

## THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON COMMUNICATION BARRIERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (CASE STUDY CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CIU)

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### ABSTRACT

Social media has transformed higher education communication between students, professors, and institutions. As this study shows, social media enhances and alleviates communication challenges in higher education. This study examines effect of social media on communication barriers in higher education.

The study employed quantitative approach. Data was drawn from 136 academic faculty, administrators, and students in higher education institutions. Descriptive and correlation analysis was conducted. The result shows that frequency of using social media for academic purposes correlated positively with privacy and security, information overload and language interpretation issues. Technical issue was observed to have an insignificant correlation with frequency of social media for academic purposes. It's crucial to consider the complex interplay of factors that lead to challenges across various contexts, including professional and educational settings. Institution should strive to Achieve effective communication modalities within educational environments which requires not just an awareness of the diverse obstacles but also a commitment to developing strategies that promote clear, inclusive, and empathetic interactions.

**Key words:** social media, Communication, Higher Education. awareness

### INTRODUCTION

Higher education has recently experienced a significant shift, principally driven by the extensive integration of social media platforms. The dramatic movement described here goes beyond the conventional boundaries of academia, fundamentally altering the nature of communication among students, teachers, and educational institutions. The teaching and learning process is effective when communication is passed from the teacher to the students who understand the message fully (Harran,2014).

### MEDIA

Media refers to a vehicle or means of message delivery system to carry and message to a target audience. Media such as TV, Radio, Print, Out-of-Home, and Internet are instruments to convey the advertising message to the public (Pantograph Support, 2020). The use of media as channels of communication has been in existence since the stone age when rocks, stones and other objects were used to send messages from the source to the receivers (Adegbija, 2012). Teacher education programs recognize the importance of preparing future teachers to be skilled in digital and media literacy. media is defined as "all means of communication, whatever its format." In this sense, media include symbol systems as diverse as print, graphics, animation, audio, and motion pictures. Technology is defined as "any object or process of human origin that can be used to convey media." In this sense, technology includes phenomena as diverse as books, films, television, and the Internet. With respect to education, media are the symbol systems that teachers and students use to represent knowledge; technologies are the tools that allow them to share their knowledge representations with others. Unfortunately, it is common to confound the meanings of media and technology in education, and they are often used synonymously (Reeves,1998).

### SOCIAL MEDIA

As computer scientists are quick to point out, most of the apparently new characteristics of social media existed long before the advent of Facebook. Since the early 1970s, internet applications have allowed users to exchange messages with each other, maintain personal profiles, curate lists of 'friends' and write blog-like journal entries. It is therefore important to remember from the outset that 'the web has always been social (Halpin & Tuffield, 2010). As online tools and technologies have developed, social media has become regarded as a key tool for supporting applied learning activities. Social media technologies provide tutors with the means to engage learners with valuable time-on task learning (Purvis, 2016). As such, the most immediate significance of social media for higher education is the apparently changing nature of the students who are entering university. In a practical sense, the highly connected, collective, and creative qualities of social media applications are seen to reflect (and to some extent drive) more flexible, fluid and

accelerated ways of being. Social media are therefore associated with an increased tendency for young people to multitask, to rely on a 'digital juggling' of daily activities and commitments (Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011).

### **COMMUNICATION**

Since the Millennial generation is the newest set of individuals to enter the workforce, this specific group will be looked upon as a possible reason communication in higher education is lacking now, with solutions given that may help to resolve this issue (Howard, 2014). Communication is the actionable transfer of information from one person, group, or place to another by writing, speaking, or using a medium that provides a means of understanding. Every communication consists of a minimum of one sender, a receiver, and a message. The transmission of a message from sender to recipient risks being affected by many things because communication impacts how people interact. These include the location, medium used to communicate, the cultural situation, and the emotions involved. However, communication helps people to interact and share various aspects of life (Ntara, 2023). The general view of communication is that it is an interaction within a social context. Communication usually involves a sender (source) and a receiver. It involves the interlocutors' exchanging signals. These signals could be verbal or graphic, it could be gestural or visual photographic (Fatimayin, 2018).

