

Influence of Social Media Adoption on Academic Performance and Student Satisfaction, Through the Mediating Effects of Social Media Usage

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Abstract: Digitalization is inevitable in this globalized world, and initiatives are underway to digitalize the services in the Maldives. Since, social media a common tool used by many, this study is exploring the influence of social media adoption influence of social media adoption on academic performance and student satisfaction at tertiary level education. This influence will also be explored further with social media usage as a mediating factor. A quantitative survey questionnaire will be used to collect data from students enrolled in both government universities and private colleges in greater Male' region. Despite the limitations that exist in giving depth due to the utilization of only a quantitative method, this study can establish the role and influence of social media in higher education and could be beneficial for policy makers and decision makers at higher education institutions in their decisions to include social media in their educational plans. Theoretically also this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by making a comprehensive model that combines a lot of individually tested variables together to further explore the influence of social media.

Keywords: Social media adoption, Social media usage, Student satisfaction, Academic Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Social media usage has increased drastically since its introduction. Social media was a novelty when it was initially introduced as an online communication in the form of email in 1971 (Sajithra & Patil, 2013). However, despite the debates on whether email can be considered as a social media tool, it falls under the simplest definition, where social media is referred to interactions that happen online. Soon after Usenet was introduced in 1979, where users can read and post messages in different categories. LISTERVE, made email communication possible at a larger scale in 1984. And the very first online chatting experience was introduced in 1988 by Internet Relay Chat. Then personal websites and discussion groups were introduced in 1991. However, social networking sites was initiated in 1995 and other aspects such as blog posts and wiki pages started being appearing from 1998 to 2004. Since then, social media and its users increased drastically. Just twitter alone sent 10 billion messages from its initial launch in 2006 to 2010 (Sajithra and Patil, 2013). Ever since, the number of social media users has been on the rise. According to AlAfnan (2025), there were 2.78 billion users in the year 2018 and this number increased to 2.95 billion and the number of users were estimated to grow up to 3.43 billion by 2023. And According to the global social media statistics posted by datareportal, by October 2025, around the globe there are 5.66 billion social media identities (datareportal, n.d). Hence, over the last few decades social media,

with its multitude of possibilities and uses has shown that it is indeed an inevitable force.

Problem Statement

Social media has not only grown by the number of users, but its platforms and usage has also evolved and a lot of sectors, including the education sector. According to Amjad, Aslam & Tabassum (2024) over the years, social media has also evolved and most importantly, these changes has enabled academic communities to thrive on these platforms. Therefore, it is important to identify the influence of social media adoption on students, especially academic performance and satisfaction among students.

Notably, social media has been studied extensively, and most of the variables studied in this study has been studied to some extent in combination with some other variables. Mediating effects of social media has also been found between mobile learning and academic performance (Amjad, Aslam & Tabassum, 2024). However, this study will look into social media adoption using the Technology Acceptance Model and find its influences on academic performance and student satisfaction through social media usage. This study will be using the Uses and Gratification theory to explore the mediating effects of social media usage. The variables used to explore social media adoption will be usefulness, ease of use and attitude as a simplified version of Technology Acceptance Model and variables for the mediating factor, social media

usage will be identified through social interaction, information, entertainment and convenience as a simplified version of uses and gratification model. And using these variables this study will explore if there is a relationship between social media adoption and academic performance and student satisfaction, through social media usage in student studying at higher education institutions in greater Male' area. Considering that social media is growing drastically, it might be beneficial to explore how social media is influencing students and their performance. Especially for a country like the Maldives, starting its digitalisation journey, identifying the role of social media in higher education. It is also important to include user friendly technological tools such as social media as a tool to positively impact our life. However, before we do that, we need to identify how social media is influencing students, especially their academic performance and satisfaction. Hence, this study could offer insight regarding integrating social media in higher education.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to review the past literature to show the key determinants of social media adoption and whether social media adoption influences social media usage. Also, this conceptual analysis will show whether social media usage has any influence on academic performance and students' satisfaction. Similarly, this conceptual analysis review the past literature to show whether social media adoption has any direct influence on academic performance and students' satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions

Social media adoption

Social media has several definitions from simple to complex. One such definition is, social media or in other words digital technologies that focus on content or interactions generated by its users (Hassan & Basit, 2021; Kaplan Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Terry, 2009). Looking at more complex definitions, Carr & Hayes (2015), defines social media as channels available on the internet where its users may interact with each other and present themselves selectively, in real time or not, with bigger or a smaller audience where they derive value from content generated by its users and perception of interaction from other.

