

# Investigating the Impact of Facebook on Students' Social Behavior: SLIATE as a case study

D. A. Akuratiya\*, D. N. R. Meddage

*Department of Accountancy, Department of Information Technology, ATI-Dehiwala, SLIATE, Sri Lanka*

*\*Corresponding author*

**Abstract:** Facebook, the world's largest social media site of today's world is the new trendsetter on interpersonal communication, interaction, and socializing. It has changed the face of social relationships and has taken the socio-cultural settings into a new phase. This study investigates the impact of Facebook on students' academic, social behavior, privacy, and physical health. A sample of 223 questionnaires was collected from participants of 20-24 years of age. The findings emphasized that Facebook is used for recreation and relaxation, remaining updated about trends, and for socializing. Besides, there is no significant adverse impact on students' academic, social interactions, and physical health. Also, the study indicates that students are aware of how to safeguard their privacy and security virtually, which is a good sign.

**Key words:** Facebook, Academic, Social Behavior, Privacy and Physical Health

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become the latest in the series of technological breakthrough in interpersonal communication and dissemination of information. Social media is all about communication and interaction. Starting from cave paintings, people have always used communication to form a relationship with others to fulfill their social needs (Kaya & Bicen, 2016). The popular social media sites like Facebook, twitter, myspace, etc. had revolutionized the way we communicate, interact, and socialize.

According to Al-Sharqi et al. (2015), social media has become universal, impacting the social and cultural fabric of the society and changing the nature of social relationships. Also, Leea et al. (2015) say, this new approach consuming and creating information in a particular way attractive to youth as a platform and space for activities not possible in the face-to-face context (p.84). The face of social media has changed rapidly from the first social media site classmates.com (founded in 1995) to today's most popular social media site Facebook. With the easy access to the internet, computers, portable devices, and wi-fi Facebook has become an integral part of the social life of people of all ages and professions. Facebook users are allowed to set up and maintain virtual personal 'profile' page for the purpose of connecting, interacting and sharing personal views and connect with other individuals, groups and communities (Akubugwo & Burke, 2013; Jha et al., 2016). Facebook was the first social media site to surpass the one billion users and currently has almost 2.5 billion monthly active users globally (Statista.com, 2020).

Today's young generation, especially, teens and youth are high digital natives and they are using technology in innovative ways. It is believed that excessive use of social media sites like Facebook have changed the social behavior of this generation such as the way they think, work, and communicate even they are in formative years of their life. According to previous researchers, students use social media platforms to interact with peers, share information, reformulate their personalities, and showcase their social life. Facebook which was introduced in 2006 for the general public has drawn a large number of users especially students. Recent research studies confirm that 80 to 90 percent of the university students are actively involved with a particular social media site (Akubugwo & Burke, 2013). Facebook is a very important aspect in students' social life and can be useful for their academic pursuits (Abdulahi et al., 2014; Jha et al., 2016). Several studies portrayed social media interaction could have positive and negative impacts on students in short and long terms. Some studies elaborated that Facebook enables flexibility in learning, inspire new ideas, and increase interpersonal relationships. Also, Facebook use is reported to have negative influences like addiction, wasting time, misuse, dependence, information overload, and isolation from physical society. But unfortunately, students are unaware of these negative effects (Jha et al., 2016).

Use of Facebook is on the rise in Sri Lanka, with the increased easy accessibility and availability of the internet and related devices. On average, there were 6.6 million Facebook users in Sri Lanka by the end of March 2020, which counted for 31.5 percent of its entire population and out of which 27.4 percent of users were under the age category of 18 - 24 (Napoleoncat.com). With the growing popularity of social media more research has been focused on how students feel and the use social media sites like Facebook and the impact on social behavior is in essential place to start the investigation. This study focuses on how Facebook impact SLIATE students' social behavior and this will contribute to enriching the prevailing empirical knowledge in Sri Lanka.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

From the day manhood started, communication played a vital role. Through communication people can form relationships with each other where it was identified as 'social belonging' by Abraham Maslow (Dessler, 2008). According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), "... the need to belonging is a

powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation” (Kaya & Bicen, 2016, p.375). Literature reveals that the communication evolves with the development of social media, which started with the cave painting and gradually advanced with printing media (books, newspapers), traditional media (telephone, film, radio, television), and extended to digital media including computers, internet and smartphone (Lee et al., 2015). Through social media modern human being can satisfy their need for belonging and it is one of the reasons behind social media phenomenon.