### **BARRIER**

It's crucial to consider the complex interplay of factors that lead to challenges across various contexts, including professional and educational settings. Beyond linguistic, psychological, emotional, physical, and cultural barriers, advancements in technology and social media have introduced new opportunities and challenges for communication. The digital divide, information overload, and nuances in online engagement styles can complicate communication processes further. In educational settings like distance learning, an institution's maturity and capability in utilizing digital platforms are critical in overcoming these barriers. Achieving effective communication in these environments requires not just an awareness of the diverse obstacles but also a commitment to developing strategies that promote clear, inclusive, and empathetic interactions. This involves enhancing digital literacy, fostering a culture of active listening and feedback, and creating environments that support diverse communication needs and styles.

Barriers almost inevitably develop when two people attempt to join together in the pursuit of common objectives. Because no two individuals are identical in terms of background, experience, mood, and expectations, the process of coming to know one another involves a series of potential roadblocks as differences are identified and worked through (Quill, 1995). The process of communication has multiple barriers. The intended communicate will often be disturbed and distorted leading to a condition of misunderstanding and failure of communication. The Barriers to effective communication could be of many types like linguistic, psychological, emotional, physical, and cultural etc (Toppr, n.d). Several barriers retard effective communication. These can be divided into four categories: process barriers, physical barriers, semantic barriers, and psychosocial barriers. To improve the effectiveness of communications, schools must develop an awareness of the importance of sender's and receiver's responsibilities and adhere to active listening skills (Lunenburg, 2010). This is true of distance education, and it is especially true when the individual's organization is at a low stage of maturity or capabilities regarding distance education (Berge, 2007)

### **COMMUNICATION BARRIER**

The elements that make interpersonal communication unsuccessful are referred to as communication obstacles. Understanding the elements that promote successful communication is crucial to comprehending these hurdles fully. Effective communication occurs when the recipient receives the sender's intended message exactly. Strong listening abilities are necessary for both the sender and the recipient to engage in effective communication. This is so because feedback is a communication component; hence, the roles are interchangeable.

Education-related communication barriers impact students, teachers, and institutions. They can be caused by various psychological, pedagogical, technological, social, cultural, emotional, temporal, and feedback-related problems. These barriers exacerbate the complex communication dynamics that exist in educational environments. Psychological barriers include things like disparate attitudes and perspectives. Pedagogical obstacles are a result of curriculum design and instructional strategies. Technical barriers to smooth communication arise from difficulties utilizing tools or technology. Power relations and cultural differences produce social obstacles. Cultural barriers can lead to miscommunication due to differences in cultural backgrounds. Temporal barriers are time problems that affect real-time communication, particularly in online learning. Emotional walls draw attention to the lack of emotional ties, essential in a few in-person encounters. The absence of prompt feedback is associated with feedback-related hurdles, which can impact the quality of communication. To create inclusive and productive learning environments, it is imperative to remove these obstacles. This calls for the development of clear, culturally aware, and technologically advanced communication tools in the classroom, particularly in the context of online and digital learning.

The literature is replete with discussion of the various barriers to distance education. These can be categorized several ways such as psychological, pedagogical, technical, social, cultural, and so forth. (Berge, 1998) Likewise, as increased communication allows for collaborative activities within the distance education course, more complex communication barriers come into existence, too (Berge, 2013). A communication barrier is anything that prevents us from receiving and understanding the messages others use to convey their information, ideas, and thoughts. (Rani, 2016). Difficulties communicating with others in online classes can happen because of time zone variations, the absence of a sense of emotional connection with each other, or the lack of the kind of real-time feedback that happens in an in-person classroom (Kim, Liu, & Bonk, 2005).

