

Nurturing Communication through Social Online Platforms

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Received: 20 Dec 2021; Received in revised form: 20 Jan 2022; Accepted: 03 Feb 2022

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Abstract— Akram and Kumar (2018) maintained that “Children are growing up surrounded by mobile devices and interactive social networking sites such as Twitter, MySpace, and Facebook, Orkut which has made the social media a vital aspect of their life. Social network is transforming the behavior in which youthful people relate with their parents, peers, as well as how they make use of technology.” This study aimed to find out the advantages and disadvantages of social online platforms from the students’ perspectives at Quds university. The researcher distributed a questionnaire as tool of research which consists of 20 items. Moreover, the study used also a qualitative tool: two interviews with two students. The sample was 60 students of the first and second year level. The researcher concluded that there are radical positive and negative effects of social platforms on students. However, these platforms have more positive effects especially during the Covid-19 crisis. The researcher recommended raising awareness of the pros and cons of social platforms among future generations. Alternatively, the researcher recommends that a combination of face to face and social platforms will have more efficacy in language teaching and learning.

Keywords—social platforms, effects, communication, pros, cons.

I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Martin (2008) & Lusk (2010) noted that the social media is the use of Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn for the purpose of communication, sharing photos as well as videos. While Faudree (2009) discussed the advantages of the social media especially the facebook. Dube (2016) indicates the prolonged and excessive use of social media presents dangers i.e. suffering from mental health issues. According to Malik & Rafiq (2016) the positive impact of social media is expanding friendship, information media, a place to develop skills, and opportunities to interact with people who have social anxiety. Damota (2019) indicated that social media has both positive and negative consequences. Some of the positive outcomes are socialization and communication; enhancement of learning opportunities and accessing health related information. However, he maintained that depression, anxiety, bullying, terrorism, and criminal activities on societies are some of the negative sides of social media. Drakel et al. (2018) show that students are more focused on social media when they are in the teaching and learning process, and when they are outside the classroom, there is almost no communication between students. This phenomenon shows that students have unconsciously faced social media's swift influence that can

hinder social interaction. Abu-Baha (2017) studied the effect of using virtual classes on enhancing the reading comprehension and found that virtual classes enhanced most reading comprehension strategies. Siddiqui and Singh (2016) concluded that “the social media has various merits but it also has some drawbacks which affect people negatively. False information can lead the education system to failure, in an organization wrong advertisement will affect the productivity, social media can abuse the society by invading on people’s privacy, some useless blogs can influence youth that can become violent and can take some inappropriate actions. Use of social media is beneficial but should be used in a limited way without getting addicted. concluded that virtual classes are very effective in developing the reading comprehension strategies”. According to Oche & Aminu (2010), it is eminent that students are very divided in social media. Even in the classroom and lecture theaters, it has been observed that some students are always busy in chatting and communicating during lectures which hinders the learning teaching processes. Abbas and Wang (2021) concluded that the media platforms assist in adopting virtual learning and teaching models to continue providing education in the interim of the COVID-19 pandemic. They added that, globally, most countries have imposed

restrictions on physical interaction and face-to face education at all levels of education to minimize the infection transmission risk of the COVID-19. Educational institutions have turned almost overnight to online teaching, learning, and virtual education to facilitate their student communities. It helps reduce stress and provide relief to students. Alsaif (2016) concluded that 52% students think that social media is helpful in keeping in touch with friends; 28.5% of the students agree that social media helps in socializing; 14.28% students think that learning technology becomes easier with social media usage. 4.7% students think there is no advantage of using social media. However, the results has also shown that 38% of the students agree on social media proving to have negative effects on their studies by any means. 7.4 % of the students strongly agreed. But 35.7% of the students disagreed.

As covid-19 is still hitting different places and affecting all educational institutions around the world, the importance of this study stems in finding out the efficacy of online platforms in enhancing the communication skills among students. The objective of the study is to find out the effect of the social platforms that the students are profoundly involved in and its effect on their communication skills, and to identify the pros and cons of the use of social media compared to face to face learning according to the demographic variables such as gender and study level.