Based on the existing literature, Facebook use is primarily motivated by two basic social needs where one is the need to belong, and the second one is the need for self-presentation. The need to belong refers to the intrinsic drive to affiliate with others and gain social acceptance and the need for self-presentation to the continuous process of impression management. These two motivational factors can co-exist, but can also each be the single cause for Facebook use.

Social media is defined as web-based activities which give access to individuals to build unrestricted or semi-public profiles in a confined system, locate and connect to some other users, view and navigate the list of connections with the ones created by others inside the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007 as cited in Akubugwo & Burke, 2013, p.39). According to Aimeur et al. (2010), profile means the recording and organization of behaviors (as cited in Akubugwo & Burke, 2013, p.39). Normally user’s profile includes information like user’s name, age, gender, locality, pictures, hobbies, etc. Through social media platforms individuals with the same interests form groups to accommodate social interactions.

In a survey conducted by Al-Sharqui et al. (2015), found that students use social media to learn peoples’ different thinking styles, to connect and communicate with others, to improve open mind and alleviate feeling of routineness and boredom, to respect the opinions of others and emphasized freedom of expression. Negative impacts on students were physical inactivity, exposure to negative ideas and bad company, unproductive and distraction, introversion, and mental dullness.

Kaya and Bicen (2016) examine the effect of Facebook on students’ behaviors and highlight that students use Facebook for communication, entertainment and sharing news, pictures, and songs. Further study also indicates students were aware of protecting their social identity and to respect privacy. Weng et al. (2011) also mentioned that students use social media for many purposes like access to information, group discussion, resource sharing, and entertainment. Further reported most students spent a vast number of hours in social media sites where 90% of students spent their time on entertainment. While 80% admitted they posted or responded while completing homework. Navied et al. (2017), observed the impact of Facebook on Pakistani teenagers’ social behavior and concluded no unhealthy effect on relationships between family and friends. Furthermore, they mentioned there were

no negative personality traits were being introduced such as narcissism or jealousy.

Jha et al. (2016) revealed the main reason for using Facebook by students was to keep in touch with family and friends. Also stated excessive use of Facebook may increase the risk of addictive behavior and may result in less time spent on academic activities. Madge et al. (2009) also reported students especially join Facebook to make new friends at university, as well as to stay in touch with family and friends at home (as cited in Al-Sharqui et al., 2015). Also, they mentioned students thought Facebook was used most importantly for social reasons.

Another study done by Akubugwo & Burke (2013) revealed that many students use social media especially Facebook and they spend an increasing amount of quality time on these networks. Also, disclosed that spending more time daily on social media can lead to or inspire improper behavior which may lead to riot, gossips, terrorism, disorder behavior, and immoral acts. Abdulahi et al. (2014) also studied the negative effect of Facebook on Malaysian university students and stated as students spend more time on Facebook may deteriorate academic performance and can have health threats, privacy, and security issues.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was carried to gather primary data via a selected sample from Higher National Diploma students from various academic disciplines of SLIATE. Under a convenient sampling method, a self-administrated questionnaire was distributed among 256 participants. After excluding 21 incomplete questionnaires and 12 participants who did not have Facebook account 223 questionnaires were used for the study. A pre-study questionnaire was given to 25 students who were not included in the study.

The questionnaire included two different sections where the first section included demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and field of specialization. The second section contains eighteen questions from which the first three regarding overall utilization, reason, and impact of Facebook. The rest of the questions were regarding the academic, social behavior, privacy, and physical health of Facebook users.

