

## Usage of Social Networking as a learning tool: Opinion of Critical Care Nursing Students

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**Abstract:** Facebook is an innovative approach in nursing education.Itcan be used with its integration into different nursing courses to improvestudents learning. Therefore this study aimed to assess students' usage of social networking and their opinions for the effectiveness of course Facebook group as a learning tool. Descriptive exploratory research design was used and participants were selected using convenience sampling which included 162 nursing students. Data was collected using a self-administeredquestionnaire and course Facebook page was created. The results showed that that the highest percentage (66.7%) of nursing students were very satisfied with using course Facebook page as a learning tool. This study concluded that Facebook is used perfectly by students at the university level. It may be an excellent tool to integrate into the learning resources of university courses and recommended that social media should be used for teaching and learning of all nursing courses.

**Key words:**Social networking, Facebook, Nursing students, learning, nursing education

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### I. Introduction

Information and communication technologies are becoming important tools in nursing education. In the digital era, nursing is changing itself into a profession supported by technology to provide high quality education and facilitate students learning. <sup>(1-3)</sup>Learners today have many tools that allow them to use technology to aid in their education. Students are using smart phones, tablets, laptops, and numerous other electronic devices every day. <sup>(4)</sup>

The social networking has become one of the most important communication technologies tools for education and entertainment in recent times .It is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as “internetbased applications that allow the creation and exchange of contentwhich is user generated”. <sup>(5)</sup>

There are different forms of social networkingsitesthat can be used to communicate and interact with each other. One of the best known social networking sites that used bymany students in their daily life is Facebook. <sup>(6,7)</sup>

Facebook has been widely used for nursing education. It is a social media network in which users develop a profile and connection with acquaintances to develop a virtual network of “friends.” Facebook users can post photos, videos, status updates, or Web links on their personal profile that can be viewed by friends on their “News Feed.” To view an individual or group's posts on Facebook, they must be connected in the virtual Facebook network as “friends,” but anyone with a Facebook account has access to the public Facebook profiles of all users. <sup>(8,9)</sup>

Facebook can also be used with its integration into different nursing courses to improve the realismof case studies and collaborative learning. Students can at that time interact with this patient case study through Facebook by following his/her posts to gather data and by asking and answering questions. This interactionaids student apply theory in a safe, controlled, nonthreatening manner. <sup>(10,11)</sup>

Class Facebook groups can be generated to permit students and educator to interact in the virtual Facebook world through discussions and media sharing. Facebook can also serve as a platform for students to upload video, projects and assignments for nurse educatoras well as peer-viewing and evaluation. <sup>(12)</sup>In addition, it can be used for helping students acquire more knowledge and skills in professional communication, health policy, patient privacy, ethics, and writing competencies. Therefore, Facebookcan be considered as an innovative, engaging approach for educating future nursing professionals by facilitating and expanding discussion beyond the traditional classroom, promoting critical thinking, providing collaboration among students and teachers, and assisting with patient education. <sup>(13)</sup>

Although the importance of using Facebook for educational purposes,there are some disadvantages in using it, such as waste of time, postponement and changing priorities , waste of money, and even addiction. <sup>(14)</sup>

University students become more and more occupied with communication technology and spend too much time on Facebook so; nurse educators play an important role to guide students in the safe, professional, and responsible use of this social networking to be as a part of their academic day. They also have the responsibility of trying to develop a learning environment that meets students' needs and characteristics. In addition, these undergraduate students are the future nurses that must be well educated to be able to influence this world and make nursing a better profession. <sup>(15)</sup> Thus, the aim of this study was to assess critical care nursing students' usage of social networking and their opinions for the effectiveness of course Facebook group as a learning tool.

## **II. Material And Methods**

### **I. Material**

The study used the descriptive research design. It was carried out at critical care and emergency nursing department, Faculty of Nursing, University of Alexandria. The subjects of this study included a convenience sample of 162 nursing students enrolled in the critical care nursing (II) course. Two tools were developed by the researcher based on the related national and international literatures <sup>(6,15-17)</sup>. Tool one is entitled as: "Nursing Students' social networking usage" and was divided into two sections. Section one contained demographic questions that asked for students' sex and age, while section two assessed students' social networking usage. It included questions asked about access to the internet, awareness of social networking sites, preference of social networking, and time spent on Facebook. Moreover, tool two is entitled "course evaluation and feedback questionnaire". This tool assessed the students' feedback about the effectiveness of using course Facebook's group as a learning tool. It consists of 9 statements on Likert scale ranged from scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree).