### **HIGHER EDUCATION**

According to the references, higher education, any of various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning and usually affording, at the end of a course of study, a named degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies. Higher-educational institutions include not only universities and colleges but also various professional schools that provide preparation in such fields as law, theology, medicine, business, music, and art. Higher education also includes teacher-training schools, junior colleges, and institutes of technology. The basic entrance requirement for most higher-educational institutions is the completion of secondary education, and the usual entrance age is about 18 years (Britannica, 2024). Higher education has now become a part of the wider globalization process. Due to globalization, the internationalization of higher education is regarded as one of the leading trends that determine the value foundations of the functioning of modern universities (Sharipov, 2020). Modern higher education is defined as an organized tertiary learning and training activities and institutions that include conventional universities such as arts, humanities, and science faculties and more specialized university institutions in agriculture, engineering, science, and technology. The concept of higher education also includes such post-secondary institutions like polytechnics, colleges of education, and “grandes écoles.” Under the umbrella of higher education come all forms of professional institutions. Even this wide spectrum does not exhaust the possibilities of forms of higher education (AssiéLumumba, 2007).

### **IMPORTANCE OF STUDY**

Considering current educational practices, this research is highly noteworthy. Considering the increasing use of social media, it tackles the urgent need to comprehend the changing communication dynamics within academic institutions. It provides educators and institutions with a lens to view the evolving communication patterns between professors and students in the digital age, where social media platforms are integral to daily interactions. Comprehending this is essential to modify instructional strategies, student engagement tactics, and general educational procedures to conform to the tastes and actions influenced by social media.

The study explores social media's opportunities and problems in higher education. It tackles possible obstacles, including information overload and privacy concerns, allowing instructors to take these challenges head-on. The research also identifies positive effects, including dismantling conventional barriers and encouraging international collaboration, which enable educators to use social media to provide students with richer educational experiences. Assessing how social media affects student-teacher interactions includes information about upholding moral principles and academic integrity in an online learning environment. The study's overall importance rests in providing a comprehensive understanding of how social media affects communication dynamics in higher education, enabling institutions and teachers to meet obstacles and seize possibilities in the digital era of learning.

### **RESEARCH GOAL**

An in-depth investigation of the dynamic interaction between social media usage and communication dynamics within higher education is the main study objective of the paper "The Effect of Social Media on Communication Barriers in Higher Education." With a focus on traditional forms of communication between students, teachers, and academic institutions, this research aims to clarify the complex effects of social media. Considering the increasing integration of social media, the study attempts to identify and classify potential communication hurdles.

The quality in communication and its effects on people's lives can be improved once clarified its meaning and the meaning of education which is the major concept on which a structured society is based. Communication is a process that includes linear, interactive, and transactional views from different perspectives barriers (Işman, 2004).

The research's ultimate objective is to recognize and comprehend the communication difficulties brought on by social media and offer insightful analysis and helpful suggestions.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This study's problem statement is based on how higher education is changing and how social media is becoming increasingly common. While using social media in academic settings has many advantages—such as improved

connectivity and opportunities for collaboration—it has also raised some possible issues that should be carefully considered. A thorough grasp of the complex effects of social media on communication dynamics in higher education is lacking in the body of current knowledge in higher education, communication barriers can be broadly classified based on issues that affect students, faculty, and institutions. This is especially true in light of the rise in social media usage.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

To comprehend how social media affects communication dynamics in higher education, the theoretical framework for this study incorporates elements of both communication accommodation theory and social presence theory.

The Social Presence Theory, first put forth by Short, Williams, and Christie in 1976, asserts that the level of social presence in a mediated setting affects the effectiveness of communication. Short et al. (1976) devised social presence theory to understand interpersonal communication and relationship building in a business setting when using telecommunication media and how this affects the social influence communication partners may exert on each other. According to them, each telecommunication medium is characterized by the degree to which it can communicate verbal and nonverbal cues conveying socio-emotional information in such a way that the other persons involved in the communication are perceived as physical “real” and present. Accordingly, they defined social presence as the “degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships” (Kreijns,2022). Social presence is associated with the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools and electronic platforms for OGL in terms of the degree to which these CMC tools and electronic platforms can transfer the same face-to-face interpersonal communication, group learning, and group dynamics when learning and working together in an online setting. Social presence influences the way how the social interaction in OGL groups unfolds online, which, in turn, affects the learning outcomes (Zhao, 2014).

In Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) the focus is based on three types of adjustments, convergence, divergence and maintenance. (Gallois,2005). Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) provides a wide-ranging framework aimed at predicting and explaining many of the adjustments individuals make to create, maintain, or decrease social distance in interaction. It explores the different ways in which we accommodate our communication, our motivations for doing so, and the consequences. CAT addresses interpersonal communication issues, yet also links it with the larger context of the intergroup stakes of an encounter (Giles, 2007). The proposition by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) that social media platforms create a virtual presence aligns seamlessly with the exploration of global collaboration and intergenerational relationships in higher education. This theory serves as a foundation for understanding how social media transcends physical barriers, fostering a sense of presence in the digital realm (Short, 1976). This theory, when applied to the context of higher education, aids in understanding how the incorporation of social media may cause changes in the ways that institutions, teachers, and students communicate with one another. The study's examination of the advantages and disadvantages of social media use and its possible effects on face-to-face communication abilities is pertinent, given the theory's emphasis on convergence and divergence in communication behaviours.

The combination of CAT and Social Presence Theory offers a thorough framework for comprehending the intricate relationship between communication dynamics and social media in higher education. They cover social media's virtual presence and people's adaptable communication techniques in reaction to technological advancements. Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the integration of social media in higher education, resulting in extensive research aimed at identifying potential benefits and challenges. Several notable studies have examined the intricate relationship between academic communication dynamics and social media, contributing to a deeper understanding of this evolving landscape. Research by Muilenburg and Berge (2003) highlights organizational, technological, and expertise barriers in educational contexts. These findings are relevant to comprehending comparable barriers in higher education's usage of social media for communication. This link emphasizes the wider effects of obstacles to technology adoption at all educational levels. This research offers a fundamental understanding of the challenges faced in educational settings while implementing new technology, which makes it directly relevant to the current study. Insights into the possible difficulties and factors to be considered for higher education institutions utilizing social media as a strategy for overcoming communication barriers can be obtained by looking at the barriers found in the K–12 setting.

Berge's (2013) extensive research scrutinized education as a communication process, with a focal point on distance education. The study provided insights into the nuanced communication processes within both traditional in-person and remote teaching and learning settings, shedding light on the unique dynamics facilitated by technology. Providing a comparison of communication across traditional and remote learning environments, this study sheds light on the intricacies of communication in education, highlighting the revolutionary impact of technology on the dynamics of teaching and learning. Its understanding of the subtle communication facilitated by technology in remote learning offers a strong basis for comprehending how social media can affect communication barriers in higher education.

Bash (2009) explored the problematic aspects of intercultural communication within the internationalized higher education market. The research delved into the impact of globalization on knowledge dissemination, the compatibility of distinct national higher education cultures, and the potential for successful cross-cultural cooperation. Providing a comparison of communication across traditional and remote learning environments, this study sheds light on the intricacies of communication in education, highlighting the revolutionary impact of technology on the dynamics of teaching and learning. Its understanding of the subtle communication facilitated by technology in remote learning offers a strong basis for comprehending how social media can affect communication barriers in higher education. Rani (2016) investigated the intricacies of communication barriers, underscoring the fundamental concept that effective communication necessitates shared meaning. The study emphasized the critical role of shared understanding in overcoming communication challenges within an academic context. The necessity of effective communication through shared meaning and comprehension of the communication environment is emphasized in this essay. It lists and examines the five main obstacles that prevent effective message transmission: behavioral, cultural, linguistic, attitude, and environmental barriers. The essay emphasizes how disparities in beliefs, attitudes, and discrimination lead to breakdowns in workplace communication and emphasizes the significance of appreciating diversity for a more comprehensive understanding. Gikas & Grant (2013) Examine the effects of using mobile computers—smartphones and cellphones—in higher education. The study offers findings from student focus group interviews, focusing on students from three US institutions where teachers integrated these devices into courses for at least two semesters. Two main themes came to light: (a) the benefits of mobile computing devices for education, emphasizing the chances for social media and Web 2.0 tools to foster interaction, collaboration, content creation, and communication, and (b) the difficulties students encountered when using these devices to further their education. Their study, which focuses on the integration of cellphones and smartphones into coursework, demonstrates that these devices can enhance learning environments by fostering communication, teamwork, and content development through Web 2.0 and social media platforms. However, the report also underscores the challenges students face in using these gadgets for educational purposes. This study provides valuable insights into how social media can either alleviate or exacerbate communication obstacles in higher education environments.

## METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted in two phases. We refer to the first phase as the 'pilot study' and the second phase as the 'main study' in this instance. Testing and validating our research instruments and methodology was the objective of the pilot study conducted for our research titled "The Effect of Social Media on Communication Barriers in Higher Education: A Case Study of Cyprus International University (CIU).

To achieve this, students present in the university library were provided access to an online survey comprising 5 Likert-scale questions via a designated link. Subsequently, insights gained from this pilot study were instrumental in refining our survey questionnaire to better capture the nuances of social media's influence on facilitating or hindering communication between students and professors within a higher education context.

Hence, the following hypotheses were developed:

**H1:** Frequency of social media usage for educational purposes has a positive correlation with technical issues encountered by users.

**H2:** Frequency of social media usage for educational purposes has a positive correlation with information overload.

**H3:** Frequency of social media usage for educational purposes has a positive correlation with privacy and security.

**H4:** Frequency of social media usage for educational purposes has a positive correlation with language and interpretation issues.

## MEASUREMENT

The research measurement includes frequency of using social media for education purposes 13 items, technical issue 5 items, privacy, and security 4 items, language interpretation issues 5 items and information overload 3 items. The completion of the online questionnaire by the participants enabled the researchers to gather the data utilized in this study. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to 30 individuals for the pilot study and 137 individuals for the final study, comprising students and professors.

## ANALYSIS

SPSS was used to analyze the data. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is used to find the underlying structures in the data set and to find out how many factors are responsible for the characteristics related to social media use and communication barriers. This approach makes it possible to analyse the data in a more structured way and to identify the variables that are important for our study.

A questionnaire with 33 standard questions was used to gather data. The lowest level of agreement, or negative valuation, is represented by 1 in this instance, and the maximum level of agreement, or positive valuation, is represented by 5. By using the Likert scale, researchers can more accurately gauge participant attitudes, assessments, and reactions. They can then utilize this data for statistical analysis and gain a deeper comprehension of the topic being studied. In evaluating the internal consistency of our questionnaire, we employed Cronbach's alpha, a widely used measure of scale reliability. This statistic gauges the extent to which a set of items are inter-related and thus collectively measure an underlying construct (Cronbach, 1951). A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or above is traditionally deemed acceptable, indicating that the scale items have a reasonable level of consistency (Nunnally, 1978)

## RESULT

Information about gender, age and academic status, was obtained and reported. The male respondents were the majority, representing 69 (50.7%), while the female respondents represent 65 (47.8%), Not listed 2 (1.5%). Most of the respondents were within the age group of 18-25 67(49.3%), while 48 (35.3%) were within the age group 25–35, also, 17 (12.5%) were within 36–45, and 4 (2.9%) were above 45 years. As regards the Academic status of the respondents, the result indicates that the majority were students 95 (69.9%), graduates 30 (22.1%), professor 9 (6.6%), and University staff 2 (1.5%).

**Table 1:** Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	female	65	47.8
	Male	69	50.7
	Not listed	2	1.5
Age	18-25years	67	49.3
	26-35years	48	35.3
	36-45years	17	12.5
	More than 45	4	2.9
Academic status	student	95	69.9
	professor	9	6.6
	University staff	2	1.5
	graduate	30	22.1

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix. Frequency of using social media for education purposes variable has mean value 4.5158, Technical issues, 4.5368, and privacy and security 4.7040, Language and Interpretation issues 4.5515, and Information overload 4.4951 standard deviation .86797, .55868. .57991, .59752 and .53516 respectively.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Frequency of using social media for Education purposes	1.92	5.92	4.5158	.86797
Technical Issues	4.00	6.00	4.5368	.55868
Privacy and Security	4.00	6.00	4.7040	.57991
Language and Interpretation Issues	4.00	6.00	4.5515	.59752
Information Overload	4.00	6.00	4.4951	.53516

