
Undergraduate Students' Trust in Using Social Networking Sites

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Abstract – Recently, social networking sites (SNSs) experienced increased popularity, becoming one of the most significant tools in the present high-tech world. Users can instantly interact with each other by using social media platforms, forming professional connections, friendships, and business opportunities. Nonetheless, users impact trust when using SNSs, which is the most essential component in human connection. The study aims to investigate the impact of users' trust in using SNSs. Accordingly, 110 valid survey questionnaires were distributed through Google Form. The descriptive statistics were applied for data analysis. The results revealed that perceived privacy, sharing knowledge, and perceived ease of use significantly and positively affected users' trust in SNSs. The study develops the knowledge in improving trust in SNSs by extending the factors based on users' trust in SNSs.

Keywords: Social networking sites, users' trust, perceived privacy, sharing knowledge, perceived ease of use

1. Introduction

More people use social media in the current information technology and information systems era, where users share information with each other. Similarly, technology has dominated virtually every corner of the globe over the decades. The internet, Web 2.0, and SNSs all play a significant role in developing humanitarian technology. The popularity of SNSs has increased adversely, attracting many individuals who wish to share thoughts, views, and opinions. Users can utilise SNSs to create educational material for blogs, SNSs, and online sharing platforms. Kavada (2015) stated that social networking platforms formed the foundation and framework in constructing new social systems. Additionally, social media platforms allow efficient knowledge sharing, collaboration, and professional networking (Donelan, 2016; Koranteng & Wiafe, 2019).

Academics presented multiple definitions for SNSs. For instance, Wakefield and Wakefield (2016) defined social media as "specific types of social media platforms and internet sites with common attributes, such as user profile, user access to digital content, user list of relational ties, and user ability to view and traverse relational ties." Hence,

social media is a type of electronic communication (such as social networking websites and microblogging) where people create online communities to share knowledge, ideas, personal messages, and other online material (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Furthermore, social media affects offline events, physical places, and digital settings (Menendez-Blanco, et al, 2017; Mosconi et al., 2017). Thus, people who use SNSs, such as Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Wikis, Flickr, and YouTube, realise that the sites are good communication mediums and sharing approaches (Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2014).

Statista (2020) reported that the global SNSs users are 2.82 billion in 2019, expected to increase to approximately 3.1 billion by 2021. Meanwhile, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC, 2018) recorded 24.6 million SNSs, 97.3% of which are owned by Facebook users. Additionally, most social media users are young people between 20 to 30 years old. Students in higher learning institutions use multiple mediums to communicate, cooperate, and share knowledge regularly (Maroofat, 2018; Sarwar et al., 2019). Gokhale and Machina (2018) noted that students were the most frequent users of SNSs. Social networking platforms present a novel way to develop student engagement and learning achievement (Gokhale & Machina, 2018; Roopchund et al., 2019).

The trust component in using SNSs is a serious issue. Specifically, trust is a crucial term that includes credibility and authenticity for the participants and online sources. Several factors influence trust issue in using SNSs, such as information quality, reciprocity, shared value, reputation, and contentment (Wang et al., 2017; Koranteng et al., 2020). Cheng et al. (2017) highlighted that trust prevents the engaging parties from gaining psychological distance from a geographical distance, and characteristic of online media contacts. Hashim and Tan (2015) added that trust significantly impacts the formation of dependable behaviour in situations where the regulations lack, such as with online communities. Although trust is usually identified as essential to online interactions and relationships, literature gaps remain in examining the subject.

Cheng et al. (2017) observed that most empirical studies on trust examine the structure in teams or organisations, but trust in social media results from social relationships. Therefore, the study postulates that trust plays a vital role in using social media technology. The study investigated the effect of users' trust on SNSs use. The study is crucial in determining how the trust mechanism encourages social media users to believe in one another. Finally, regarding social networking trust, the study revealed that social media users' trust, particularly among students, are impacted by perceived privacy, sharing knowledge, and perceived ease of use.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Users' Trust

Social media enables interactive information, collaboration, and contextualising. Studies reveal that SNSs use is designed to communicate, allowing the public to be visible and interactive simultaneously (Nesi et al., 2018). Nevertheless, Raza et al. (2020) stated that using social media affects social benefit, suggesting that university students can acquire personal or professional contact, obtaining advantages such as social support from virtual

group study or friends and wider social networking. Students and university professors may utilise social media platforms to engage and share information outside of the institution physical borders (Coleman, 2013). Past studies emphasise that SNSs are highly valued by users as instant sources of information, communication, and social means.