### **II. Methods**

1. An official letter was sent from the responsible authorities at the Faculty of Nursing; Alexandria University, to the Head of the critical care and emergency departments to take the approval for collecting data after explanation of the aim of the study.
2. The tools were developed by the researcher after extensive review of the related literatures.
3. Tool's content validity was tested by 5 experts in the related study field then the necessary modification will be done.
4. Reliability for the developed tool was tested by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient statistical test.
5. Pilot study was carried out on ten nursing students to test the clarity and applicability of the tools, and then necessary modifications will be done.
6. A structured questionnaire method was used for data collection.
7. At the beginning of the academic semester, tool one was distributed to all the students attending the lecture of Critical Care Nursing II course which assessed their usage of social networking. Then Course Facebook group was created by the researcher and was added all the instructors of the course to the Facebook group.
8. Students were informed about the Facebook group and instructed that they can use it as a learning resource throughout the semester by visiting it and clicking on the 'join' button. When this was done, a connection was made between the course group and the student's personal Facebook account.
9. The course group appeared in the 'Activities and Interests' section of the student's profile, and allows publication of updates and notifications to the students, which appeared in the 'News Link' of the student's personal Facebook page.
10. Students' engagements with the Facebook group were strongly encouraged by the course instructors; however there was no formal assessment associated with students' participation.
11. The Facebook group was used as a platform to provide information relevant to the course. Thus, each instructor posted on the course Facebook group approximately 3-5 times each week during the semester. The posts included notifications for Lecture schedules, Clinical rotation schedules, Clinical students groups with the instructors names, Changes in lecture times and locations, short quizzes, Links to useful and interesting learning media, Learning materials related to the course, topics and assignments provided by instructors to create discussion among the students. All these posts were visible on the Facebook group 'wall' to all individuals who had 'joined' the course Facebook group. Students were able to comment on any post on the Facebook group, as well as post their own questions course, projects and assignments regarding to course learning activities.
12. Course instructors logged on to the course Facebook group at least once per day to respond to questions and monitor discussions. Discussions were monitored to ensure that content was appropriate to the course material to maintain academic integrity.
13. During the final lecture of semester, post-semester questionnaire were completed by the students to assess their interaction with the course Facebook group, as well as opinions of its utility as a learning tool then it

was gathered after its completion. It taken from 10 minutes for every student to complete the questionnaire. Any clarification statements were given to all students during filling the questionnaire.

14. Out of 180 copies of questionnaire distributed to the students, 162 copies were retrieved. This represented a response rate of 90%.
15. Data were analyzed with statistical methods using SPSS 23 statistics software. The descriptive statistics were used.
16. Ethical consideration:

The researcher explained the purpose of the study, and assured them that the study is for educational purpose only. Information and responses of participants was treated anonymously, privacy and confidentially will be assured.

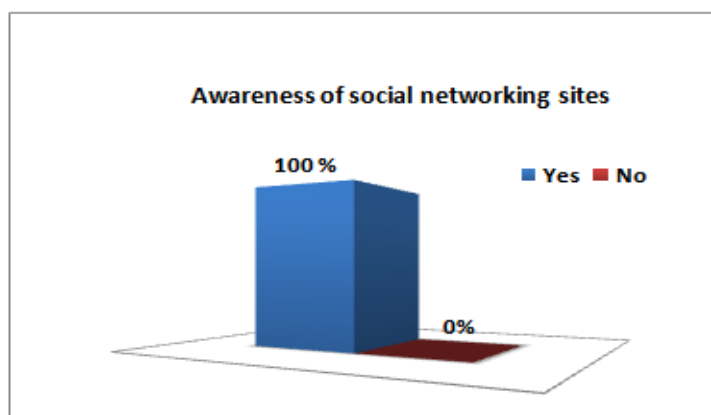
An informed consent was obtained from the participants and the right to withdraw from the study will berespected.

### III. Result

The data was retrieved from 162 students over a period of three months. The students' responses are evaluated against the following two parameters.