II. METHODOLOGY

There are two major Null hypotheses for the study objectives:

H₀₁: There are no statistically significance differences in the respondents' answers towards the effect of social platforms on nurturing the students' communication attributed to gender.

H₀₂: There are no statistically significance differences in the respondents' answers towards the effect of social platforms on nurturing the students' communication attributed to study level.

This study was conducted at Quds University through which (60) first and second-year level students (30 males and 30 females) took part and were selected purposefully. The researcher used a quantitative tool: a questionnaire which contained (20) items analyzed according to SPSS. The questionnaire of this study was validated and its internal consistency reaches to 85%. The study conducted an F- test to establish the significance of the independent variable (online platforms) on the dependent variable (nurturing communication). The significance of variables

was observed at 95% confidence level whereby, variables with a 'p' value of 0.05 or less were deemed significant while those with 'p' value of 0.05 or above were deemed insignificant.

50% of the respondents were males and 50% were females. The findings represent the views of the two sex groups about the effect of social platforms on nurturing the students' communication attributed to gender. This was necessary for the study to get a balanced picture of the respondents' views.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A One Way ANOVA was calculated. Table 1 answers the first hypothesis.

Table 1: ANOVA- Gender

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.311	30	0.166	1.101	0.518
Residual	1.489	30	0.165		
Total	4.800	60			

As illustrated in Table 1, the significance value $\alpha = 0.518 > 0.05$, thus the Gender is statistically NOT significance. Also the F critical at 5% level of significance was 1.101. Since F calculated = 1.101 which is less than the F critical (value = 2.701), this shows that the Gender is also NOT significant in finding out the effect of social online platforms on nurturing the students' communication. In other words, by checking α for the gender, it shows that $\alpha = 0.518 > 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore, gender has nothing to do with the effect of social platforms on nurturing the students' communication. According to the questionnaire items, the most advantages of social media platforms on communication is that: "Social media connect people from anywhere to anyone". This item is highly ranked to reach 95% for both males and females. However, the lowest ranking (70%) was for the item, "Social media effects on emotional and family connection"

A One-Way ANOVA was also calculated. Table 2 answers the second hypothesis.

Table 2: ANOVA- level

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	21.283	30	1.064	0.930	0.561
Residual	10.184	30	1.132		
Total	31.467	60			

As illustrated in Table 2, the significance value $\alpha = 0.561 > 0.05$, thus the level of students is statistically NOT significant. Also the F critical at 5% level of significance was 0.940. Since F calculated = 0.930 which is less than the F critical (value = 2.701), this shows that the students' level is NOT significant. In other words, by checking α for the level, it shows that $\alpha = 0.561 > 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore, level has nothing to do with the effect of social platforms on nurturing the students' communication. On the other hand, the most ranking (92%) of the First and Second year students is "Social media decreases face-to-face communication skills". While the least ranking (50%) is that "Social media can create anxiety and depression". This (50%) also applies on the item: "Social media reduces family relations".

The results of the interviews showed that there are many positive effects of media platforms on nurturing the communication among students. According to the two interviewees: 1. Social media can connect people from anywhere to anyone. 2. Social media have a lot of advantages in varying the teaching methods and learning styles. 3. Through social media, one can share issues with community to get help and guidance. 4. Through social media one can promote communications and life skills to the largest audience. 5. Social media can be used to develop speaking, reading, listening and writing skills. 6. Social media can help reduce loneliness for those socially isolated. 7. Social media create sympathy among people's lives. 8. Social media help build the community of own culture, religion and beliefs to discuss, learn and exchange with others. These results are in harmony with Damota (2019), Drakel et al. (2018), Siddiqui and Singh (2016) and Abu-Baha (2017).

On the other hand, the results of the interviews showed that there are many negative effects of media platforms on nurturing the communication among students. According to the two interviewees: 1. Social media can disturb personal lives. 2. Social media can have negative impact on the health such as gaining weight. 4. Social media can easily ruin someone's reputation. 5. Social media can be a platform to miscommunicate with unknown strangers with bad habits. 6. Social media can access to people's personal matters. 7. Social media can create anxiety and depression. 8. Social media effects emotional connection with the family. 9. Social media decreases face- to - face communication skills. 10. Social media reduces family relations and reduces free time of caring for children and studies. These results are in harmony with (Oche & Aminu, 2010) and Dube (2016).