All the data was entered and analyzed through the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS version 20). The descriptive statistics analysis of data was performed to determine the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage. Reliability and validity were calculated by Cronbach’s alpha value, which was 0.8.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From overall participants, 139 participants were female (62.3%) and 84 were male (37.7%). All were under the same age group of 20 – 24 years. The majority of participants (33.2%) were studying Information Technology followed by Business Administration (29.6%) Accountancy (21.5%) and

Business Finance (15.7%) (Fig 1). Same as the previous studies, findings of the study indicate the widespread use of Facebook among the higher national diploma students (95%) of SLIATE. Kaya and Bicen (2016) argue that high Facebook use might be due to the participants' lifestyle.

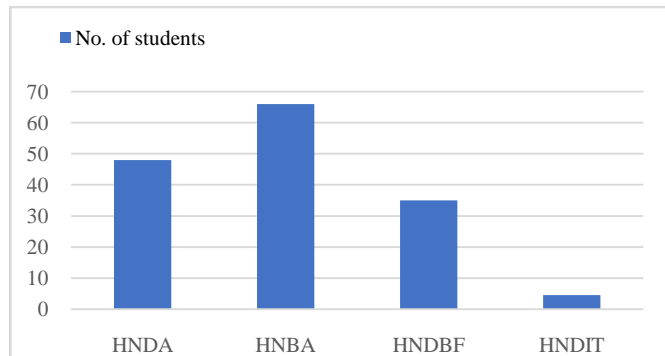


Figure 1 Number of participants based on the course (N=223)

#### 4.1 Students' Overall Utilization of Facebook

The majority of the participants (39.5%) admitted using Facebook for 1 to 5 years following 26% of students using it for the last 6 months to 1 year and 18.8% of students using it for more than 5 years. Less number of students (15.7%) started using Facebook in the last 6 months. Results show that the majority of students access Facebook on a daily basis. On average most of the students spend their time around 1 to 2 hours daily on Facebook and few numbers of students spend their time on Facebook more than 8 hours daily (Fig 2) which is in comparison with the previous studies conducted (Jha et al., 2016; Khurana, 2015). Further Akubugwo and Burke (2013) emphasized that constant involvement in social media can make the students dependent on social media and may cause frustration among students. Also, previous studies indicated excessive use of social media, compromises actual live social interaction and academic activities and young adults have a high tendency to develop addictive behavior with Facebook use (Jha et al., 2016).

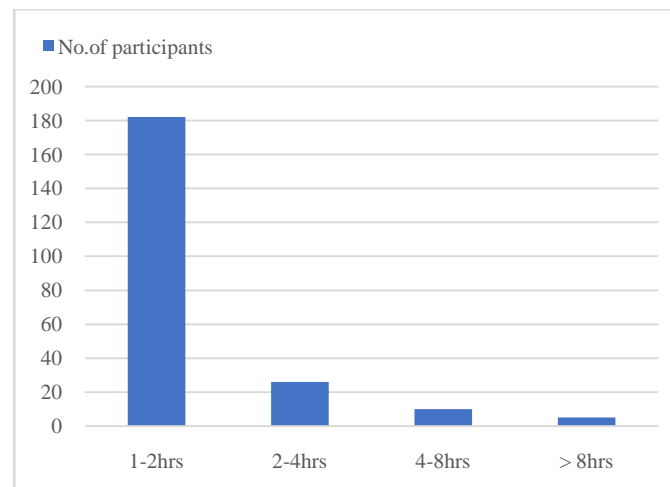


Figure 2 Use of Facebook on daily basis (N=223)

#### 4.2 Overall Reason of Using Facebook

When participants were asked about the reason for using Facebook, results indicated that the majority of students use it as a source of recreation and relaxation, remaining updated about trends, socializing and making new friends, collaborating with fellow friends and studies (Fig 3). Results were in-line with previous findings where Facebook is increasingly used especially by the students for communication, entertainment, to stay connected with older and new friends, and to update with new trends (Akubugwo & Burke, 2013; Al-Sharqi et al., 2015; Navied et al., 2017). In addition, Kaya and Bicen (2016) said students frequently share content to display that they are following the recent styles and trends and act accordingly.