According to Von Muhlen & Ohno-Machado (2012), definition of social media is constantly evolving and most studies and surveys they reviewed define social media in the broader sense, including social networks, information sites such as Wikipedia and commonly used platforms such as Facebook. However, Kent (2010) referred to channels with certain characteristics, identifying direction of the messages or it is about using specific tools of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and etc. Even though all these definitions exist, a lot of researchers agree that there is a lack of a formal definition (Effing, van Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Considering the vastness and lack of a formal definition, for the purpose of this study, social media is defined as a tool of communication and self-representation, either direct communication using communication tools such as Viber, WhatsApp etc., or through publicly shared pictures, post, forums or via other interactive social media tools or platforms.

Table 1: Aspects of Social media adoption

Aspects of social media adoption	Source
Social media adoption is described in relation to the attributes such as socializing and usability.	Preece (2001), Phang <i>et al.</i> (2009) as cited in Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2011)
Extent of social media usage Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman (2011) examined the factors of social media adoption through perceived characteristics of social media technology.	Griffis <i>et al.</i> , (2014). Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman (2011)
Social Media adoption in relation to technological, organizational and environmental characteristics of consumer and innovation itself (Consumer was companies or organization)	Ahmad, Abu Bakar and Ahmad, (2019).
Social Media adoption by consumers (doctors in this study) for specific uses such as of sharing	McGowan, <i>et al.</i> (2012).

knowledge and lifelong learning and in this study, it was predicted through their perception of ease of use, usefulness attitude and personal beliefs.	
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To summarize, existing studies and their utilization of the term social media adoption include, referring adoption as consumption, extent of its usage, characteristics of technology itself and its

consumers, and technology consumption that can be predicted by consumer's perception of its ease of use, usefulness and their overall attitude.

Social Media Usage

Table 2: Social Media Usage

Aspects of social media usage	Source
Usage pattern and Various uses of social media platforms for communication, collaboration, education and entertainment.	Pan, Vorvoreanu and Zhou, (2014).
Refers to multiple activities from communication, content creation, content sharing to social interactions that happen online. Characteristics of social media adoption of consumers or behaviors of its consumers across several social media platforms, such as video sharing sites in Youtube and picture sharing in sites such as fliker, and other virtual community sites that could be used for group communications and etc.	Atteh et al. (2020) Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, (2011)
Pattern and Intensity of social media consumption (definition derived from context in which it is used in this research).	Ahmad, Abu Bakar and Ahmad, (2019).
It is the way society or people leans towards while using social media technology to acquire information through it.	Bernoff and Li, 2008 as cited in Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, (2011)

To summarize, social media usage has been defined through definitions, through the use of the term in several researchers and more. Some of these definitions cover how people utilize social media or their usage pattern, be it through it usage frequency, through various uses of social media such as for communication, collaboration,

education and entertainment. Therefore, for the use of this paper Social Media Usage is defined as the consumption pattern of people, specifically with regards to the purpose of its frequency and purpose of their social media consumption, such as social Interaction, Information, Entertainment and Convenience

Academic Performance

Table 3:Aspects of Academic performance

Aspects of academic performance	Source
Increasing knowledge of a topic and competence that can be reflected in grades, academic achievement, Progress and persistence in gaining knowledge.	Kumar, Agarwal and Agarwal, (2021).
Academic achievement or performance reflected in grade point average. Maintaining the score (GPA) or performance in their academic studies.	Bakar, Tarmizi, Mahyuddin, Elias, Luan, and Ayub (2010) Hasnain, Nasreen and Ijaz (2015).
Grade Point Average in a semester.	Giunchiglia, Zeni, Gobbi, Bignotti and Bison (2018).

