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# Impact of Students' Trust on Social Networking Services

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**Abstract** – Web 2.0 technology is the vast website and platform for sharing virtual information and communication worldwide. Social networking services (SNSs) technology perform the role of human interaction. The SNSs users can instantly transfer and receive information from other users. Nevertheless, users experience trust issues when delivering information to social networking platforms. Generally, the trust component is the fundamental issue in sharing any type of information on online platforms. Therefore, the study attempts to examine the impact of students' trust in using social networking platforms. Accordingly, the study collected 110 valid survey questionnaires using a social media platform. The study also used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 software for data analysis. The findings revealed that students' trust in information disclosure and effort expectancy is essential for using SNSs. The study enhances knowledge of how to improve SNSs trust by extending the factors conceived of users' trust in social networking sites. The study provides knowledge on integrity and honesty to develop students' trust in using SNSs.

**Keywords:** “Social networking services”, “trust”, “information disclosure”, “effort expectancy”, “network effect”.

## 1. Introduction

People are involved in social and digital networking technology in the current era. The way how global technology works on people also competes in accepting the new, modern technology. Social media is one of the leading advanced technologies, presenting a way for people to stay in touch with others living far away. Social media enables people to share amusing, educational, and engaging material. The platform also enables companies to interact with customers. Users can utilise SNSs to create educational material for blogs, social networking sites, and online sharing platforms. For instance, social networking platforms formed the foundation and framework for constructing new social systems (Kavada, 2015). Presently, social media platforms enable efficient knowledge sharing, collaboration, and professional networking (Donelan, 2016; Koranteng & Wiafe, 2019).

People seek information via social networking platforms and blogs (Fateh, 2017; Pihl & Sandstrom, 2013). The topic is significant from the view of user behaviour and demands more knowledge of how user consumption patterns change alongside media technology. Notably, more than 35% of millennial women stated that social media produces a major effect when purchasing clothes (Fateh, 2017), implying a strong connection with digital media as a user group. Past studies investigated the link between system use and performance influence and discovered significant results. Yang et al. (2011) demonstrated that an online marketing tool positively relates to the company performance in investigating e-marketing. Moreover, social media enables open contact, assisting firms to learn client needs and motivating in responding proactively and instantly to the needs (Parveen et al., 2016). Online social networks (OSNs) allow customers to contribute to the marketing process through introducing technologies, such as cocreation, engagement, and two-way communication platforms (Hennig et al., 2013; Plume et al., 2018).

Gokhale and Machina (2018) identified university students as the most frequent users of social networking sites. The students use multiple mediums to communicate, cooperate, and share knowledge regularly (Maroofat, 2018; Sarwar et al., 2019). Resultantly, social networking platforms present a novel way to develop student engagement and learning performance (Gokhale & Machina, 2018; Roopchund et al., 2019). Students are motivated to use social media as sophisticated technology provides ways for interpersonal contacts instantly worldwide with applications, such as Outlook, Skype, WhatsApp, IMO, Line, and Tango (Raza et al., 2020). Nonetheless, students seek face-to-face interaction during studies and the concept of online training is not prevalent; hence, why social media is not utilised for education (Raza et al., 2020).

Several studies were conducted on student trust in social media. For example, Chiu et al. (2006) stated that trust is one of the main challenges of online communication. Studies also demonstrate the influence of trust in similar activities, such as online knowledge sharing among university students (Ismail, Tajuddin, & Yunus, 2019). Trust decreases uncertainties and related risks (Joia & Lemos, 2010). Despite the existing studies on online trust, several researchers attempted to study the implications of trust (Grabner-Kräuter & Bitter, 2015). Thus, insufficient studies investigated the factors of trust in using social networking sites (Oliveira et al., 2017). Therefore, the study aims to analyse the impact of students' trust in using SNSs.

## **2. Literature Review**

Trust is influenced by several issues in using information technology (Haciyakupoglu & Zhang, 2015; Shareef et al., 2020). McKnight et al. (2002) mentioned that people more likely rely on technology and retailers. Wu and Sukoco (2010) highlighted that trust impacts the psychological status and the purpose to conduct, impacting the person's behaviour in knowledge sharing. Nonetheless, regarding the social networking element, trust involves social network members to not willfully injure other people and remain with established standards (Koranteng & Wiafe, 2019). Meanwhile, Ayaburi and Treku (2020) explained that trust is a fundamental issue among social media users in terms of building

relationships, concern and privacy. trust is a medium disclosing social media users' relationships, concerns, and privacy.