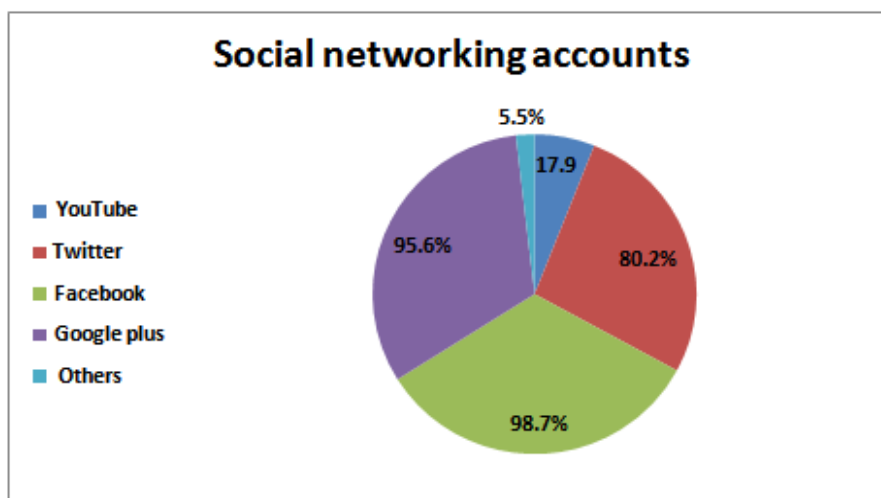
#### a. Nursing Students' social networking usage

Figure (1) demonstrates the percentage of students' awareness of social networking sites. It showed that all students are aware about social networking sites.



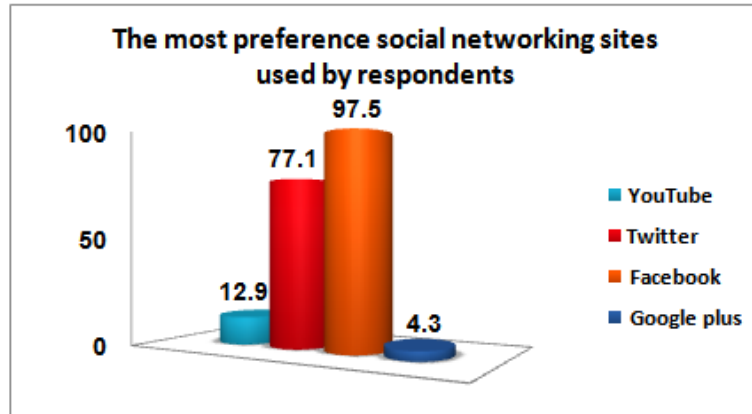
**Fig. (1): Percentage of students' awareness of social networking sites.**

Figure (2) shows that the majority of students has accounts on Facebook and Google plus while 80.2% has account on twitter and 17.9% on YouTube



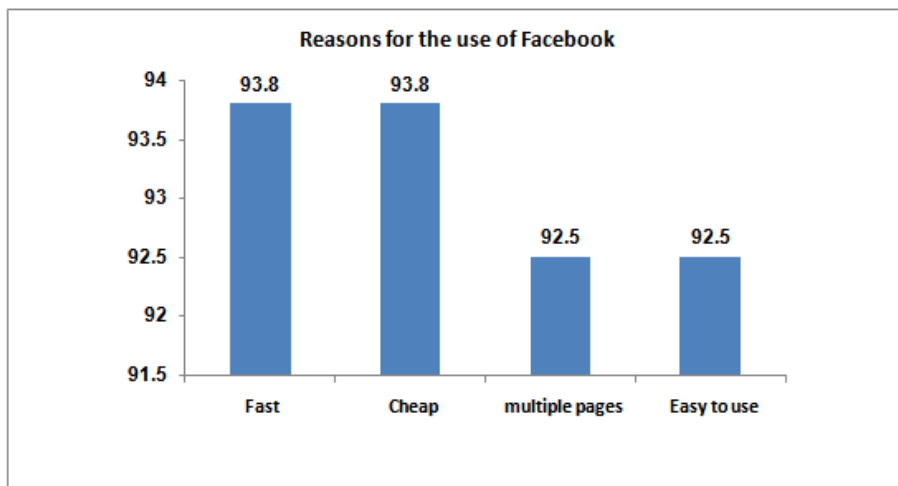
**Fig. (2): Percentage of students who have multiple Social Network accounts**

The figure (3) shows the most preference social networking sites used by critical care nursing students. The respondents found Facebook is the most preference followed by Twitter then other social networks e. g. YouTube and Google plus. Out of the 162students, 97.5% of the students use Facebook to communicate, while 77.1% use Twitter network.



