

ICIS2022Penang

<https://fim.uitm.edu.my/index.php/research/conference/342-icis-2022>

5th International Conference on Information Science

Royale Chulan, Penang, Malaysia, 19-21 Sep 2022

Organised by Faculty of Information Management, UiTM, Malaysia



Assessing the Effect of Digital Social Media towards Face to Face Communication during Pandemic COVID-19 in Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract

This paper will assess the effect of social media on face-to-face (F2F) communication among students in a higher education institution. Previous scholars found that social media is a platform to connect people, especially in the current pandemic COVID-19. However, another study has shown the negative effect of social media among university students because it hampers students' real-life experiences. A literature survey has been selected to explore the effect of social media on F2F communication among students in a higher education institution. This paper also highlights the significant role of social media in higher education institutions during the pandemic of Covid19.

Keywords: F2F communication, social media, Social Networking Sites (SNS), technology

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v7iS110.4099>

1.0 Introduction

Some social media platforms have been introduced, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and WeChat, where individuals share memories, reconnect with friends and family, plan events and communicate instantaneously. However, despite the myriad of advantages associated with social media usage, it still negatively influences how individuals engage in face-to-face (F2F) communication, especially among students. Some of these impairments in face-to-face communication using social media have led not only to time misappropriation but also to a decline in confidence and English eloquence among students when engaged in face-to-face communication. Social media is a virtual platform that facilitates people's communication regardless of location (Sathya & Indradevi, 2017). It is an essential tool, fashioning our societies into a global village by connecting people remotely.

Since the inception of social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and WeChat, most people have found such platforms intriguing and addictive (Christensen, 2018; Shoab & Nandi, 2018; Tang-Mui, 2017). In recent times, most youths, especially technologically literate students, find the use of social media quite unresisting because of its manifold of exciting packages (Tang-Mui, 2017). However, despite the various benefits and satisfaction derived from social media, it negatively affects how students esteem F2F communication (Shoab & Nandi, 2018). Students have a high affinity for their mobile devices because of the various social media platforms housed in such devices, and this causes them to spend a chunk of their time relating with others via text or video (Shoab & Nandi, 2018). Students find social media platforms more relaxed and comfortable expressing themselves adequately relative to face-to-face communication (Shoab & Nandi, 2018; Tang-Mui, 2017). However, this preference for the use of social media against face-to-face communication has a negative effect on some students' confidence, English proficiency, and eloquence when engaged in face-to-

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v7iS110.4099>

face interactions (Drago, 2015; Shoab & Nandi, 2018). Hence, there is a yawning urgency to address the quandary impairing the effect of social media on face-to-face communication.

Hence, the aim of this study is to address the quandary manifested by students when engaged in face-to-face communication. The effect of social media on F2F communication will also be dug out in this study. This paper will explain the positive and negative effects of social media on the F2F communication of students. Even though social media usage arises because of pandemic COVID-19, F2F communication is essential to know deep on certain information rather than using social media. Online communication and F2F communication are equivalent, especially during the current global pandemic. The individual, student, or community should stay online or F2F to share and stay connected. This is how to keep the health mental by interacting with other people. Thus, the objectives of this study are (1) to identified how F2F communication is essential to build the student's confidence especially during the current global pandemic, (2) to examine the role of social media technology and purposes of usage among students during the pandemic COVID-19 and, (3) to determine student digital literacy skills to gain in-depth knowledge of specific material using social media compared to information gained through face-to-face communication.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Social Media

Technology advancements produce the digital social media application purposely to interact, share and disseminate the information with the people. Nowadays, social media is used as a platform to market, advertise, promote, and share all the information with people. Social media is a form of communication that allows people to communicate (Aman and Hussin, 2018). While social media is a form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, and other content in various formats (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2021). While Nation (2021) states that social media refer to a web-based communication tool that makes people interact with each people by sharing and consuming the information.