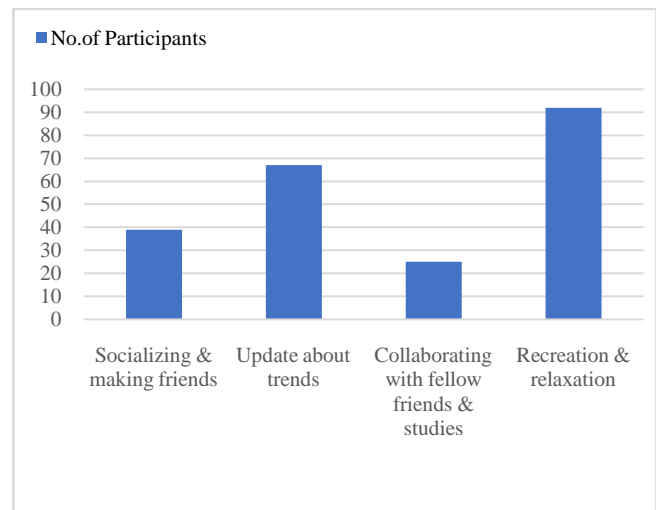


Figure 3 Overall reason of using Facebook (N=223)

#### 4.3 Overall Impact of Facebook on Studies and life

Another objective of this research is to find out the overall impact of Facebook on students. Overall results show that majority of the students believe Facebook is helpful in their studies by any means while few students disbelieved Facebook as an academic source. As visualization is effective for education, participants may prefer to use Facebook as a supportive learning method. Kaya and Bicen (2016) argued that using channels that students prefer will be effective to support their education. Facebook has to be effective in obtaining and disseminating information regarding academic purposes quickly (Jha et al., 2016). While 68.6% of the students think Facebook has negative effects on their studies which is similar to the findings of Jha et al. (2016).

Out of all 92.8% of the students perceived Facebook has positive effects on their life and 66.8% believed Facebook negatively affect their life (Table 1). Previous studies clearly indicated that excessive use of social media like Facebook can compromise real-world social interaction and academic activities. Further, researchers had investigated the impact of Facebook on students' academic, social behavior, privacy, and physical health. Finding were in comparison with the previous

literature where students admitted Facebook had both positive and negative effects on their studies and life.

Table 1 Impact of Facebook on studies and life

Statement (N = 223)	(f)	%
Do you think using Facebook helps you in your studies by any means?		
Yes	204	91.5
No	19	8.5
Do you think using Facebook is posing negative effects on your studies by any means?		
Yes	153	68.6
No	70	31.4
Do you think usage of Facebook has any positive effects on your life?		
Yes	207	92.8
No	16	7.2
Do you think usage of Facebook has any negative effects on your life?		
Yes	149	66.8
No	74	33.2

#### 4.4 Academic, Social Behavior, Privacy, and Physical Health

A majority of students use Facebook to share information (59.6%), 20.6% students think that learning technology becomes easier with Facebook usage, 9.9% of the students agree that social media helps in socializing, and 7.2% think that social media helpful in keeping in touch with friends. Only 2.7% of students think there is no advantage of using social media (Table 2). Findings are moderately in line with the past literature. However previous results regarding academic use of Facebook is contradictory. According to Hew (2011), Facebook has very little educational value and the participants mainly used it for connect with known people while other studies conducted by Raacke et al. (2008) and Gray et al. (2010) reported academic use to be higher (as cited in Jha et al., 2016).