Academic success by self-reported, non-continuous grade-based reporting.	Chowdhury (2025)
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To summarize, Academic Performance has been defined using grade point average, student's ability to maintain their academic grades, and also in a broader sense through the ability to increase knowledge or competence that is reflected in grades, along with persistence and progress. For

the purpose of this study, Academic Performance is defined in two ways 1) the perception of a student's ability to increase their knowledge or persistence to progress in gaining knowledge; 2) Academic achievement through grade point average.

Student Satisfaction

Table 4: Aspects of Students Satisfaction

Aspects of student satisfaction	Source
Likability of course content by students	Hollis (2014).
User satisfaction of new systems or changes and consequences How pleased students are with their learning experience	Kaewkitipong, Chen and Ractham (2016) Andersen (2013).
Overall learning experience	Ensmann and Whiteside (2022)
Level of satisfaction of an overall product (technology or course content) and happiness.	Ajibade and Zaidi (2023).

To summarize, Student satisfaction has been defined as the user experience, their likability, how content they are to keep up with changes and learning of new systems and the overall happiness of an overall product. Considering these definitions, for the use of this study, this paper will define student satisfaction in two ways. 1) overall Likability of learning process and content and 2) overall likability of social media as a tool including the technological acceptance of social

media such as keeping up with changes and new systems.

One of the most common two theories used to explain social media usage are uses and gratification theory and Technology Acceptance Model to understand social media adoption and social media usage and explore their influence on academic performance and student satisfaction.

Uses and Gratification Theory

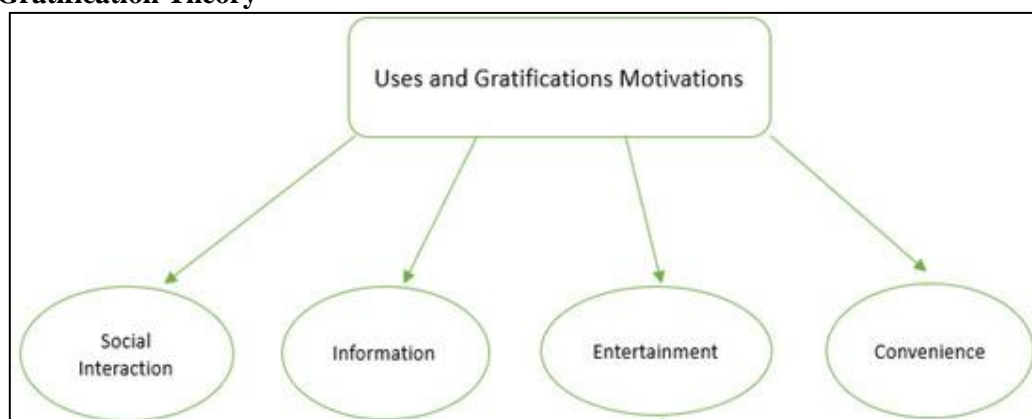


Figure 1: Gratification Theory

Source: Moon and An (2022)

Uses and Gratification theory has been around for some time, and it is often used to explore topics in mass communication. At the beginning in 1920s, this theory was used to explain moral panic and

other psychological effects of panic behaviour and not as a tool to study the effects of mass communication (Weiyan, 2015). However, this theory was introduced to the public in 1940s, was

popular in the 1950s and 1960s and has become one of the prominent audience theories used by researchers. Today this theory is used to study the effects of media. Even though this theory was developed to study the gratifications of individuals that in turn attract them to a certain type of media or a program/content. And this attraction is because of fulfilling a social or psychological need

of the individual consuming the content. However, other research also explored general lessons about better communication, unintended messages and motivation and selection patterns of audiences (Weiyan, 2015). Therefore, social media usage, and its effects is quite relevant to explore using uses and gratification model.