2.2 Face to Face Communication (F2F)

Communication is the one form of interaction among the people in the community. There are various kinds of communication, such as verbal and non-verbal communication, formal and informal communication, and visual communication. Communication is the act of sending information or ideas via speech, visuals, writing, and other methods of communication (Bhasin, 2021). In the past, people communicate through written communication or F2F communication. However, the medium to deliver the information not only through written and F2F communication but the communication through an online medium has been popularized, especially among the people with long-distance relationships; even though the medium of communication shows some changes but F2F communication is a significantly essential ways to communicate with other people.

2.3 Effect of social media on F2F communication

Today, social media is perceived as a salient tool in our society, serving as a common platform that brings people together. Social media is esteemed as a collection of online communication channels specialized for community-based input, interaction, content sharing, and collaboration. Currently, a handful of social media platforms have been introduced, encompassing WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and WeChat, where individuals share memories, reconnect with friends and family, plan events and communicate instantaneously. However, despite the myriad of advantages associated with the usage of social media, it still has some negative influence on how individuals engage in face-to-face communication, especially among students. Some of these impairments in face-to-face communication caused by using social media among students have led not only to time misappropriation but also a decline in confidence and English eloquence among students when engaged in face-to-face communication. Tang-Mui, (2017), the influence of social media ranges from positive to negative. Online behaviours were often classified as benefits and drawbacks of social networking, such as documented hiding Internet practices among teens or destroying isolation among older people.

In terms of marriages, there has been a debate in Internet environments about the closeness and the consistency of an online partnership. Looking at the inconsistency in a revolutionary engagement between classic group contact and social media, in the presence of digital culture, there is a mysterious fragrance of future struggles and challenges in all human communication and relationships. The study employed a Diffusion of Creativity to examine the broad and constant dissemination of digital technology in human communication; and Media Dependence in understanding and structuring social media's cognitive, affective, and behavioral impact on each individual using the Internet in various ways. The study utilized online polling to gather feedback from a social network platform as an overview of people's viewpoints and show self-awareness on all rates. A social media platform such as Facebook (FB) is viewed as a reliable contact resource because it can offer closeness between family members. The findings suggest that social networking such as Facebook has a beneficial effect on family members; it will help create a healthier and more harmonious community, and interactions between family members and contact could be strengthened and upgraded to a united community.

2.4 Significant Role of Social Media to Higher Education Institutions during Pandemic COVID-19

In Malaysia, the higher education institution began adopting the e-learning system to start teaching and learning with the university student. In the early stage, the media reported various problems, especially in terms of connectivity and accessibility of rural students in rural areas of Malaysia. This has been supported by Zainol, Hussin, Othman and Zahari (2021) that state the availability of internet access is one of the big challenges faced by middle-income parents in the process of providing the student change to online learning classes. This is because middle-income parents face an obstacle in providing the proper devices to the student joining the online classes. Besides that,

limited access to the Internet also makes it difficult for students to communicate with lecturers, interact with friends, and have laboratory access, which affects their studies (Selvanathan, Hussin & Azazi, 2020). As a result, the lecturer put some effort by extending assignment submission dates to the student due to internet accessibility issues (Lim, 2020).

3.0 Methodology

In exploring and understanding the effect of social media usage on F2F communication, the literature survey has been used in this study. Literature survey is defined as the documentation of a comprehensive review of published and unpublished work from secondary data sources in the area of specific interest of the researcher (Uma Sekaran, 2003). Reviewing the literature is an important approach in assisting the researcher or author in focusing on one aspect which has been published in the journal or other sources, either physically or online. Through this literature survey, the researcher or author could extract relevant information found in the journal. This method could facilitate the researcher or author in understanding the important component that exist within the topic of study. The researcher or author could find a variety of information in the secondary data source.

Example of secondary data sources includes an online journal, newspaper, article in website, government documentation, statistic, and another kind of documentation that provide the information related to the study. Secondary data sources is research data that has been previously gathered by the previous scholar and can be accessed by the researcher (Techtarget, 2017). Besides that, through this literature survey, the researcher or author could expand the information, which could see the trends based on the topic of the study. In this study, the researcher or author identifies the changes in F2F communication when social media usage arises among students in higher education. Moreover, this paper will explore the factors that impede effective face-to-face communication and the effects on students (UiTM) due to social media communication platforms. This paper significantly contributed to the trends of research in social media and the body of knowledge in this study.