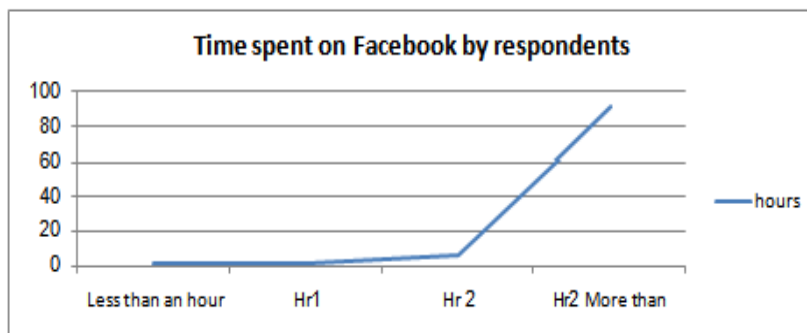
**Figure (3):** The most preference social networking sites used by respondents

Figure (4) illustrates the reasons for preferring Facebook to communicate. 93.8% of the students stated that it is fast and cheap, while 92.5% of them reported that the easy to use and multiple pages



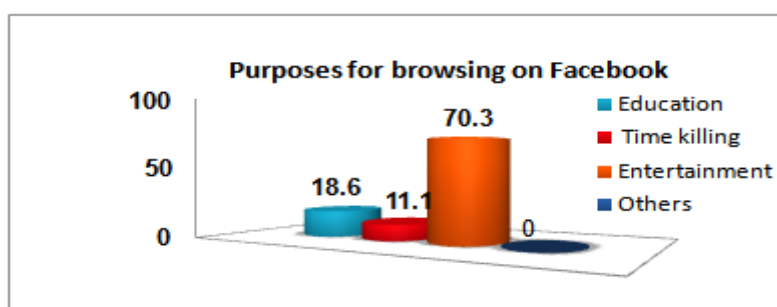
**Figure (4):** Reasons for the preference of using Facebook

The results show that 91.5% of students indicate that they spend more than two hours on Facebook daily as presented in figure 5.



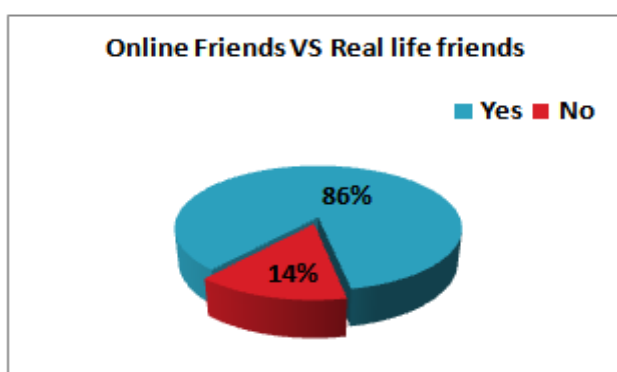
**Figure (5):** Time spent daily on Facebook by respondents

Figure (6) illustrates the responses of students toward the purposes for browsing on Facebook. The highest percentage (70.3%) of students stated that they using Facebook for entertainment purposes where as 18.6% of them browsing for educational purpose. Only 11.1 % of students used Facebook for Time killing.



**Figure (6): Purposes for browsing on Facebook**

Figure (7) reveals most of students (86%) have more friends online than in real life while 14% students had more real life friends than in online.



**Figure (7): percentage of respondents for real versus online friends**

**b. Nursing Students' opinion toward using Facebook as learning tool**

Table (1) illustrates frequency distribution of students' opinion toward using Course Facebook group. It was found that the majority of participants (88.9%) felt that the instructions used in course Facebook group were clear. Most of the students (86.4%) stated that they favored Facebook page, when accessing content via mobile phones rather than university websites. In addition, 90.6% of the students agreed that the use of course Facebook group improving their academic performance. Moreover, the largest percentage (94.4%) in students' opinions related to their responses toward the learning activities used with course Facebook group that were helpful, followed by 93.2% reported that they learned from feedback made by their teachers and peers. Similar percentage (88.9%, 87.6%) of students' responses agreed that Course Facebook group is a good place to access links to resources provided by the teacher and help them to discuss different topics and questions with their classmates and teachers. Furthermore, 85.8% of the students agreed that Course Facebook group promotes the interaction between me and my teacher and colleagues. Only 83.4% of them reported that course Facebook group was an effective E-learning tool.

**Table (1): Frequency distribution of students' feedback toward using Course Facebook group**

| Items  | N=162 |      |          |      |
|--|-------|------|----------|------|
|  | Agree |      | disagree |      |
|  | N     | %    | N        | %    |
| Instructions used in course Facebook group were clear  | 144   | 88.9 | 18       | 11.1 |
| Facebook page is easier to access from my mobile phone than my own university's website.                 | 140   | 86.4 | 22       | 13.6 |
| The use of course Facebook group improving my academic performance                                       | 147   | 90.6 | 15       | 9.2  |
| The Course Facebook group learning activities was helpful  | 153   | 94.4 | 9        | 5.6  |
| I learned from the feedback made by my teachers and peers  | 151   | 93.2 | 11       | 6.8  |
| Course Facebook group help me to discuss different topics and questions with my classmates and teachers. | 142   | 87.6 | 20       | 12.4 |
| Course Facebook group is a good place to access links to resources provided by the teacher               | 144   | 88.9 | 18       | 11.1 |

|   |     |      |    |      |
|---|-----|------|----|------|
| Course Facebook group promotes the interaction between me and my teacher and colleagues | 139 | 85.8 | 23 | 14.2 |
| The course Facebook group was an effective E-learning tool                              | 135 | 83.4 | 27 | 16.6 |