Information disclosure denotes users' ability to govern personal data (Margulis, 2003). The information privacy in information systems mainly emphasises data privacy measurement structures (Van Slyke et al., 2006; Dinev & Hart, 2006). Additionally, users' internet privacy concerns are linked to users' exposure of personal information and websites gathering, storing and using personal information (Metzger, 2012). Social networking sites popularity is rapidly expanding. Statista (2020) reported that Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn were the top five most popular social media websites based on monthly visitors. Madden (2012) claimed that the rising usage of social networking sites increases concerns about privacy among users. Trust and risk in information are two structures deeply analysed regarding online privacy issues (Pavlou et al., 2007). On social media, disclosing personal information is often necessary prior to the assertion of services. Sharing personal data involves the risk of a possible violation of users' confidentiality. Data are saved indefinitely and can be used for any purpose after providing personal information, which raises privacy concerns (Joinson, 2008).

Effort expectancy describes the ease of technology use (Venkatesh et al., 2012), frequently considered significant predictors of users' behaviour (Wong et al., 2015). Chang et al. (2017) demonstrated that users favour systems led by simplicity with maximum efficiency compared to a complicated technology. Nevertheless, users view differently of the effort expectancy when utilising social networking applications compared to mobile shopping (m-shopping) applications. Most empirical studies found that the usability of social network applications supports more intention. Chang et al. (2017) analysed the degree to which perceived ease of use and challenges is linked to Facebook. Additionally, Facebook users' impressions are according to confident intentions through social activities, social search, profile identification, and contact maintenance. Thus, Facebook must provide users with simple, clear navigation, instant user interactions, and enjoyable features. The facilities create easy-to-use concepts and develop user trust.

A network effect is a collection of individuals with similar characteristics who can connect and disseminate data to one another. Online SNSs, such as Facebook or Twitter comprise an organisation of clients with shared urban areas providing important data among each other. Network impact is associated with trust and reliability. The organisational impact on customers conduct in the informal community is crucial as Solis (2010) mentioned that "the reality is that our friends and network of influence determine our location and participation". Scholz (2008) added that regarding anxiety, trust has developed importance as a component of attraction for entering new organisations or to remain faithful to the current ones. Hence, networks that paradoxically present reliable elements positively influence users' trust.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Sampling and Data Collection Process**

The current study applied a quantitative research design to collect and analyse data. The study also used an online survey questionnaire to collect data from University of Malaya undergraduate students. The respondents were students as the students are more inclined to use social networking platforms in academic learning and activities, find SNSs easy to communicate with colleagues and update the latest information about classes. The study employed non-profitability sampling using the purposive technique. The technique was applied in numerous contexts, such as participants' observation, survey questionnaires, and statistical analysis (Walker et al., 2004; Zhen et al., 2006; Neupane et al., 2002). Moreover, the study tested data reliability and validity, which achieved the minimum alpha value as a rule of thumb (refer to section 4.2). Initially, 200 complete survey questionnaires were distributed among respondents via online platforms, such as social media, email, and Facebook messenger. Ultimately, 110 responses were deemed valid by removing 90 incomplete responses because of missing values and outliers.

### 3.2 Materials

The questionnaires were categorised into two sections. Section one analysed the respondents' demographic characteristics, while section two examined the impact of users' trust in using SNSs. The study assessed the students' agreement using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey questionnaire was validated based on previously mentioned past studies. For instance, three items were adapted from Tuunainen et al. (2009), and McKnight et al. (2002) for the information disclosure instrument. Similarly, three questions from Ennew and Sekhon (2003) were adapted to evaluate network effect. Three items from Venkatesh et al. (2003) were adapted to assess effort expectancy. The study referred to Gefen et al.'s (2003) three instruments to determine trust issues. Finally, three items were adapted from Balakrishnan and Gan (2016) to measure SNSs use.

### 3.3 Analysis Technique

The data were analysed using the newest SPSS version 21 software. A codebook was generated with information on each variable in the data set. Meanwhile, the outcomes were reported in descriptive forms. The study was examined in descriptive statistics and statistical approaches, such as frequency and percentage distribution, central trend measurements (mean and median), and spread measures (standard deviation) were used to describe, view and summarise data in relevant ways. The study applied the descriptive statistics for data analysis, analysing statistical approaches, such as participants' agreement level, frequency and percentage, average mean, and standard deviation.

## 4. Findings and Discussions

### 4.1 Demographic information

The section demonstrates the results in detail. The study examined the descriptive findings, indicating that all participants were familiar with social media platforms and use the mediums. According to a sample of 110 participants, the results suggested that 68.1% of the respondents were women, implying that women were the majority respondents and were more willing to complete the poll. The majority participants' age range was between 21 and 25 (61.8%). Regarding ethnicity, Malay respondents comprised 50% of the participants.