Table 2 Academic, Social Behavior, and Privacy

Statement (N=223)	(f)	%
What is the worst disadvantage of using Facebook?		
Sharing information	133	59.6
Meeting new people can help you socialize	22	9.9
Learning technology becomes easier	46	20.6
Keeping in touch with friends is convenient	16	7.2
None	6	2.7
What is the worst disadvantage of using Facebook?		
Reduced focus on studies and affects academic performance	81	36.3
Lesser physical activity results in health problems	58	26
Decreases/destroys social skills (not an adequate replacement for face-to-face communication)	40	17.9
There is no concept of privacy	31	13.9

None	13	5.8
Do you evaluate the content you publish on Facebook?		
Yes	215	96.4
No	8	3.6
Are your parents aware of your Facebook activities?		
Yes, all of them	145	65
No, none of them	27	12.1
Some of them	51	22.9
Have you ever regretted any information that you shared/posted over Facebook?		
Yes	25	11.2
No	198	88.8
Do you think Facebook is essential for today's life?		
Yes	178	79.8
No	45	20.2

The results about the disadvantages of using Facebook were, 36.3% agreed that using social media reduces focus on studies and affects academic performance, 26% agreed that it effects health, 17.9% agreed that it destroys social skills, where findings are concurring with Jha et al. (2016) and Khurana (2015). It could be also associate with relationship problems, personal loneliness, depression and addictive behavior. In this study, 13.9% students agreed that there are privacy issues, while balance minority thinks they have no disadvantages of using Facebook. Majority of the students evaluate contents before publishing them on Facebook while few participants did not consider about what they are publishing (Table 2). These results ensure that the security and confidentiality problems are minimal among the participants. This result contradicts the findings of Abdulahi et al. (2014) and in comparison, with findings of Kaya and Bicen (2016). Where Abdulahi et al. (2014) said as the usage of Facebook increases, the amount of exposure to privacy and security issues also increased. It can be argued that participants in this research are aware about security issues.

When students were asked whether they think there is any privacy issue related to using social media, 81.2% agreed while 18.8% disagreed where the results are in congruent with previous studies (Abdulhai et al., 2014; A-Sharqi et al., 2015; Khurana, 2015; Navied et al., 2017). Question about whether they regretted any information that they shared/posted on social media or not, 11.2% admitted yes while 88.8% students admitted no. It could be argued that they have confidence on what they publish on Facebook. Participants might be consciously doing their public sharing to protect their privacy and to prevent from displaying bad behaviors.

When asked whether students' real social life has been affected with the usage of Facebook, 68.2% disagreed while 26% felt uncomfortable in face to face conversations sometimes following 5.8% of the students always felt uncomfortable in having face to face conversations are also

similar to the past results. This is inconsistent with the findings of Farooqi et al. (2013) and Gaudin (2015) where many students admitted that excessive Facebook use had ruined their social life, causing them to spend less time with their loved ones (as cited in Jha et al., 2016).

When students were asked about the whether the friends they make through social media are trustworthy or not, majority (52%) were uncertain about it while 42.6% disagreed. This shows that they do not pay much attention on level of trust and faith concerning virtual friendship. Students responded to the question whether their parents are aware of their social media activities or not, 65% of the students agreed while 12.1% do not share any of the activities with parents. Also, 22.9% students share some of the activities they do on social media with their parents. This could be due to the cultural impact on participants where parents and children have a good psychological bond among them. But it could be argued that they might have received complains from their parents regarding Facebook activities.

When students were asked about whether using some kind of social networking is essential for day' life or not, 80% students agreed and 20% disagreed. As they are digital natives they perceive being member in any social media site is important to their life. As instant communication is very important in their lives and sharing information has become easier through social media. Result is following past literature (Jha et al., 2016; Kaya & Bicen, 2016). 51.1% percent of students think that peer pressure plays no role in their joining of Facebook, while 36.8% think that peer pressure matters to some extent, 12.1% students think that peer pressure matters a lot. This depicts that participants are confidence enough to make their own decisions and cannot be easily misguided.