4.0 Discussion

According to Baruh (2012), social media is beneficial for the online sharing of information and knowledge among different groups of people. Upgrade of technology shows a variety of features offer by social media. There are several kinds of social media, such as social networks, social news, microblogging, media sharing, a community blog, and many more. At the same time, some examples of well-known social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and others have been introduced to the community, and the number of accounts has increased yearly. Each example of social media shows a different purpose, target, and format. For example, Youtube shares the information by creating the informative video content creator, while Facebook purposely shares and interact with people in a variety of format, either in the form of text, video, graphic, and video. This is the uniqueness of social media popular on the Internet nowadays.

F2F communication means communication that takes place in the physical presence of other people (Lange, 2008). F2F also involves communication with the front or faces towards each other, especially when they are close together (Dictionary.com, 2021). Communication could portray whether those people are confident or shy to speak up. During F2F communication, the listener could read the speaker's expression in delivering the information. The student should have good skills when communicating with the lecturer or family. Presenting the information in a presentation session could build up the confidence of the student in delivering the information. However, the current scenario and situation hinder us from gathering and communicating with each another, and it will greatly impact and effected the ways of communication of students. There is another effect of social media on F2F communication that will be further discuss in this study.

Sathya & Indradevi, (2017), social media has influenced different aspects of our daily social activities and has a significant impact on human contact. The present-day is characterized by an acute lack of time for individuals and families due to the need for husband and wife to be employed to meet the needs of a satisfactory lifestyle. Time has been the most valuable tool, and because of its quick-paced existence, people are seeking ways to save time. People require connectivity to meet their social needs, and social media has become a popular means of contact through the internet and mobile devices proliferation. Digitization has decreased people's face-to-face contact, whether it is for selling or endorsing a company or informal correspondence. The cell phone has developed a social condition in which people are addicted by moving to a smartphone to prevent contact from individual to individual. The new habits and lack of resources have rendered it more critical for social media to utilize cell phones and other connectivity aids.

Shoab & Nandi (2018) conducted a detailed overview of social networking resources and their negative effect on face-to-face or real-life interactions among Uttara, Dhaka, and area university students. The work was carried out using qualitative research approaches. Both interviews and surveys were conducted among Uttara's 48 university students to gather the primary details. The study targeted university students who use social media to engage with others intending to understand how social media communication platforms adversely impact face-to-face contact. Social media has been an increasingly common and informative platform for people to use for communication. These days, university students are very much interested in this social media. However, the heavy usage of social media has been found to hamper real-life experiences potentially. People begin to neglect actual contact and interactions since they rely so much on social media. Owing to new and automated technology devices, the Internet and social media connectivity are becoming quite simple and accessible in this present century. The bulk of young university students would prefer this more straightforward way of contact. Too much interest in social media has lost personal contact and participation. The study evaluated the detrimental effects and its influence on the students when they become addicted to it. This mentality has been seen as weakening good engagement, self-confidence, and collaboration.

Dutta (2020) stated that pandemic COVID-19 has interrupted the pedagogy or method in teaching and learning all over the world. Digital social media play a vital role in teaching and learning especially in communicating and interacting with the student as well as giving the assignment to the student. The new pedagogy or method in teaching and learning should be adopted by all the university world widely

to make sure students are not left behind in this crisis. The opportunities and benefits of social media have become visible nowadays. Higher education needs ultimate transformer and common trend, and education systems around the world need to change and respond with an "emergency e-Learning protocol" to show the transition from face-to-face classes to online learning systems. The higher education institution must adopt new norms by adopting new or right technology and approaches to engage with the university student.

