

Social Media as A Tool for Improving Communication Skills of College Students

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Abstract

India is a country of young people. The youngsters use the social media proactively. Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp are the most widely used social media networking sites in India. The present research aims to explore how social media can be used constructively to improve communication skills for college students. The study is experimental in nature. The north-east region is considered for the present study. The simple random sampling was used in this regard. Facebook was introduced as a new communication tool or control group control in which the status quo is maintained. The results demonstrate that Facebook integration enabled teachers to reach out to students more effectively, bridging communication gaps associated with the dropout phenomena. The research also discovered a decrease in the course failure rate, pointing to a beneficial effect on student retention. Additionally, students' general course performance increased, supporting Facebook's ability to be a catalyst for greater learning outcomes. The calculated incorporation of Facebook as a supplementary means of communication in the distinctive educational environment of North-East India has potential for establishing meaningful faculty-student contact, reducing dropout rates, and improving student accomplishments in online education.

Keywords: Distance Learning, Facebook, Higher Education, Social Media, Student-Instructor Communication

1. INTRODUCTION

A new realm of communication has emerged as due to the expansion and popularity of online social media (Alakrash, et. al. 2021). To create, work together, and share their knowledge and wisdom, more than a billion people are linked and networked globally. It is impossible to overstate the importance of information to management in any organisation. Because of this, it is essential for organisation leaders to make sure that information is appropriately disseminated throughout the personnel. Before staff members can properly complete their jobs, they must be well-informed (Azlan, et. al. 2019). The act of sending and receiving information is what we mean when we talk about communication. It is the transfer of knowledge from one person to another. The process of communicating information between two or more individuals may also be referred to as it. Organizational leaders are frequently anticipated to communicate frequently. This necessitates that these leaders have the knowledge and abilities essential for effective information distribution. In other words, communication serves as a means of coordination for organizational tasks (Erarslan, 2019). The study specifically targeted secondary schools. Secondary school principals are charged with carrying out the mission of the institution; as a result, they need to be able to communicate effectively with individuals who may help them achieve their objectives.

Social networking has become a staple in students' daily lives. It has transformed how pupils communicate and think. Students utilize social media as a platform for a variety of activities, including building relationships, relocating connections, talking about shared interests, etc. (Gaikwad, 2019). The availability of smartphones has increased students' interest in using social media as part of their everyday routines. The college students are more techno-savvy to use social media. In the upcoming years, it is

predicted that this number would increase further. However, the use of social media has a significant influence on the social and academic lives of students (Hosen, et. al. 2021). Positive consequences include improving their communication abilities, shaping their personality, and influencing their character. However, social networking has been proven to have detrimental impacts, including time wastage and a decline in school scores.

Social media is more than simply a tool for information searching. With the use of social media, people may interact with one another, do business or engage in commerce, establish new acquaintances, reignite existing connections, and track down tragically missing family members. Because of its usability, virtual entertainment has enormously smoothed out the correspondence interaction. Web-based entertainment exercises incorporate internet based correspondence and systems administration utilizing text, pictures, and video. Online entertainment is a class of electronic administrations that help the creation and circulation of client produced content. It is established on the philosophical and innovative standards of Web 2.0 (Khan, et. al. 2021). Virtual entertainment advances have been made to allow clients to access and remark on material that has been composed by others as well as to keep up with, make due, and work on friendly connections between individuals. Understudies can without a doubt learn at whenever and wherever because of these changing learning conditions.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The social networks may significantly contribute to raising awareness among students and society about the need of trustworthy information sources through the provision of alternative knowledge sources (Lestari, 2019). Social media are tools that leverage online and mobile technologies to provide fully coordinated stages where individuals and networks can share, produce, examine, and change client created content. Web-based entertainment, otherwise called person to person communication, is a by and large created and conveyed sort of media that interfaces gatherings. Interpersonal interaction destinations are online apparatuses that allowed clients to speak with each other by setting up private data profiles, giving companions and collaborators admittance to those records, and trading messages and texts. Giving occasions of virtual entertainment, interpersonal interaction locales like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, online conversation gatherings, discussion channels, and message sheets, video sharing sites like Flickr and Vimeo, blogs, wikis, and social bookmarking are all examples of social media.