Technology Acceptance Model

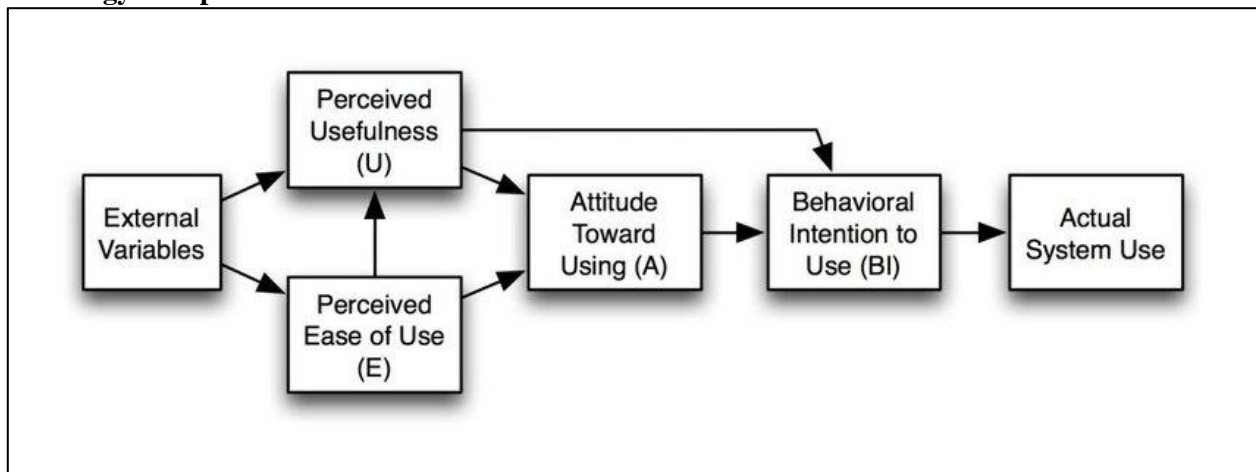


Figure 2: TAM model

Source: Abdullah *et al.* (2016).

The technology acceptance model proposes that usage can be predicted by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, and user attitude is also considered in this model (Masrom, 2007). And this model is also used to explore the user experience

of social media users. Even though this model has several components, for the purpose of this study, the variables used are Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use and Attitude.