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to disclose the factorial structure of the research instrument. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with varimax rotation because the data was not normally distributed. The criterion for retaining the items was item-loading  $\geq 0.5$ . Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to investigate the factorial structure of the research instrument used in this thesis as adopted from previous literature. The result is contained in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Factor Loading

	Component	
FSME1	.538	
FSME2	.741	
FSME3	.695	
FSME4	.771	
FSME5	.692	
FSME6	.736	
FSME7	.805	
FSME8	.765	
FSME9	.753	
FSME10	.791	
FSME11	.723	
FSME12	.623	
FSME13	.567	
TI1		
TI2		.752
TI3		.843
TI4		.830
TI5		.732
PS1		.702
PS2		.863
PS3		.638
PS4		.548
LII1	.701	
LII2	.823	
LII3	.800	
LII4	.752	
LII5	.654	
IOL1		.716
IOL2		.538
IOL3		.588

**RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement of a phenomenon provides stable and consistent results. Hence its concerns repeatability. Cronbach’s alpha value is what is used to determine or justify the reliability test. Cronbach’s alpha is a measure of internal consistency that tells us how closely related a set of items are as a group. The general rule is that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above is good, 80 and above is better, and. 90 and above is best (Jacobs & Richardson, 2017). From the reliability test results, the Cronbach’s alpha ranges from .797 to .934 which shows that the data is reliable as shown in Table 4 below.

**Table 4:** Reliability

Variable	Item	Cronbach
Frequency of using social media for academic purposes	13	.934
Technical Issue	5	.870
Privacy and security	4	.797
Language Interpretation Issues	5	.901
Information Overload	3	.760

**CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

Correlation is a statistical tool for quantifying the link between two or more variables (Akoglu, 2018). It explains how variations in one variable impact variations in another. The measurement of correlation is frequently used to determine the strength and direction of a link between variables, showing if they are correlated in any way, or not at all associated (Schober et al., 2018).

The correlation coefficient, commonly denoted as "r," is a number that indicates the degree and direction of the association between two variables. The correlation coefficient lies within the -1 to +1 range (Coccia, 2020). A perfect positive correlation, when all the variables move in the same direction, has a correlation coefficient of +1. The other variable rises proportionally as the first one does. A perfect negative correlation, when the variables move in opposite directions, is shown by a correlation coefficient of -1. The other variable reduces correspondingly as the first one rises. There is no link between the variables, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0. A consistent link between changes in one variable and those in the other is absent. The correlations values are positively and significantly associated which indicates that the values are significant at  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed) except for variable technical issues. Frequency of using social media for Education purposes has a positive correlation with Privacy and security  $r = .174^*$ , Language and interpretation issues  $r = .349^{**}$  and Information overload with  $r = .231^{**}$ . However, the association between Frequency of using social media for Education purposes and technical issues was insignificant  $r = .167, p > 0.05$ . See Table 5.

**Table 5:** Correlations

		Social media for Education	Technical Issues	Privacy and Security	Language and Interpretation Issues	Information Overload
Social media for Education	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Technical Issue	Pearson Correlation	.167	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.052				
Privacy and Security	Pearson Correlation	.174*	.585**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.000			
Language Interpretation Issues	Pearson Correlation	.349**	.523**	.423**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
Information Overload	Pearson Correlation	.231**	.451**	.498**	.604**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	.000	.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

An analysis of which social media platforms are used for academic purposes across female was conducted and result indicates that Facebook observed to be the most used social media platform across gender. The result is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Which social media platforms do you regularly use for educational purposes?

	telegram	Facebook	WhatsApp	YouTube	Instagram	google meet	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Total
female	4	20	12	8	7	5	7	2	65
Male	3	20	15	7	7	8	7	2	69
Not listed	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	7	40	28	15	14	14	14	4	136

An analysis of social media features considered most effective in terms of academic communication was conducted. The result shows that discussion forums were observed to be the most effective social media features used across gender. See Table 7.