A fundamental aspect of students' lives now is social media (Qureshi, et. al. 2022). It has completely changed the way that students interact, think, and communicate. Students utilize social media as a platform for a variety of activities, including strengthening relationships, tracking down connections, talking about shared interests, and more. With the availability of smartphones, students are increasingly inclined to incorporate social media into their everyday lives. Social networks and information and communication technology may be utilized as powerful tools to advance teaching strategies and boost students' academic achievement in an online setting.

Academic performance is defined as an individual's show of ideas, abilities, thoughts, and data, and it is recommended that grades precisely mirror an understudy's exhibition. Performance is the quantity of worthwhile work completed by an individual in relation to the amount of time and resources used. Typically, performance is described in terms of grade point average. The main factor in graduate and postgraduate selection and employment that predicts occupational position is grade point average (Stathopoulou, et. al. 2019). Academic performance is a measure of how well each student has done in their schooling. Due to the importance of business education to a country's growth, students' academic success in this subject is significant.

A crucial programmer at tertiary institutions is business education, which has the power to liberate and energize the populace in order to promote national growth. It is an academic programmer designed to instill in the students the information, understanding, values, technical abilities, and business skills needed in the workplace and for instructing other business students. Students studying business education should focus on developing technical, manipulating, and cognitive habits that can be used with social media platforms, equipment, tasks, processes, and operations (Van Den Beemt, et. al. 2020). These abilities are needed on a worldwide scale by companies, employees, and individuals to run new technology, which social media platforms rely on. Social media have permeated modern culture and are the focus of both students' and staff's obsessive attention. It is unclear how much social media is influencing or supporting students' academic work or how it affects academic success. Social media, despite its significant drawbacks, is possibly the most significant shift in recent decades in terms of inter human connection and students' academic participation.

3. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To investigate how Facebook and other social media sites affect college students' involvement and communication abilities
2. To examine the connection between students' academic success, including assignment completion and grades, and their use of social media
3. To inquire at the influence of social media on students' chosen routes for academic communication
4. To provide suggestions on how social media platforms might be used in classrooms to improve communication and engagement between college students

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lacka, E., Wong, T. C., & Haddoud, M. Y. (2021) This research looks at whether or not students can succeed in higher education with the help of virtual learning environments (VLEs) and social media (SM). It uses a two-stage strategy that takes into consideration the role that technological resources play in determining the exact correlations between HE inputs and outputs (Lacka, et. al. 2021). The research indicated that although VL may improve goal attainment with extra inputs, kids are best off not depending on digital tools. Students that use SM, however, are the least productive. The results recommend more study on the careful use of VL and SM in HE settings.

Bobkina, J., Domínguez Romero, E., & Gómez Ortiz, M. J. (2020) Digital video is increasingly being used in language classrooms to improve both active production and auditory reception abilities. The goal of the current study is to provide a trio of lesson plans built around the use of instructional mini-videos that support students' development of speaking skills through an active learning approach (Bobkina, et. al. 2020). These lesson plans were used in an undergraduate ESP course for engineering students at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), but they may be simply modified for use in other ESP/EFL/ESL contexts. We want to inspire language instructors all around the world to use instructional films into their lessons in fresh ways.

Xiuwen, Z., & Razali, A. B. (2021) The advancement of technology, especially social media, has completely changed the arena of learning and acquiring English language communication skills. The Covid-19 epidemic has brought to light the value of TikTok, a well-known social media site, in helping Chinese foreign undergraduate students improve their English communication skills. Few research, however, have examined its effects on EFL undergraduate students' development of communicative

ability in the English language (Xiuwen, & Razali, 2021). The purpose of this essay is to examine the potential of TikTok and other social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and WeChat for enhancing students' English communication skills and piquing their interest in using it. The anticipated results may show the potential of TikTok for foreign undergraduate Chinese students outside of EFL courses to boost their interest in speaking English and enhance their English communication skills. The researchers will provide their critical opinions, suggestions, and implications for using TikTok to help EFL undergraduate students improve their English language communication skills.