Meanwhile, 63.6% was the highest educational level among second-year students. The results indicated that 37.2% respondents used Instagram as the current account of social media platforms. Subsequently, the second-highest platform was 28.1% (Facebook). Nonetheless, most respondents (32.7.2%) preferred Snapshot. Regarding the time spent by respondents on social media, most spendt approximately two to three hours on social media (33.6%). Nonetheless, the majority spent between one and four hours with an average time of approximately four to five hours. Hence, social media could consume students' daily life and using social media is tempting to students.

*Table 1: Demographic Information*

Items	Demographics	Sample	%
Gender	Male	35	31.8
	Female	75	68.1
Age	18-20	22	20
	21-25	68	61.8
	26-30	20	18.2
Education	First year students	15	13.6
	Second year students	70	63.6
	Third year students	14	12.7
	Fourth year students	11	10
Ethnicity	Malay	55	50
	Chinese	38	34.5
	Indian	11	10
	International	6	5.4
Current account of social media	Facebook	31	28.1
	Instagram	41	37.2
	WhatsApp	15	13.6
	LinkedIn	16	14.5
	Twitter	5	4.5
	Others	3	2.7
Favorite social media platforms	Facebook	19	17.2
	Snapshot	36	32.7
	Instagram	12	10.9
	WhatsApp	14	12.7
	LinkedIn	8	7.2
	Twitter	16	14.5
Daily time spend on social media	Others	5	4.5
	0	6	5.4
	5-10 minutes	7	6.3
	30 minutes	10	9.0
	1 hour	12	10.9
	2-3 hours	37	33.6
	3-5 hours	22	20
6-9 hours	16	14.5	

#### 4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

The reliability of the data unique to the variables was determined by calculating the Cronbach’s alpha using SPSS. The internal consistency of the survey data connected to each variable was assessed by performing the test against each variable (Vogt et al., 2007). The coefficient of Cronbach’s alpha ranges from 0 to 1,  $\alpha$  to 0.9 is considered outstanding,  $0.7 \alpha < 0.9$  is good, while  $0.6 \alpha < 0.7$  is considered excellent; (Henson, 2001). All scales demonstrated internal reliability in Table 2 as information disclosure (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.868), effort expectancy (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.812), network effect (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.876), students’ trust (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.893), SNSs use (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.878). Therefore, each scale revealed an average number of items used in anal products. The construct validity is a test of the extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure. The survey questionnaire was validated based on past studies to verify the survey questionnaire.

Table 2: Internal Reliability Results

No.	Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
1.	Information disclosure	0.868	3
2.	Effort expectancy	0.812	3
3.	Network effect	0.876	3
4.	Students’ trust	0.893	3
5.	Social networking services use	0.878	3

#### 4.3 Information Disclosure

Table 3 depicts the examination results from the descriptive analysis, indicating the respondents’ agreement level towards three statements that measure the trust perception on SNSs use. Regarding information disclosure issues towards SNSs, results revealed that most respondents were inclined to agree (37.3%), stating that “Using social media sites, I might be involved in some unexpected risk”. The findings also revealed that respondents tended to neutral all three statements (25.5%, 30.9%, 35.5%), which implies that most respondents trust using SNSs regarding information disclosure. Nevertheless, the average mean score on SNSs for information disclosure issues was 3.81, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.991. Hence, information disclosure issues and hazards negatively impacted students’ trust in using SNSs.

Table 3: Information Disclosure

Statement	SD	DA	NE	AG	SA	Mean score	Std.
Using social media sites, I might be involved in some unexpected risk.	2/1.8%	14/12.7%	28/25.5%	41/37.3%	25/22.7%	3.81	0.991
I feel that I might get attacked by other people on social media sites.	3/2.7%	17/15.5%	34/30.9%	39/35.5%	17/15.5%		
I am concerned that the information I submit on social media could be misused.	4/3.6%	21/19.1%	39/35.5%	27/41.8%	21/19.1%		

Note: SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, NE = Neutral, AG = Agree, SA = Strongly agree, Std = Standard deviation.

#### 4.4 Effort expectancy

Table 4 illustrates that from the descriptive analysis, the biggest group of interviewees answered ‘strongly agree’ (43.6%, 46.7%, 30.9%) with the level of agreements, followed by ‘agree’ (39.1%, 42.7%, 41.8%). Thus, the effort expectancy positively influenced students’ trust in using SNSs. The study discovered that the average mean score was 4.05 and the standard deviation was 0.842. Additionally, the trust and continuity of social media users were significantly related to the degree of effort expectancy. Furthermore, the imitations of social media users were formed on trust through social browsing, social search, profile identification, and contact maintenance activities. Ultimately, social media applications must provide users with easy and clear navigation, easy contact with users, and enjoyable amenities. The facilities produce user-friendly concepts and develop user trust.