College and university students embrace digital platforms to gain and share knowledge regarding their studies (Fox, 2009; Head & Eisenberg, 2010). Although SNSs are useful for communication, sharing knowledge, exchanging information, and building relationships among users, SNSs tend to produce negative impacts, particularly reducing trust on information. Raza et al. (2020) proposed that stress, trustworthiness, and emotional weariness damage university students' satisfaction while using SNSs for education. Ayaburi and Treku (2020) suggested that trust is generally a medium of social media users' relationships, concerns and privacy. Hence, the study examines the factors that impact users' trust in social media usage.

2.2 Perceived Privacy

Perceived privacy is the likelihood and severity of losing personal information due to other parties' opportunistic behaviour (Xu et al., 2011). The social media-enabled risk assessment comprises a subjective assessment of people with access to and what they can do with the information. Platform infringements that operate privacy in institutions may cause serious consequences, such as profiling, pricing discrimination, and targeted publicity (Crossler & Bélanger, 2019). The perceived dangers harmfully impact user behaviour. Users avoid unclear purchase conditions caused by behavioural disruptions.

The impact of perceived risk online is significantly influenced by increased ambiguity (Farivar et al., 2017). Studies also demonstrated that social media hazards detrimentally impact social media use (Khan et al., 2014). For example, the perceived risk of social media could negatively affect customer trust, market share, and reputation (Brivot et al., 2017; Demek et al., 2018). Madden (2012) claimed that the rising usage of SNSs increased concerns on users' privacy. Therefore, trust and risk are two structures intensively investigated regarding online privacy issues (Hong & Thong, 2013).

2.3 Sharing Knowledge

Sharing knowledge denotes "providing task information and know-how to assist others in solving issues, forming new ideas, or crucial policies and processes" (Wang & Noe, 2010). Sharing knowledge with academics facilitates in improving and developing ideas, with social media as a mean to achieve the goal (Panahi et al., 2016). Sharing knowledge also aids in the learning and comprehension process, allowing individuals to teach and learn to develop themselves professionally and personally. Trust is regarded a crucial factor for sharing knowledge. Communicate knowledge without trust is impossible, preventing people from offering personal information. McCaughey et al. (2016) mentioned that trust influences the SNSs in sharing knowledge, suggesting kindness and honesty to others as a foundation for trust in SNSs. Chai et al. (2011) found that knowledge sharing among users concerning privacy, trust, social relationships, and reciprocity all contribute to knowledge sharing behaviour. Nemati (2015) highlighted that communicating knowledge without

trust is impossible, preventing people from offering their information. Thus, the intention to share knowledge on SNSs depends on users' trust.

2.4 Perceived Ease of Use

Perceive ease of use refers to the ease of technology use (Venkatesh et al., 2012), frequently identified as main predictors for user behaviour (Wong et al., 2015). Chang et al. (2017) demonstrate that users favour a system driven by simplicity with maximal efficiency compared to complicated technology. Nevertheless, users view differently about the effort expectancy when utilising social networking applications compared to mobile shopping (m-shopping) applications. Most studies suggested that the usability of social network applications supports more intention. Chang et al. (2017) examined the degree of perceived ease of use and challenge related to Facebook. Facebook users' impressions were based on confident intentions through social activities, social search, identification of profiles, and maintaining contacts. Ultimately, Facebook must provide the users with simple, clear navigation, quick user interactions, and enjoyable features. The facilities form easy-to-use concepts and build user trust.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection and Sampling

The study employed a quantitative research approach to collect data and descriptive statistics for data analysis. An online survey questionnaire was applied to collect data from University Malaya undergraduate students. The study also employed non-profitability sampling using convenience sampling technique. Non-profitability sampling applies where subjects from the targeted segment are considered for study purposes, fulfilling specific practical criteria. For example, geographical proximity and easy accessibility, and accessibility at a specific time and readiness to participate (Dörnyei 2007). The study population is University Malaya undergraduate students. Students are more familiar with social networking technology and eager to learn academic activities through social media, such as communicate with friends, sharing knowledge, updating information about class, and others. Thus, the study population is appropriate. Roscoe (1975) established a rule of thumb for calculating sample size, specifically in experimental research, the sample size of larger than 50 and less than 500 is deemed appropriate. Thus, the study distributed 200 survey questionnaires among respondents via online platforms, such as social media, email, and Facebook messenger. Ultimately, 110 valid responses were obtained by removing 90 incomplete responses from missing values and outliers.