Abbas, J., Aman, J., Nurunnabi, M., & Bano, S. (2019) The learning habits of university students are greatly influenced by social media, which is essential for establishing sustainable education. With technology making the globe smaller, the effect of social media on students' attitudes and learning is becoming more and more obvious. The purpose of this research is to better understand the link between the positives and negatives of social networks and university students' attitudes towards learning. It investigates how positive and negative influences on students' thoughts and how they communicate both good and bad characteristics to others. The research received 831 complete/valid answers from university students between the ages of 16 and 35 using a cluster sampling methodology. The study examined students' usage of social media through the lens of the social pleasure theory, uncovering 18 factors that may be both harmful and beneficial (Abbas, et. al. 2019). The study demonstrates a connection between social media's antagonistic and creative traits and suggests directions for future research to better comprehend how people utilize web-based social networks.

Namaziandost, E., & Nasri, M. (2019) The use of social media by EFL instructors has grown as they realize the necessity to stray from the norm. Speaking is difficult to teach in traditional schools since writing and reading are often valued more highly than speaking. 100 EFL professors and 100 students participated in the study at Islamic Azad Universities in Iran. The research discovered that both instructors and students are highly impacted by regular use of social media. Through practical pedagogy, the research also showed how ready instructors are to incorporate social media into EFL environments (Namaziandost, & Nasri, 2019). It is vital for instructors to enhance their teaching process with proper social media usage and encourage global knowledge among EFL students since technology is thought to help students react favorably in language classes. This will facilitate their successful interaction and communication in English.

Sari, F. M., & Wahyudin, A. Y. (2019) this article explores students' thoughts on Instagram utilization in the classroom and on language learning as a whole to get insight into how they approach the English for Business course. The study included 116 undergraduates from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science at the University of Teknokrat Indonesia. Observation, questionnaires, and interviews were used to gather data, which was then examined both statistically and qualitatively (Sari, & Wahyudin, 2019). The findings indicated that most students had very favorable opinions of utilizing Instagram for studying, since it affected their attitudes, motivation, and engagement. But they said that issues with internet connection speed, misunderstandings, and poor communication prevented them from learning. Instagram may aid in the learning of the English language, indicating the need for better technological instruction and the development of appropriate digital literacy in academic topics.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We conducted an empirical study to check the veracity of our findings. After carefully choosing individuals, we randomly assigned them to one of two groups: a control group and a treatment group. They then gave the treatment group access to a social networking site and tracked their activity on it. The results of the control and treatment groups were aggregated and compared at the end of the study. The

treatment group was given access to a web-based survey to gauge their opinions of how well the social media tool engaged them and helped them finish the course.

- a. **Research Context:** At a state funded college in North-East India, we played out this concentrate in an internet based expertise based early on IT course. All understudies studying business should accept this course. The program stuck to demanding Quality Matter TM standards and was all around planned. A release barricade is set for course refreshes, there is a deep rooted course the board site for correspondence (a Craving 2 Learn item), and due dates are conspicuously shown in both the outlines of the learning modules and the course schedule. Understudies' messages are destined to be replied in 12 hours or less. Moreover, the instructor gave kids a cell phone number where they could message inquiries. As per the course educational program, understudies needed to contact the educator through the course the executives site, yet they may likewise involve the school's email in a crisis. Taking everything into account, suitable endeavors were made both inside and outside the course the board framework to empower effective understudy teacher correspondence. Ten practical assignments are given each week for this course, and they make up 50% of the final mark. In other words, a student will be extremely likely to fail the course if they are unable to get high scores on their assignments. Most of the participants in this course were sophomores or juniors with a variety of majors. Three online sections of students were asked to take part in our research. The same teacher taught all three parts using the same course materials. Thus, possible confounding variables were decreased. Each part had between 30 and 50 students enrolled, giving our research a comparatively high sample size of 170.
- b. **Selecting Social Media Tools:** There are a number of social media platforms accessible, some of the most popular of which include Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Facebook has emerged as the most widely used social media platform in recent years, according to the Pew Research Center. Separately, we conducted an informal survey in class and found that Facebook is the most popular social networking site among students. Therefore, Facebook was selected as the social network used in this study.
- c. **Research Design:** Participating in our research were 170 three groups of students enrolled in an introductory IT skills-based online course. The other two portions served as the control group, while one section served as the treatment group. With the exception of Facebook being made available to the treatment group as an extra communication channel, the course settings for the two groups were the identical. The therapy group was given its own Facebook page for the course. Although not obligatory, participation in the course's Facebook page was encouraged for students in the therapy group. The teacher used the same frequency when posting course updates on the course Facebook page, such as assignment reminders. Additionally, inquiries might be posted on the course's Facebook page. Facebook actions for the course were tracked in terms of frequency and content. A questionnaire was given to the treatment group at the conclusion of the trial to get their thoughts on using Facebook as an extra means of course contact. To evaluate the study hypotheses, information on understudy course execution from the benchmark group and the treatment bunch were accumulated and inspected.
- d. **Questionnaire:** Only the treatment group received the specially created online survey. The survey included three sections: one for basic demographic information, another for students' favorite methods of reaching out to teachers, and a third for free-form comments; and section three looked at participants' use of and perceptions of Facebook. The questionnaire's presentation logic was thoughtfully added. For instance, on the off chance that an understudy didn't have a Facebook account, he or she was not given access to any questions on Facebook use. To assure the survey's validity, participation was optional and anonymous.