Conceptual Framework

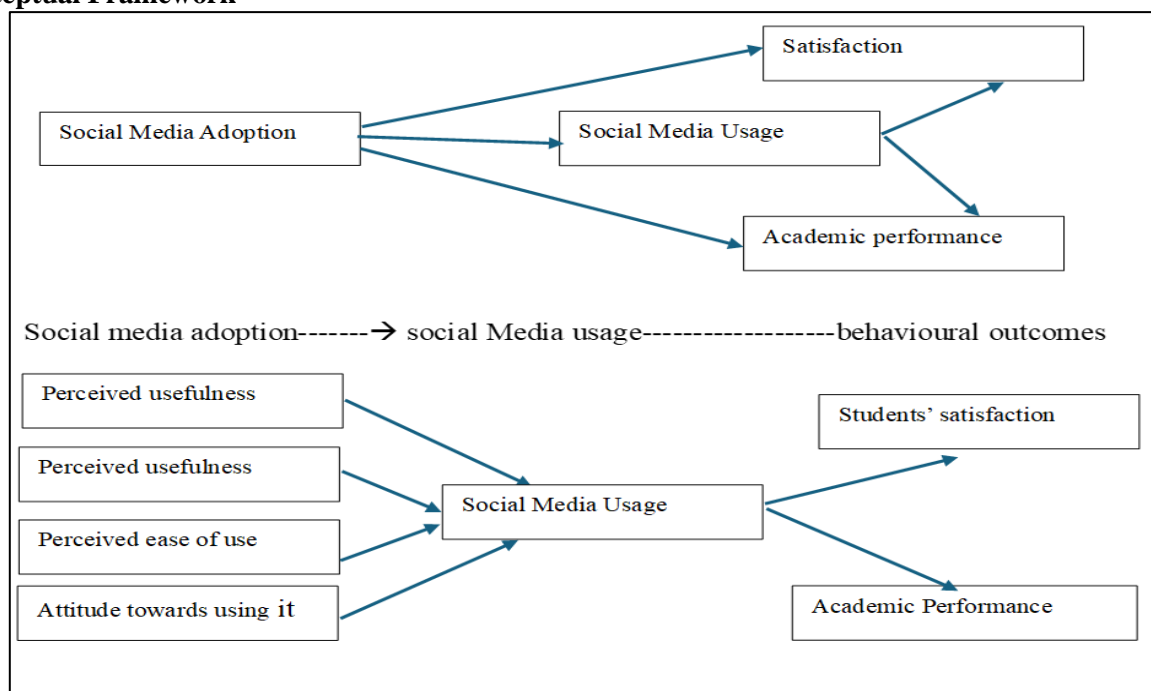


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

Social Media Adoption on Social Media Usage

Social Media adoption is explained in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) through its usefulness, ease of usage and the attitude towards social media and more. Similarly, Social media usage can be explained using its role in social interaction, information, and Entertainment and Convenience as per the uses and gratification model.

Perceived Usefulness on Social Media Usage

Social Media adoption, especially its usefulness against variables of social media usage such as social interaction, information, and Entertainment and Convenience, has also been studied. A study conducted in Kuwait by Alduaij (2019) where 88 percent of the participants agreed that social media is useful and the mean score for general usefulness was 4.20, with a mean value of 4.20 for importance of social media in their daily life. Dzandu *et al.*, (2016), also found that perceived usefulness was able to explain 18 percent of the variance in social media adoption. However, Yuan *et al.*, (2021), found that perceived usefulness has no significant effect on user attitude. And perceived usefulness was found to have a weak relationship with interaction with teachers, engagement and perceived ease of use (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013). Moreover, According to Alduaij (2019) users who are familiar with social media for four or more years perceive it as more usefulness and Al-Rahmi *et al.* (2021), found a significant and a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and social media usage.

Proposition1: There is Significant Influence of Perceived Usefulness on Social Media Usage

Perceived Ease of Use on Social Media Usage

Ease of use is another element explained in TAM model, where usage is predicted by ease of use. According to Alduaij (2019), overall, users who are familiar with social media for four or more years perceive it as easy to use (or agrees with ease of use) and even though there is no significant difference between users with a diploma compared to users with higher qualifications. A total of 84.6 percent believe social media is faster, and this value for 'social media is cheaper' is 3.88 (Alduaij, 2019). In addition, Al-Rahmi *et al.* (2021) found a significant and positive relationship between perceived ease of use and social media usage. And perceived ease of use was also positively associated with social media usage for learning (Yuan *et al.*, 2021). And perceived ease of use showed a significant difference that it was

attributed to the 17 percent of the variations in social media adoption (Dzandu, 2016). Furthermore, according to Al-Rahmi & Othman (2013), Perceived ease of use while interacting with peers through social media has a positive relationship, but it is weak. However, perceived ease of use with engagement shows a moderate level of significance. Moreover, according to Singh, Goel, & Islamia, M. J. (2016), Perceived ease of use is positively correlated to a positive attitude towards the social media usage. Hence, their perceived ease of use in itself, has been positively correlated or established in previous studies.

Proposition 2: There Is Significant Influence of Perceived Ease of Use on Social Media Usage

Attitude on Social Media Usage

Attitude towards social media can vary depending on its intended use. According to Alduaij (2019), attitude towards social media may differ depending on the user's educational level, and the duration of the usage. Overall, users with a diploma were noted as feeling more positive towards social media usage. In another study by Yuan *et al.*, (2021), conducted among 720 Malaysian students shows, attitude of social media users is significantly positive when combined with social media literacy, perceived ease of use, Perceived Behavioural Control, and Perceived Risk. Even though this study showed Perceived Usefulness was not a significant predictor when it comes to user attitude, attitude was positively associated with intention to use social media for learning (Yuan *et al.*, 2021). In addition, Singh, Goel, & Islamia, M. J. (2016), found that attitude towards social media usage was significantly above the middle point, concluding that the management students have a positive attitude towards social media usage. Hence, it is clear that the variable attitude and social media usage has an established positive relationship.