Table 4: Effort expectancy

Statement	SD	DA	NE	AG	SA	Mean score	Std.
Learning to use social media would be easy for me	1/0.9%	2/1.8%	16/14.5%	43/39.1%	48/43.6%	4.05	0.842
My interaction with social media would be clear and understandable	2/1.8%	4/3.6%	24/21.8%	47/42.7%	34/30.9%		
Using social media to interact with friends would be easy for me	1/0.9%	2/1.8%	15/13.6%	46/41.8%	46/41.8%		

Note: SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, NE = Neutral, AG = Agree, SA = Strongly agree, Std = Standard deviation.

#### 4.5 Network Effect

The 110 valid respondents were assessed on the use of social media platforms as the primary source for news, knowledge sharing, and communication with family and friends. The descriptive statistics in constructs of every item revealed that using social networking applications impacts network effect, as shown in Table 1.3. Most participants responded with ‘agree’ (40.9%, 38.2%, 38.2%), and ‘strongly degree’ (38.2%, 39.1%, 26.4%) as SNSs impact personal lives. The average total value was 3.52, SD = 0.876. Table 5 depicts the descriptive data of the social media platform content assessment. The social networking services atmosphere produces a network effect on information, communication, and interaction which establishes users’ trust.

Table 5: Network Effect

Statement	SD	DA	NE	AG	SA	Mean score	Std.
My social media makes it easy for me to share information with others.	1/0.9%	3/2.7%	19/17.3%	45/40.9%	42/38.2%	3.52	0.876

My social media networks keeps me connected even when I am on the move.	1/0.9%	1/0.9%	23/20.9%	42/38.2%	43/39.1%		
My social media network incorporates feedback functionalities.	1.0.9%	11/10.0%	27/24.5%	42/38.2%	29/26.4%		

Note: SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, NE = Neutral, AG = Agree, SA = Strongly agree, Std = Standard deviation.

#### 4.6 Students' Trust

Table 6 illustrates the study outcomes in descriptive forms. Trust is a significant influence in social media. Results indicated that trust is a key basis for behavioural purposes, which positively impacted the ongoing social media use. The largest group of respondents answered 'neutral' (41.8%, 46.1%, 50.9%), followed by 'agree' (29.1%, 28.2%, 21.8%). Nevertheless, the average mean score on SNSs for students' trust was 3.91, with a standard deviation of 0.889. Most significantly, as higher education institutions continue employing social media to engage students in learning activities, enhancing the prominence of trust, and the factors of students' trust in using the platforms are vital. Thus, universities could be better equipped to assist in teaching and learning.

Table 6: Students' Trust

Statement	SD	DA	NE	AG	SA	Mean score	Std.
I believe social networking services are trustworthy.	8/7.3%	19/17.3%	46/41.8%	32/29.1%	5/4.5%	3.91	0.889
I believe my social media friends are trustworthy.	4/3.6%	13/11.8%	51/46.1%	31/28.2%	11/10.0%		
I believe social networking services are trustworthy.	4/3.6%	17/15.5%	56/50.9%	24/21.8%	9/8.2%		

Note: SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, NE = Neutral, AG = Agree, SA = Strongly agree, Std = Standard deviation.

#### 4.7 Social Networking Services Use

Table 7 illustrates SNSs use and users' influence trust factors based on the students' statements. The results of the descriptive analysis suggested that the average mean was 3.51 with a standard deviation of 0.901, indicating that all respondents felt moderately good using SNSs. Results revealed that most respondents were inclined to agree (50.0%), stating that "I can easily discuss academic matters with lecturers and classmates via social media". Thus, using SNSs influenced the trust issue. People seek information via social networking platforms and blogs. If users of social trading trust a website, the trust is reflected in the reviews and information on the platform, expandable from one user to another. Past studies attempted to identify major elements impacting the trust of potential cloud adopters.

Table 7 Social Networking Services Use

Statement	SD	DA	NE	AG	SA	Mean score	Std.
I can learn easily to use social media for learning.	5/4.5%	5/4.5%	19/17.3%	51/46.4%	30/27.3%	3.51	0.901



I can communicate with lecturers more conveniently through social media.	4/3.6%	4/3.6%	22/20.0%	44/40.0%	36/32.7%		
I can easily discuss academic matters with lecturers and classmates via social media	3/2.7%	4/3.6%	18/16.4%	55/50.0%	30/27.3%		

Note: SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Disagree, NE = Neutral, AG = Agree, SA = Strongly agree, Std = Standard deviation.

## 5. Conclusion

The study investigated University Malaya undergraduate students (during the survey period) who rely heavily on social media platforms for academic learning, communicating with friends, sharing knowledge between members of the social networking sites, and updating the newest social media information. Future studies should examine more young adults by identifying people from a particular tertiary school as the target research demographic. Studies should also extend the scope of the survey by including young working adults no longer in tertiary schools to obtain results that are more reflective of Malaysian youth's broader demographic background.

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