IV. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Social platform technologies allow students to share thoughts, cultures, beliefs with other people. With the use of social media, students can easily communicate or share information quickly with each other through various social networking sites like Facebook, Orkut, and Instagram, etc. The students can develop life skills and all language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. During Covid-19 pandemic, online platforms have been used profoundly during the worldwide blockade. The communication has increased virtually in contrast to the decrease in face-to-face interaction. This study has many implications to discuss. First, the students' opinions- whether males or females- were balanced and there were no differences on a significant level about the effect of media platforms on nurturing communications. This reflects that both males and females have similar thinking about media platforms. Both males and females trust that online platforms can connect people whenever and wherever. This implies that the world has become a small village and the world has now become an open space for people of different cultures, origins, ethnicities, religions and languages.

The interviews have highlighted the merits of social platforms in enhancing and fostering the language skills and the social life. It was clear that the platforms can hinder the family relations and connections, but still the knowledge of the world became attainable for students upon the access and being open to the world. The platforms can foster communication among students even in the partnership during games. These platforms also foster the connections with lecturers and the material become more accessible when shared by the lecturers. During the lecture, there is no guarantee that all students are following the lecture properly, however, some quizzing and drilling techniques at the end of the lecture can help put the students on the track. Moreover, in the breakout rooms, some sort of communication can be initiated between students or lecturers. These platforms allow foreign students to be included in the discussions and communication. The platforms can mostly develop the listening skills, then the speaking skills, therefore, receptive and productive skills are being integrated for better communication.

The social networking and platform technologies are all about setting the developments that run around the globe. Students can outfit their plans of what is expected out of them in the forthcoming days and years by observing the changes that are being rationalized, shared, conversed or articulated about on the social platforms. Students habitually do not get the right platform to share their

feelings. However, through social platforms, they will be given a choice to reflect their thoughts. When learners were allowed to share what they think and feel, it becomes easy for them to decide what is good or bad since they will have feedback by different observers. An important part of grown-up learners is socializing and making friends. This allows the students to exchange ideas and learn new things which will invariably effect in becoming more confident in life skills.

On the other hand, online platforms might lead in the reduction in real human contact. The more excess time the students spend on these online platforms, the less time they will go through connecting face to face with other colleagues which will ultimately decreases their interpersonal abilities. This will also affect the capacity to convey and socialize adequately face to face with others. To Akram and Kumar (2018), the businesses are getting more and more unsatisfied with the relational abilities of the new alumni because of this reason. The convincing relational abilities are critical to achievement in reality.

V. Conclusion

Social media has been evolving since quite a long time to become an important drive for gaining and spreading information in different domains, such as education, business, entertainment, math, space, science, crisis management, and politics. Social media has diverse merits, yet it also has few disadvantages which influence persons perversely. Communication on social platforms is highly efficient as this will allow students to know and discover the world surrounding them. Even though communication takes place in a virtual environment, the learners are more confident in expressing their opinions away from face to face eyes chasing them. The chance of succeeding on social platforms is the same for everyone. However, managing socialization requires quite a lot of time, planning, precise strategy, huge effort, and ingenious ideas.

So far, this study has concluded that there are no statistically significance differences in the respondents' answers towards the effect of social platforms on nurturing the students' communication attributed to gender or study level. The results have highlighted the merits of social platforms in nurturing the language skills and the social life. The online platforms can hinder the family relations and connections, but still, the knowledge of the world became more achievable upon the access to the open space of the online platforms. The study recommends more monitoring over online platforms by stakeholders. A longitudinal study on the effect of online platforms on

communication might formulate a clear image for future considerations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An acknowledgement should be presented to all who eased this study and put it in the right track. Thanks to the patience of my wife: Sana and children: Rawan, Salam, Asma and Ahmad.

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