Proposition 3: There is Significant Influence of Attitude on Social Media Usage

Social Media usage on Academic Performance

Social media is used by students all over the world. Several studies have found a link between social media usage and academic performance. Social media has a great potential to improve the learning experience through its iterative and collaborative features. Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016; Schlenkrich & Sewry, 2012; Sobaih, Moustafa, Ghandforoush, & Khan, 2016, as cited in Dumpit

and Fernandez, 2017). While some studies found direct links, other studies show a mediating effect. According to Almogren, Al-Rahmi and Dahri (2024), social media was positively associated with academic performance, and the findings were significant. Social media showed a significant mediating effect between mobile learning and academic performance with coefficient (Amjad, Aslam and Tabassum, 2024). Habes *et al.*, (2018) states that social media tool, Facebook has a positive impact on student's linguistic abilities, their intellect and moral behaviour. However, the overall study showed that social media has a negative impact on student's academic performance and recommended teachers and parents to monitor social media usage by students (Habes *et al.*, 2018). In addition, Al-Rahmi *et al.* (2021), also found a positive relationship between social media usage and academic performance. Sivakumar (2020), found that social media positively impacts the academic performance of students. Hence, these findings suggests that social media usage and academic performance of student does have a positive and significant relationship as a single variable.

Proposition 4: There is Significant Influence of Social Media Usage on Academic Performance.

Social media usage on Student Satisfaction

The influence of social media on student satisfaction has been studied before, and some studies has shown a positive relationship, while others show a weak negative relationship. According to Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013), social interaction with peers and teachers through social media has a significant positive impact on student satisfaction. Moreover, social media usage focusing on specific platforms also show a similar result. According to González-Mohíno, Ramos-Ruiz, López-Castro & García-García (2024) there is a significant positive association between the use of Instagram for educational purpose and student satisfaction. And online social networking was found to have a significant positive association with contribution to learning and student satisfaction (Lau, 2012). Therefore, these studies suggests that there is a relationship between social media and student satisfaction. Al-Rahmi *et al.* (2021), found a relationship between social media usage and student satisfaction (of using social networking platforms)

Proposition 5: There is Significant Influence of Social Media Usage on Student Satisfaction

Perceived Usefulness and Academic Performance

Students who used social media occasionally had a higher score compared to students who never used social media, suggesting possible usefulness of social media for education (Tanwar and Kumar, 2019 as cited in Chowdhury, 2025). Badr, Al-Abdi, R. K. and Ali, (2024), perceived usefulness along with other factors such as social media usage and engagement and quality explain a significant percent (66.7%) of the variation in academic performance of students. perceived usefulness has a mediating relationship where it is necessary as it boosts the effects of social media quality to get an optimal result in their studies/ academic performance (Badr *et al.*, 2024).

Proposition 6: There is Significant Influence of Perceived Usefulness on Academic Performance.

Perceived Ease of Use and Academic Performance

Samarasinghe and Chandrasiri (2019) defines perceived ease of use as how much a student believes or perceives social media as easy and something that is effortless to use and lesser the effort leads to a better performance (Venkatesh, D. V. and Davis, as cited in Samarasinghe and Chandrasiri, 2019). In addition, according to the Technology Acceptance model students who adopt and believe that the technological tools such as social media is easy and does not need much of a cognitive effort, would see an improvement in their performance (Zhang, Z. and Tan, 2008, as cited in Al-Rahimi, O. and Musa, 2013). Hence, showing that there is a positive relationship between ease of use and academic performance.