The previous studies show that social media usage will affect student life experience with F2Fcommunication. These scenarios show that social media is beneficial to the individual who is in long distance relationship but negatively affect the student in term of public speaking and presentation in front of other people. However, this scenario show totally changes when the world is faced with the pandemic Covid19 crisis. The higher education institution totally transforms their common learning trends into online learning systems. All universities have begun to use and improve their online learning system to engage with the student. However, there are several obstacles and barriers to making sure the online learning is successfully implemented, such as poor connectivity and accessibility. The Malaysia Government tried to provide various initiatives and solutions by introducing Jalinan Digital Nasional (JENDELA). JENDELA is the comprehensive digital infrastructure for the rural people who who could experience the excellent internet infrastructure, especially people in rural areas. This initiative surely will be beneficial to thousand or millions of people in Malaysia.

Based on the literature survey a list of Digital Social Media effects and their definition have been outlined as shown in Table 1. After addressing all the issues in the discussion, this study proposed the conceptual Model of Digital Social Media Effect towards Face-to-Face Communication as shown in Figure 1.

Table 1: List of Digital Social Media effects and the definition

Researchers	Effect of Digital Social Media	Definition
Baruh (2012); Papademetriou, Christos, et al. (2022).	Social Media Technology	Social media technology is defined as "web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new user-generated or existing content, in digital environments through multi-way communication" (Woodmen, 2017)
Sathya & Indradevi, (2017); Bal, E., & Bicen, H. (2017).	Social Media Usage	Social media usage is defined as internet-based applications that allow user-generated content to be produced and shared (Anwar et al., 2022).
Shoaib & Nandi (2018); Landrum, B. (2020).	Self-Confidence	Self-confidence is defined as "courage"; however, the concept of self-confidence also includes the firm belief in one's own abilities. It is a concept with a physical side as well as a state of mind (Merey, 2010)..
Dutta, 2020; Akhyar, Yundri, et al (2021).	Digital Literacy Skills	According to the American Library Association "Digital literacy skills is the ability to use information and communication Technologies to find evaluate, create and communicate information requiring both cognitive and technical skills."

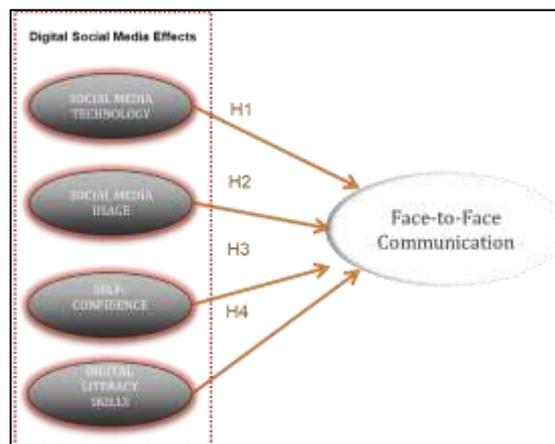


Fig 1: Proposed Model of Digital Social Media Effect towards Face to Face Communication

There are also 4 hypotheses have been proposed this study as stated below.

- H1: Social media technology in assisting online communication has a positive relationship with Face-to-Face Communication
- H2: Social media usage in assisting online communication has a positive relationship with Face-to-Face Communication
- H3: The individual self-confidence has a positive relationship with Face-to-Face Communication
- H4: Digital Literacy skill in gathering online information has a positive relationship with Face-to-Face Communication

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the effect of social media usage on F2F communication during pandemic Covid19 is further discussed in this study. The overview of the current scenario of social media usage has been identified and explored by a previous scholar as well as various news websites in discovering the current scenario especially related to the online learning experience of the student. Based on the discussion,

social media show the positive and negative effects of F2Fcommunication among students in a higher education institutions. There are several cases showing that the students lose their confidence to speak during the presentation because they spend more time on social media. However, social media also play a positive role in making sure the student can interact with the lecturer or friends to stay connected. Thus, social media could become a tool to improve the F2Fcommunication among students in higher education institutions. The university student could improve their speech and ways of presentation by joining the online group on social media to gain more knowledge. Moreover, they also could interact with their friend by using live video to improve their communication with the audience. The lecturer in higher education institutions could organize some programs to make sure university student can improve their communication in the future. This skill is important to prepare them for their future.

Acknowledgments

This article is financially supported by Faculty of Information Management, UiTM Selangor, Malaysia

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