Figure (8) illustrates the overall level of satisfaction with the course Facebook page. It found that the highest percentage (66.7%) were very satisfied with Facebook group

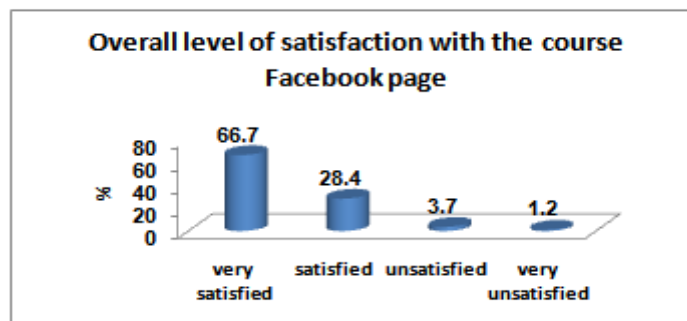


Figure (8): overall level of satisfaction with the course Facebook page

#### IV. Discussion

Social networking plays a variety of roles in teaching and learning process. The use of social networking technology helpsto increase interaction between students and teachers and create innovative ideas as well as provide flexibility in learning and course content delivery. In addition, the current study explained the critical care nursing students' usage of social networking and their opinion for the effectiveness of course Facebook group as a learning tool.

Regarding to the students' usage of social networking, it was found that the majority of nursing students had multiple Social Network accounts and Facebook is the most favorite for them because it is fast, cheap, easy to use and had multiple pages. This result may be attributed to many of today's students are "digital natives" and their usage of different Social networking sites are become part of everyday lives. Saied et al.(2016) indicated that among different types of social media; the medical students reported Facebook as the most commonly used one. Ryan and Xenos (2011) also stated that Facebook is the most common social networking site and has increased a great amount of popularity by being worldwide available. It is also similarly reported by Griffiths (2012) reported that Facebook has many benefits, based on the free access, improving communication as well as sharing personal information so it is most common in use. According to statistics in 2015, it showed that Facebook had 1.55 billion monthly active users with estimated 27 million users in Egypt. It has rapidly become both a basic tool for social interaction, personality identity and network building among university students. (18-20)

In relation to time spent on Facebook, the result revealed that 91.5% of nursing students spend more than four hours on Facebook daily which is supported by Saied et al.(2016) who reported the daily use of Facebook by 58% of Egyptian students for duration of 1- 2 hours (41.3%). Oueder and Abousaber (2018) also informed that 45% of university students spend from one hour to three hours using the social media daily. (21, 22)

As for, purposes for browsing Facebook, the highest percentage revealed that the students used it for entertainment purposes whereas browsing for educational purposes comprised of a lesser percentage. This finding is in line with Mehmood (2013) who found that social networking sites were used by students for entertainment mostly and less for educational purposes. This reflected the role of nurse educator to direct students for the effective use of the Facebook especially for educational purpose to prevent time wasting in chatting on non-educational topics and to improve student learning. (16)

Regarding nursing Students' opinion toward using Facebook as a learning tool, the majority of them were very satisfied with the course Facebook page that used for improve their learning and academic performance. This could be supported by most of the critical care nursing students' opinion agreed that Facebook is easy to use and learning activities uploaded was very effective. Moreover, the students learned from the interaction between teacher and students and their colleagues as well as the group discussion and feedback that provided by the educators and peers. This is in the line with Oueder and Abousaber (2018) who concluded that online social media had enhanced the communication between the faculty member staff and the students which assist the communication of the correct information and improve the understanding and the development of the ideas and the courses. (22)

In contrast, Camilia et al. (2013) found that the frequent use of social media by Nigerian students had no effect on their studies. (23)

## V. Conclusion

Facebook is used perfectly by students at the university level. It may be an excellent tool to integrate into the learning resources of university courses. The findings from this study indicated that students are receptive to incorporating Facebook into their academic lives and perceive benefits through enhanced communication, interaction, and flexibility in course content delivery.

## Recommendation

Study the relationship between the nursing students' usage of internet and social media and their academic achievement and social life.

## Acknowledgment

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