3.2 Instruments

The data collection tools utilised by the participants assessed their agreement using a five-point Likert scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). The survey questionnaires were validated based on several studies used and identified previously. Seven items were adapted from Tuunainen et al. (2009), and McKnight et al. (2002) as a perceived privacy instrument. Additionally, Zhao et al.'s (2018) six questions were adapted to measure sharing knowledge. Meanwhile, five items from Venkatesh et al. (2003) were adapted to

measure the perceived ease of use. Gefen et al.'s (2003) seven instruments were applied to determine the trust issue. Finally, seven items were adapted from Balakrishnan and Gan (2016) to measure SNSs use.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 software. A codebook was generated with information on each of the variables in the data set. Furthermore, the outcomes were reported in descriptive forms. The study was analysed in descriptive statistics and statistical approaches, such as frequency and percentage distribution, central trend measurements (mean, median, and others), and spread measures (standard deviation) were used to describe, view, and summarise data in relevant ways.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Demographic Findings

The section demonstrates the results of the present study in detail. The study examines the descriptive findings, indicating that all participants were familiar with social media platforms and use SNSs. Based on a sample of 110 participants, the results revealed that 73.5% of the respondents were women, implying that women were the majority. The numbers also suggested that women are more willing to complete the poll. The majority age range was 70.0% between 21 and 25 years. For ethnicity, Malay respondents account for 47.3% of the participants. Meanwhile, 68.2% of the highest educational level was among second-year students. The results suggested that 40.9% respondents used WhatsApp as the current social media platform, followed by 29.1% Facebook users, and 24.2% (others). Regarding the time spent on social media by respondents, most spend approximately two to three hours on social media (29.1%). The majority spent between one to four hours, four to five hours on average. Therefore, social media could consume most of the students' daily life and using social media is tempting to students.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Items	Demographics	Sample	%
Gender	Male	29	26.4
	Female	81	73.6
Age	18-20	14	12.7
	21-25	77	70.0
	26-30	19	17.3
Education	First-year students	10	9.1
	Second-year students	75	68.2
	Third-year students	16	14.5
	Fourth-year students	9	8.2
Ethnicity	Malay	52	47.3
	Chinese	41	37.3
	Indian	10	9.1
	International	7	6.4
Current account of social media	Facebook	32	29.1
	Instagram	12	10.9

	WhatsApp	45	40.9
	LinkedIn	16	14.5
	Twitter	1	0.9
	Others	4	3.6
Favorite social media platforms	Facebook	18	16.4
	Twitter	15	13.6
	Instagram	5	4.5
	WhatsApp	24	21.8
	LinkedIn	1	0.9
Daily time spend social media	Snapchat	16	14.5
	Others	31	28.2
	0	8	7.3
	5-10 minutes	8	7.3
	30 minutes	8	7.3
	1 hour	14	12.7
	2-3 hours	32	29.1
	3-5 hours	24	21.8
	6-9 hours	16	14.5

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Date reliability unique to the variables was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's alpha using SPSS. The internal consistency of the survey data connected to each variable was assessed by conducting the test against each variable (Vogt et al., 2007). Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranging from 0 to 1, and α to 0.9 is considered outstanding; $0.7 \alpha < 0.9$ is deemed good; while $0.6 \alpha < 0.7$ is excellent; (DeVellis, 1991; Henson, 2001). Table 2 presents the results of Cronbach's alpha. The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.888, perceived privacy = 0.868, sharing knowledge = 0.812, perceived ease of use = 0.876, users' trust = 0.893, and SNSs use = 0.878. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha for construct reliability for each scale achieved internal consistency. The survey questionnaires were validated as numerous research used and verified the survey questionnaire.