**Table 7:** For academic communication, which social media features do you find most effective?

	Groups/Communities	Polls and Surveys	Discussion Forums	Collaborative Editing	Messaging and Direct Communication	Integration with Research Tools	File Sharing	Notifications and Alerts	Total
female	3	4	30	15	5	5	2	1	65
Male	7	8	29	16	6	2	0	1	69
Not listed	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	10	13	60	31	11	7	2	2	136

An analysis of most effective mode of communication for academic discussion and collaboration was conducted. The result shows that face-face meeting was observed to be the most effective mode of communication across gender. See Table 8.

**Table 8:** In your opinion, what is the most effective mode of communication for academic discussions and collaborations?

	Face-to-face meetings	Online collaboration tools (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams)	Email communication	Video conferencing (e.g., Zoom, Skype)	Messaging and Direct Communication	Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	Total
female	48	4	1	3	6	3	65
Male	47	8	4	2	2	6	69
Not listed	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	97	12	5	5	8	9	136

## DISCUSSION

The study examined the association between frequency of using social media for academic purpose and technical issues. The result shows that there is no correlation between using social media for education purposes and encountering technical issues  $r = 167$ . This suggests that as students use social media more for educational purposes, they may occasionally face technical challenges related to the platform, but it will not demotivate their academic activities. Social presence is associated with the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools and electronic platforms for OGL in terms of the degree to which these CMC tools and electronic platforms can transfer the same face-to-face interpersonal communication, group learning, and group dynamics when learning and working together in an online setting. Social presence influences the way how the social interaction in OGL groups unfolds online, which, in turn, affects the learning outcomes. Briones (2018), which found that Integrating ICT in teaching and learning process at present remains a challenging task which includes lack of confidence and competence in ICT, lack of technical support and lack of accessibility to ICT resources.

Similarly, there is a weak positive correlation between social media use for education purposes and privacy/security concerns  $r = .174$ . As students engage in educational activities on social media, they might become more aware of privacy risks and security measures. The CAT explores the different ways in which we accommodate our communication, our motivations for doing so, and the consequences. This finding is in line with Staddon et al (2012) they argued that risks of privacy and security may lead to poor social media engagement. A moderate positive correlation between using social media for education purposes and encountering language or interpretation issues was observed  $r = 349$ . Students who actively participate in educational discussions on social media may encounter language barriers or struggle with interpreting content. Lastly, there is a moderate positive correlation between social media use for education purposes and information overload  $r = 231$ . As students consume educational content on social media, they may sometimes feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information available. according to social presence theory in the context of social media, the platforms used in the of higher education can, while being digital, help create a sense of presence and meaningful relationships between students, teachers, and institutions.

## CONCLUSION

This research examines the various ways that social media affects communication obstacles in higher education, with a focus on Cyprus International University. The study finds that social media use is positively correlated with concerns about privacy, security, and information overload. However, it is not significantly correlated with technological problems, according to the data. These results underscore the importance of educational institutions in properly balancing the dual effects of social media. They must harness its potential to enhance academic collaboration while also addressing the challenges it poses. The study advocates for a thoughtful strategy for integrating social media into learning environments, emphasizing the importance of digital literacy, as well as privacy and security precautions, to enhance teaching and learning in higher education.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is advisable for educational institutions, especially Cyprus International University, to adopt a proactive approach to integrating social media into their curricula based on the study's findings. To ensure that both teachers and students are equipped to navigate the complexities of social media use, including understanding privacy settings, implementing security measures, and managing information effectively to mitigate overload, comprehensive digital literacy classes should be implemented. Furthermore, offering specialized workshops or courses on best practices for social media communication can address language and interpretation issues, thereby enhancing the overall academic experience. Additionally, institutions should consider establishing explicit policies and procedures for social media use in educational settings to foster a secure, welcoming, and efficient virtual learning environment. By implementing these measures, universities can minimize communication obstacles associated with social media while maximizing its potential as an educational tool.

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