e. Hypotheses of Study: Facebook, one of the most famous social networking sites, is the preferred communication platform for college students and has successfully engaged students in higher education. We contend that Facebook may assist teachers in communicating with students more successfully given the basic IT course. Students in this class would thus miss fewer assignments and perform better in the class. Our research hypotheses are:

H1. When used as a supplemental communication medium, Facebook may help instructors contact more students in online beginning IT courses.

H2. Students in an online beginning IT course who are given access to Facebook as a supplementary communication medium do better than their peers who are not given this option.

6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The treatment group, which included 170 individuals, received the questionnaire. There were participants in the research from all different age groups. Ages 29 to 38 made up the largest percentage of responders (35.29%), closely followed by 39 to 48 (36.47%). With 11.76% of respondents between the ages of 18 and 28, 49 and 58, and 4.71% above the age of 58, other age groups were also represented. Participants' gender distribution revealed that 61.22% identified as male and 38.78% as female. This suggests that men were somewhat overrepresented among the study's participants. The participants' stated marital status was married in 55.88% of cases, single in 29.41% of cases, and unmarried in 14.71% of cases. This sheds light on the sample's range of marital situations. The individuals' educational backgrounds were diverse. Graduate degrees made up the largest percentage (35.29%), followed by intermediate degrees (29.41%). Holders of secondary qualifications made up 20.59% of the sample, while those with primary qualifications made up 7.06%. 7.65% of the population (7.65%) has higher education credentials. According to the occupational distribution, a sizeable part (35.29%) classified as being in business or self-employment, followed by 24.71% in government employment, 20.59% in the agricultural sector, and 19.41% in the private sector. Moreover, 5.88% of respondents said they were students, demonstrating that a variety of jobs were represented in the sample.

Table 1: Description of the Respondents' Demographics

Variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–28	20	11.76
	29–38	60	35.29
	39–48	62	36.47
	49–58	20	11.76
	Above 58	8	4.71
	Total	170	100
Gender	Male	120	61.22
	Female	50	38.78
	Total	170	100

Marital status	Married	95	55.88
	Single	50	29.41
	Other	25	14.71
	Total	170	100
Qualification	Primary	12	7.06
	Secondary	35	20.59
	Intermediate	50	29.41
	Graduate	60	35.29
	Higher Education	13	7.65
	Total	170	100
Occupation	Agriculture	35	20.59
	Govt. job	42	24.71
	Business/Self-employed	60	35.29
	Private job	33	19.41
	Student	10	5.88
	Total	170	100

a. Communication Method Preference

Participants were asked (a) how they preferred to get in touch with the instructor when they had questions about the course, and (b) what specific strategies they used when asking questions in class. Email was the most popular and often used mode, as seen in Table 2, with texting coming in second. Facebook came in third on the participants' list of favorite ways to communicate with the teacher, while its popularity was quite low. The results didn't surprise us since we used Facebook mostly to educate pupils of important information. Another intriguing discovery was that no student called the lecturer or visited during office hours, two common forms of conventional contact.