Table 2: Results of Cronbach's Alpha for Instrument Reliability

No.	Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
1.	Overall	0.888	32
2.	Perceived privacy	0.868	7
3.	Sharing knowledge	0.812	6
4.	Perceived ease of use	0.876	5
5.	Users' trust	0.893	7
6.	Social networking sites use	0.878	7

4.3 Perceived Privacy

Table 3 demonstrates respondents' privacy issues towards SNSs, suggesting that most respondents did not sufficiently trust social media confidentiality settings. Additionally, the average mean score on SNSs privacy was 3.81, with a standard deviation of 0.889. The result implies that most respondents did not trust using SNSs. The highest mean value was 4.345 for "I worry that if I use social media with my mobile phone and someone steals it, he or she

can find out some of my personal information or data”. Meanwhile, the smallest mean value was 3.454 for “Based on my past experiences, the security mechanism provided by social media cannot protect my account (or myself) well”. Thus, privacy issue and hazard exhibited a negative impact on SNSs users’ trust.

Table 3: Perceived Privacy

Statements	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Using social media sites, I might be involved in some unexpected risk.	3.927	.885	-0.584	0.115
I feel that I might get attacked by other people on social media sites.	3.663	1.025	-0.427	-0.508
Based on my past experiences, the security mechanism provided by social media cannot protect my account (or myself) well.	3.454	1.019	-0.272	-0.509
I worry about my privacy and data security while using social media.	4.154	.858	-0.659	-0.463
I worry that if I use social media with my mobile phone and someone steals it, he or she can find out some of my personal information or data.	4.345	.722	-0.780	-0.122
I am concerned that the information I submit on social media could be misused.	4.127	.857	-0.871	0.712
I am concerned that a person can find private information about me on SNSs.	4.136	.840	-0.737	0.414
Average score	3.81	0.889		

4.4 Sharing Knowledge

Table 4 presents that sharing knowledge on SNSs influences the trust factor. Specifically, interviewees were willing to share something on SNSs (mean = 4.236), for the statement “Social media grants me the capability to generate technological knowledge”, followed by “Social media helps me generate basic and key knowledge” (4.081). The findings indicated that most respondents demonstrated a positive influence on trust in using SNSs. Based on past studies, users share knowledge in social networks depending on the users’ perception of knowledge sharing and trust in social networks.

Table 4: Sharing Knowledge

Statements	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social media grants me the capability to generate technological knowledge.	4.236	.777	-0.560	-0.742

Social media helps me generate basic and key knowledge.	4.081	.910	-0.610	-0.604
I usually share my knowledge with my colleagues via social media.	3.790	.977	-0.466	-0.470
I plan to share knowledge with my colleagues through social media.	3.754	.959	-0.502	-0.070
I want to help other students in social media.	3.554	.944	-0.193	0.037
The knowledge shared by members in my academic social network is accurate.	3.500	.854	.270	-0.590
Average score	3.61	.884		

4.5 Perceived Ease of Use

The results depicted that 110 valid respondents heavily depend on social media platforms as a primary source for news, knowledge sharing, and communication with family and friends. Table 5 illustrates the descriptive statistics in every item construct, whereby SNSs indicated easy to use. The average mean score was 4.12 and the standard deviation was 0.877, suggesting that perceived ease of use positively impacted users' trust in using SNSs. The study also demonstrates that the trust and continuity of social media users were highly related to the perceived ease of use. Additionally, Facebook users' impressions were built on trust through social browsing, social search, profile identification, and contact maintenance activities. Ultimately, Facebook should provide the users with easy and clear navigation, easy contact with users, and enjoyable amenities. The facilities create user-friendly concepts and form user trust.

