education can be partially measured with the number of impressions and engagement intensity.
- When it comes to the security aspect of social media use in education it was noted that there are statistically significant relations and influence of perceived social popularity, perceived content quality, and user satisfaction on education. It was also indicated that security awareness should be increased in social media and education. It is also recommended to identify factors of social media which affect security in education [16].
- Furthermore, in another study the findings indicate that both educators and students are aware of the importance of social media involvement in education, as it enhances collaboration and improves organizational skills. However, faculties should be aware of the negative aspects of social media use, thus limiting its implementation as well as to adequately manage and control the use of social media within courses. [17].
- The use of social media was evaluated as a positive tool for improved collaborative learning and engagement. However, the study revealed that beside the positive aspects of social media use, the majority of female participants noted that they experienced lack of usefulness, even though learning experience was increased. [18].

- Next, social media use was analyzed through its usefulness, perceived risk and students' satisfaction. The findings indicated that positive perceived usefulness of social media had a positive influence on students and their social media use for learning. Further, perceived risk of social media use had a negative influence in the form of discouragement. Finally, the use of social media had an overall positive effect of student satisfaction. [19].

- It was discussed that social networks were more widely used for information distribution and sharing, as well as for real-time communication. On the other side, specialized learning platforms and repositories were used for additional learning and content creation [20].

Overall, the results from various studies indicate the and partially demonstrate the complex impact of social media on education. It can be argued, that due to this complexity, future studies will be welcomed in this domain. Simply, due to the development of ICTs and the changes and innovations which are manifesting in social media requires continuous evaluation and investigation in order to determine the best course of action in regards the implementation of social media in curriculums. In the next section guidelines and propositions regarding social media use in education are discussed.

#### **IV. GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS**

After the literature review and the noted findings in the domain social media use and impact on education, the following guidelines and suggestions for social media use in education are proposed:

- social media platforms should be used as earlier as possible in the schooling system in order for students to view social media as learning tool at least as much they view as a source of entertainment;
- social media use should be promoted in a structured manner, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and critical thinking among students;
- students should be introduced to the negative effects of social media on their behavior and their potential academic performance;

- the use of social media in curriculums should be digitally governed and monitored in order to maintain or even improve education quality;
- mechanisms for reducing distraction when using social media in classrooms should be introduced;
- strategic planning is necessary for long-term sustainable solutions regarding the use of social media in classrooms;
- teachers should attain courses for effective and efficient social media use in the classroom with the goal to reduce the lack of necessary technical skills for social media use by the teacher.

In sum, the application of social media in education requires a systematic and thorough approach. This includes the participation of governance institutions, educators, and learners. This is a necessity if the use of social media in classrooms is planned as a long-term addition to the educational system.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this introductory review paper the impact of social media use in education was analyzed. The challenges, drawbacks, barriers, as well as the positive aspects of social media use by students was reviewed. Based on the existing body of literature it can be concluded that social media is a strong “tool” when it comes to enhancing the curriculums and classes. However, this “strength” can be detrimental on students’ academic performance if not adequately managed.

The main limitation of this paper is the lack of empirical data collected from educational institutions. This type of data would provide a more thorough insight into the dynamics and complexity of social media influence on the teaching and learning process. Therefore, this current paper provides a solid starting point for such future research. It is also recommended for future studies to address the variability of social media influence depending on the socio-economic and political environment.

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