Table 2: Preferred Channels of Communication for Participants

Communication Method	Most Preferred (%)	Methods Used (%)
The teacher via email	74.71	71.18
Send the teacher a text	12.94	25.88
Create a question on Facebook	9.76	3.29

Contact the teacher	3.29	0.00
During online office hours, ask	0.00	0.00
Visit the instructor's office when it is open.	0.00	0.00
Schedule a meeting with the teacher.	0.00	0.00

Table 3: Utilization of communications tools

Usage	Course Management Site (%)	Email (%)	Facebook (%)
Daily	11.76	34.71	28.48
2-3 Times a Week	74.12	7.65	14.71
Once a Week	14.12	12.94	3.82
Total	100%	100%	100%

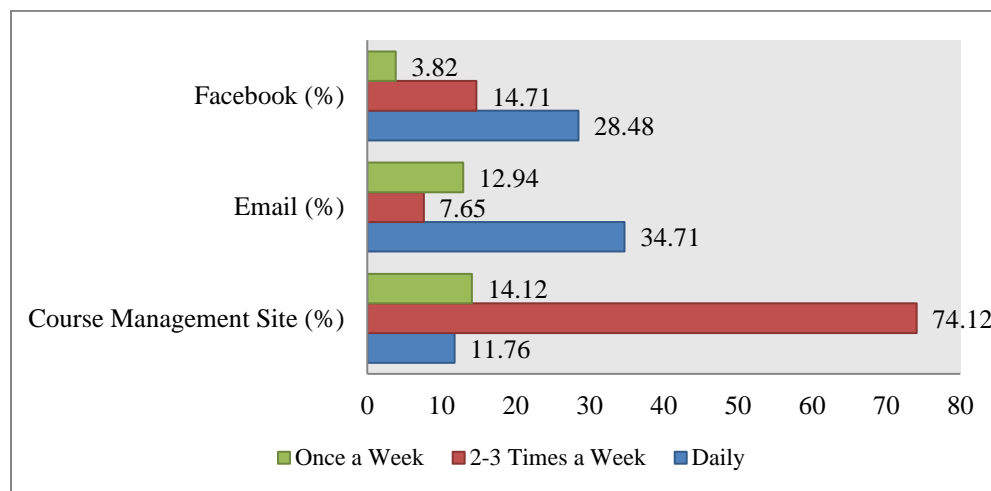


Figure 1: Communications Tool Use

According to the study in Table 3, participants regularly used communication channels, with 11.76% visiting the course administration website and 34.71% using emails on a daily basis. However, a significant percentage of participants (28.48%) used Facebook every day, indicating its usefulness as an extra communication channel. This compares with the daily engagement rate of 11.76% on the course management website. In addition, 92.4 percent of participants were aware of the specific course Facebook page, and 68% of them indicated a preference for liking it (Figure 1). Furthermore, 55.5 percent of participants viewed their Facebook sites regularly (Figure 1). Facebook is a viable additional avenue for student outreach, since conventional strategies like phone calls and the modern college student no longer values office hours. Emails are still widely used as a form of communication, particularly when it comes to correspondence from the school and the course management site. The developing environment of student-teacher interaction may benefit from improved communication as a result of this intentional integration.

b. Facebook's Efficiency

Facebook was utilized rather often in the therapy group in addition to other communication channels: the teacher posted 25 updates on the course's Facebook page detailing impending assignments, tests, and other changes. 47 percent of the participants said they regularly visited the course's Facebook page for updates. Additionally, five Q&A sessions were started by students using the Facebook messaging service. These results indicate that Facebook may be successfully used as an extra communication medium in the context of an online skill-based introductory IT course in North-East India to reach students and promote information sharing about the course. The ubiquity and familiarity of social media sites like Facebook make them useful tools for improving student involvement and communication, even if conventional communication channels are still crucial.

Table 4: Participants' Views on the Effectiveness of Facebook

Helpfulness of Facebook	Percentage
Very helpful	11.76
Quite helpful	21.18
Neutral	60.00
Not so helpful	0.00
Not helpful	6.06
Total	100.00

The treatment group members' opinions on utilizing Facebook in class were questioned. Their reactions were mostly favorable. According to Table 4, 11.76% of participants said Facebook was "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful" for getting course updates, while only 6.06% said it was "not very helpful" or "not helpful". Facebook did assist the teacher efficiently contact more than one third of the class, despite the fact that 60% of respondents gave it a neutral rating. Based on this finding, we conclude that Facebook serves as an additional communication tool that enhances instructor interaction with students. One of the hypotheses is true.

c. Course Performance by Students

We collected participants' course performance information for both the control and treatment groups to analyze the impact of adding Facebook as an additional communication channel on students' course performance. Three criteria were used to assess how well the students performed in the course.