Proposition 7: There is Significant Influence of Perceived Ease of Use on Academic Performance

Attitude and Academic Performance

Social media adoption and Academic performance have also been established through Attitude of its users and academic performance. According to Singh, G. & Islamia, M. J. (2016), beliefs and attitudes of students (management students) towards social media use in education shows a significant (positive) relationship with academic performance. According to Alismaiel, Cifuentes-Faura and Al-Rahmi (2022), attitude towards social media has a significant positive relationship with academic performance of Students. According to Sivakumar (2020), students who were asked of the impact of social media and responded positively showed an improvement in

their academic performance. Bakar *et al.* (2010) found that attitude has a positive relationship with academic performance. According to a study done by Samimi, Q. and Jahandideh (2024), attitude is positively related to academic performance. These findings shows that a positive attitude is relevant and positively associated with academic performance.

Proposition 8: There is Significant Influence of Attitude on Academic Performance

Perceived Usefulness and Student Satisfaction

Perceived usefulness of various Information technology has been proven in various context (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Mahmood *et al.*, 2000 as cited in Kaewkitipong, Chen and Ractham, 2016). According to Kaewkitipong, Chen and Ractham (2016), it was proven that perceived usefulness has a positive relationship with student satisfaction. So, if students perceived social media as useful, they will probably be satisfied using it. Perceived usefulness was also found to have a statistically significant relationship with student satisfaction among online learners (Andersen, 2013). And McGowan *et al.* (2012), found a positive correlation between the usefulness of social media and clinical competency along with performance. Al-Rahmi *et al.* (2021) also found a positive relationship between perceived usefulness and student satisfaction. Heng, Rx, Goh, Peng, and Syazwani (2022), also found that perceived usefulness has a significant relationship with student satisfaction of e-learning. These findings suggest that perceived usefulness positively influence student satisfaction.

Proposition 9: There is Significant Influence of Perceived Usefulness on Student Satisfaction.

Perceived Ease of Use and Student Satisfaction

Perceived ease of use is another variable that has shown student satisfaction. According to Andersen (2013), Perceived ease of use is statistically significant to student satisfaction among e-learners. Al-Rahmi *et al.* (2021) also found a positive relationship between perceived Ease of use and student satisfaction. According to Heng, Rx, Goh, Peng, and Syazwani (2022), perceived ease of use positively impacts student satisfaction of e-learning when institutional support is established as mediating factor. Hence, this suggests that students who perceive social media as easy to use shows an increase in their level of satisfaction towards social media and learning experiences.

Proposition 10: There is Significant Influence of Perceived Ease of Use on Student Satisfaction.

Attitude and student satisfaction.

Attitude is a factor that has shown to impact student satisfaction. According to Andersen (2013), attitude of instructors is significantly significant to student satisfaction among online learners. Samimi, Qadri and Jahandideh (2024) found a positive relationship between student satisfaction and attitude towards social media. Nuryakin, R. and Musa (2023) found attitude towards using social media has a positive relationship with student satisfaction. Hence, they suggest that attitude might be one of the factors influencing student satisfaction.

Proposition 11: There is Significant Influence of Attitude on Student Satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Since social media is growing, it would be beneficial to identify the influence of social media adoption on students, especially their academic performance and satisfaction. One of the main implications would be its integration into higher education and contribute to thought policy regarding this topic.

Theoretical implication

Theoretically this study aims combines a lot of separately tested variables. Specifically, social media adoption and usage to establish their possible influence on academic performance and student satisfaction. And testing them for direct and mediating relationships, to create a comprehensive model for social media adoption and Academic performance and student satisfaction through social media usage of student in higher education. Even though this model by students enrolled in higher education in the greater Male' region, if established it could offer a comprehensive understanding of the influence of social media on student satisfaction and academic performance.

Practical implication

This quantitative study is also aiming to establish the role and influence of social media in education to contribute to the field of higher education and higher education institutions and policy makers to find the place for an accessible and convenient tool like social media in education.

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