Table 5: Perceived Ease of Use

Statements	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Learning to use social media is easy for me.	4.227	.831	-1.035	1.204
My interaction with social media is clear and understandable.	3.990	.872	-0.657	0.281
Using social media to interact with friends is easy for me.	4.218	.817	-1.041	1.397
Social media is suitable for me to use, and fits well in my life.	4.018	.938	-0.919	0.739
When I use social media sites, I quickly find information of the services that I need.	3.990	.903	-0.894	0.964
Average score	4.12	.877		

4.6 Users' Trust

Trust is a critical factor in social media. Table 6 demonstrates the examination results from the descriptive analysis, suggesting that trust is a key basis for behavioural purposes, which

positively impacts ongoing social media use. The highest mean value was 3.290 for the statement “I believe my social media friends are trustworthy”. Meanwhile, the lowest mean value was 2.945 for “I believe my SNSs friends do not lie to me”. Observably, all variable items were above 3, except for the lowest mean value, which was 2.945. Studies examining the elements of establishing trust in using SNSs are insufficient. Most importantly, as higher education institutions continue to employ social media to engage students in learning activities, increasing the awareness of trust and the elements which inform students’ trust on the platforms are vital. Developing trust enables universities to be better equipped to facilitate teaching and learning.

Table 6: Users’ Trust

Statements	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
I believe SNSs are trustworthy.	3.063	.969	-.313	-.190
I believe my social media friends are trustworthy.	3.290	.932	-.131	.105
I believe my social media friends do not use my information for other purposes.	3.154	.910	.058	.202
I believe my social networking sites friends do not lie to me.	2.945	.956	.110	.306
I believe my SNSs friends are harmless.	3.027	1.053	-.199	-.129
Students in the SNSs mostly trust each other.	3.154	.910	-.165	.190
I believe social media sites will present accurate information on products intention to buy.	3.027	.942	-.256	.337
Average score	3.81	0.889		

4.7 Social Networking Sites Use

Table 7 depicts that users impact the trust factor. From the descriptive analysis, the results suggested that the average value of mean was 3.51 with a standard deviation of 0.90. Hence, the respondents felt moderately good in using SNSs. The highest value of mean was 4.118 for “I can learn easily when I use social media for learning”, followed by “I can easily discuss academic matters with lecturers and classmates via social media” with the mean of 4.036. Social media usage encourages active learning, effective communication, and information sharing. Social media use also increases student involvement, whereby students comply by engaging at a certain degree. Generally, people seek for information via social networking platform and blogs. If users of social trading trust a website, the trust is reflected in the reviews and information on the platform, expanded from one user to another. Past studies attempted to identify essential elements that affect the trust of potential cloud adopters.

Table 7: Social Networking Sites Use

Statements	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
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I can learn easily when I use social media for learning.	4.118	.843	-0.883	0.894
Social media helps me accomplish my academic tasks more quickly.	3.872	1.014	-1.082	1.136
Social media enables me to access more academic resources conveniently.	3.945	1.003	1.000	0.942
I can communicate with lecturers more conveniently through social media.	3.972	.850	-0.767	0.709
I can easily discuss academic matters with lecturers and classmates via social media.	4.036	.834	-0.552	-0.274
I can share my ideas, opinions, and recommendations via social media.	3.954	.912	-1.090	1.637
The main reason I use social media is to connect with fellow students worldwide.	3.909	.943	-0.550	-0.260
Average score	3.51	.901		

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The most extensively used platform in online activity is SNSs. Platforms for social networking on the internet include Facebook, Myspace, personal blogs, Twitter, video and image sharing apps (Flicker and YouTube), and all cooperative websites, encompassing a broad range of online media (Wikipedia). Social networking platforms are considered a well-established medium for knowledge sharing, professional connections, and a friendly atmosphere. Students using social media to interact with friends, keep track of campus information, and develop professional connections significantly benefit from SNSs. Nonetheless, the trust mechanism is crucial in using SNSs as trust links human relationships to qualities, such as competence, honesty, and dependability. Individual views and expectations of other ethical behaviours are referred to as trust in social media.

The SNSs members, particularly students, must uphold the same ethical standards and disengage from any harmful conduct to other social media users. Students are cautious about the information trustworthiness and correctness in peer-to-peer communication and academic learning activities. The more trustworthy the material is on social media, the more students trust the sites. Hence, social media users must develop trust among themselves to minimise the uncertainties and dangers that come with using social media. Hence, the study identified the variables that promote social media users to trust each other. Future research should emphasise how to enhance user trust in social media based on different segments. A wider scope in exploring trust in social media could identify design principles and generalise specific application guidelines.

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