1. The ratio of students who submitted each assignment to the total number of students is known as the assignment completion rate.
2. The ratio of students who submitted an assignment and achieved a C or better is known as the assignment success rate.
3. The percentage of students who passed the course with a grade of C or above is known as the course success rate.

We calculated the overall average of how many assignments students turned in for each part and compared the results to see how they stacked up against one another. We tallied up the percentage of

students who finished each assignment and then divided that number by 10 (there are a total of 10 activities in the course). In a similar vein, the average exercise success rate is calculated by adding up the exercise success rates for all exercises in a section, dividing that number by 10, and subtracting that number from 100. All p-values provided in this study are bilateral, and the two-sample t-test (assumed unequal variances) was used to assess how the control and treatment groups fared on a given measurement.

Table 5: Metrics for Treatment Group and Control Group Evaluation

Metric	Treatment Group	Control Group	P-value
Average Assignment Success Rate	89.4% (5.27%)	72.34% (7.09%)	0.000
Average Assignment Completion Rate	90.0% (5.86%)	76.43% (14.1%)	0.001
Average Calculated Grade Value	3.00 (1.28)	2.00 (1.62)	0.001

As shown in Table 5 ($p = 0.000$), the intervention group had a significantly higher mean homework completion rate than the control group. Compared with the control group, the treatment group had a significantly higher mean success rate ($p = 0.001$). We also compare students' cumulative scores. According to the standard learning process for determining a student's grade point average (GPA), a student's letter grade is first converted to a numerical value as follows: "A" = 4, "B" = 3, "C" = 2, "D" = 1, and "F" = 0. The score values of students in a section are averaged to obtain a grade number of values for each component. The mean score of the treatment group was significantly higher than that of the control group, as determined by the t-test with a p-value of 0.001.

Table 6: Letter Grade and Course Success Rate for Treatment and Control Groups

Letter Grade	Treatment Group	Control Group	Subtotal
A	48.57%	23.40%	24.47%
B	25.71%	21.28%	20.21%
C	11.43%	21.28%	19.15%
D	5.71%	2.13%	4.26%
F	9.16%	42.82%	40.12%
Course Success Rate	74.62%	76.85%	63.83%

Table 6 compares the scoring patterns of the control group and the experimental group. The percentage of students in the intervention group who scored "A" was much higher than the control group, while the number of students who scored "F" tended to be the opposite. This demonstrates that the treatment group had a much higher average success rate than the control group. Tables 5 and 6 indicate that the treated students far outperformed the untreated students across all measures of academic success.

Because of the similarity between the learning environments of the treatment and control groups, we can conclude that providing students with Facebook as an additional communication option in an online course improves their grades. Therefore, H2 may be proven.

5. CONCLUSION

This study looks at how well Facebook works as an additional means of communication for online classrooms, with a particular emphasis on measuring learning outcomes. The results demonstrate that Facebook may assist instructors in connecting with students more effectively, decreasing the number of students who fail classes and improving academic achievement. This study's findings, which emphasize the value of social media platforms like Facebook in promoting communication, show that students prefer email and electronic communication medium for interactions with teachers. The research does, however, have certain drawbacks, such as the use of a small treatment group that only took one course section and assumed identical academic competence to the control group and treatment group. This is because all business students must take the participating class as an introduction course. Furthermore, the research was unable to get the academic records of participants at the time of the study.

To enhance instructor-student connection, this study may be expanded to many classrooms, looking at various social media and communication technologies. To improve instructor-student connection, researchers might investigate various methods, such as Google Hangouts. Facebook may be used to evaluate its effects on instructor-student engagement in an online learning setting as an additional communication tool. To learn more about how social media technologies could enhance other forms of communication, such student engagement, further study is required. Additionally, it's important to investigate the negative implications of utilizing social media technologies in the classroom, including student use of personal accounts, teacher accessibility, and the line between appropriate and excessive communication. These "social" impacts of involving virtual entertainment in the study hall need further consideration and research.

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