## V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

It can be concluded that Facebook is highly used among students and they use it as an alternative communication method for obtaining and disseminating information quickly among themselves. Moreover, students use this to stay updated with current trends. So, they can follow most popular trends and can act accordingly. They use Facebook mostly for recreational and relaxation activities. It was observed that excessive use of Facebook has positive and negative impact on the academics, social relations, privacy and health of the students in this study. It was not having any harmful impact on relationship between family and friends or academic activities. Even though Facebook can deteriorate students' concentration on education, there is a chance of promoting Facebook as a supportive learning method to motivate and inspire students more effectively. They did not demonstrate any significant negative behaviors such as security and privacy issues (cyber bullying) or unhealthy physical health problems (fatigue or addiction). They were observed to be more actively engaging in campus activities. With the collaboration of parents and institutional authority can

enhance awareness among students about adverse impacts of excessive use of Facebook.

This study can be further extended and examine effect of other social networks on students' social behavior. Further, researchers can carry out studies to look at how social media networks impact on students' academic performance and GPA.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abdulahi, A., Samadi, B., & Gharleghi, B. (2014). A study of the negative effects of social networking sites such as facebook among Asia Pacific University scholars in Malaysia. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 5(10), 133-145.
- [2] Akubugwo, I. & Burke, M. (2013). Influence of social media on social behaviour of post graduate students. A case study of Salford University, United Kingdom. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 3(6), 39-43.
- [3] Al-Sharqi, L., Hashim, K., & Kutbi, I. (2015). Perceptions of social media impact on students' social behavior: A comparison between Art and Science students. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 2(4), 122-131.
- [4] Al-Tarawneh, H. A. (2014). The influence of Social networks on students' performance. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Computing and Information Science*, 5(3), 200-205.
- [5] Bargh, J.A., & McKenna, K. Y. A. (2004). The internet and social life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 573-590.
- [6] Clement, J. (2020, April 24). Global social networks ranked by number of users 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users>.
- [7] Dessler, G. (2008). *Human Resource Management* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River.
- [8] Facebook users in Sri Lanka (2020). Retrieved from [napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-sri\\_lanka/2020/03](http://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-sri_lanka/2020/03).
- [9] Jha, R. K., Shah, D. K., Basnet, S., Paudul, K. R., Sah, A. K., & Adhikari, K. (2016). Facebook use and effects on the life of health science students in a private medical college of Nepal. *BMC Research Notes*, 9(378), 1-8. doi: 10.1186/s13104-016-2186-0
- [10] Junco, R., Merson, D., & Salter, D. W. (2010). The effect of gender, ethnicity, and income on college students' use of communication technologies. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 13(6), 619-627.
- [11] Kaya, T., & Bicen, H. (2016). The effects of social media on students' behaviors: Facebook as a case study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 59, 374-379.
- [12] Khurana, N. (2015). The impact of social networking sites on the youth. *Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism*, 5(12), 1-4. doi: 10-4172/2165-7912.1000285
- [13] Lee, L., Chen, D., Li, J., & Lin, T. (2015). Understanding new media literacy: the development of measuring instrument. *Computers & Education*, 85, 84-93.
- [14] Miah, M., Omar, A., & Golding, M. A. (2013). Effects of social networking on adolescent education. *Information Systems Education Journal*, 90-100. ISSN: 1546-679x
- [15] Navied, U., Rashid, N., & Sultan, Q. (2017). Implication of facebook usage on social behavior of teenagers in public and private institutes of Lahore. *Biomedica*, 33(1), 14-19.
- [16] Rithika, M., & Selvaraj, S. (2013). Impact of social media on student's academic performance. *International Journal of Logistics & Supply Chain Management Perspectives*, 4(2), 636-640.
- [17] Wang, Q., Chen, W.R., & Liang, Y. (2011). *The effect of social media on college students*. Johnson & Wales University. Retrieved from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents>