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## The Effectiveness and Utilization of Social Media as Academic Medium in the UNC College of Education

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### ABSTRACT

Various literature has seen the potential of Social media as one of the interventions to distance learning, particularly amidst the global health crisis. It establishes that some applications are not only meant for entertainment, some of which can be of great value to learning. For this reason, this study aims to test the Effectiveness and Utilization of Social Media as an Academic Medium in the UNC College of Education to provide concrete evidence of what particular activities social media be integrated with the teaching-learning process. The study used a mixed-method design. It adopted a survey and interview instrument towards the perspective of students and teachers on social media as a tool for academic medium. The researchers determined the number of participants for the college professors through a Non-probability sampling technique, while the purposive sampling technique was utilized in determining the number of students. The study results show that most students and teachers used social media, particularly Facebook and Messenger, for communication and collaborative learning. Also, the study proves that social media platforms were highly effective and served as students' alternative LMS, which increases students' engagement with the teaching-learning process. The study realized that social media platforms help students develop learning experiences and creativity towards attaining academic achievement and boosting academic performance in making projects or assignments. Moreover, social media platforms offer a variety of activities that can be integrated into the achievement of teaching-learning. Some were used as a communication tool, be an alternative LMS where students could submit assignments, and be an announcement board where teachers could send updates and notifications. Therefore, it was recommended that social media platforms be maximized in the classroom, and teachers ensure that the student-teacher relationship remains despite the restriction to face-to-face learning. However, further research should be conducted to determine the risks and impact of too much use of these platforms on the students' mental, physical, and mental aspects and how this may affect their academic performance if misused.

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## Introduction

The global health crisis caused by COVID-19 has compelled individuals to relocate their everyday tasks to a distant location through technology. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the closure of some companies and the establishment of work-from-home opportunities using technology (Tyagi et al., 2021). Technology, such as cellular phones and laptops, has become one of the most fundamental requirements of every individual to communicate with others at work and study. The educational sector is one of the most impacted, with learning struggling for each student. Worldwide, as a consequence, schools have been closed. Over 1.2 billion children are forced out of school globally (Li & Lalani, 2020). Consequently, education has undergone tremendous changes, most notably the growth of distance learning, which incorporates remote and digital delivery of instruction. It can also be asynchronous, which permits learners to access educational materials at their leisure each week and is devoid of a live video lecture component. As the backbone of distance learning, social media influences the daily lives of adolescents, particularly university students. Digital media and social networking are altering techniques of everyday communication, cooperation, information sharing, and information consumption (Abbas et al., 2019).

Learning in a social media setting has evolved into an essential component of the academic experience. Social media are a collection of online applications built on the technology and conceptual foundations of Web 2.0. These Internet-based apps enable human connection, engagement, and cooperation by permitting the exchange and development of user-generated information (Chan & Leung, 2016).

The University of Nueva Caceres implemented a synchronous class in which students can attend their class by attending online discussion and asynchronous classes for the students who are having a hard time connecting through the internet. The learning never stops, even in different places and circumstances. Online physical education lessons, implemented virtually globally during the 2020 pandemic, were an entirely new experience for teachers and students. The abrupt transition to online classrooms left teachers unprepared and struggling with new teaching methods, requiring them to rely on trial-and-error tactics. Inadequate online teaching practices and a lack of instructor and student preparation for online classrooms hampered the shift (Jeong & So, 2020).

In this light, the researcher chooses to study the Effectiveness and Utilization of Social Media as an Academic Medium in the UNC College of Education to give a distance learning solution. This study focuses on Facebook, Messenger, and Youtube as the three most popular social media platforms used at the University of Nueva Caceres. The study's findings may be especially intriguing for academics since they may motivate them to be more proactive in establishing a curriculum for online learning contexts (Zarzycka et al., 2021).

Social media is a range of online apps built on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0. These Internet-based apps enable human contact, engagement, and cooperation by facilitating the sharing and development of user-generated content. Therefore, bringing it into education is a good transition nowadays. Students, instructors, and parents can use social media to check in and ask or answer questions, making

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communication more accessible and direct. Also, it allows for more e-learning options (Chan & Leung, 2016; West, 2021).

Social media has transformed marketing, and as this post demonstrates, their popularity is still growing in our latest global social media statistics research summary for 2022. Social media is used by approximately 578.4% of the world's population. The average daily usage is twenty-seven minutes (January 2022). The total number of Internet users demonstrates that while 61.8 percent of the world's population is internet users, 4.2 percent are not active social media users, implying future growth opportunities Chaffey, D. (2022). While 80 percent of customers interact with brands on social media, not all social media platforms are designed for this use case. Some are solely for instant messaging.

The use of social media and mobile devices provides benefits and obstacles, with the majority of the positives recognized in accessing course information, video clips, and transferring instructional notes. Students believe that social media and mobile devices are the most cost-effective and convenient ways to access important information (Ansari & Khan, 2020).

For a long time, the Philippines has been regarded as the world's texting capital. Regardless of their socioeconomic status, almost every Filipino owns a mobile phone, no matter where they go or what they do. According to the report, 83 percent of Filipinos polled are social network members, making the Philippines the world's social networking capital, followed by Hungary with 80 percent and Poland with 76 percent (Liao, 2008). Social media will continue to increase in the Philippines and become integral to every Filipino's daily life. The conception and demand of social media content can continue assimilating into local culture. If this is a positive or negative experience, it will depend on their amount of press reading skills and ability to differentiate fact from fiction.

## **Research Methods**

The researcher utilized a mixed method to determine the effectiveness and utilization of social media as an academic medium at the University of Nueva Caceres, College of Education. Thus, quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to collect and analyze the gathered data. At the same time, the qualitative method enabled the researchers to discover and interpret a meaningful understanding of individuals' lived experiences. The study was conducted at the College of Education at the University of Nueva Caceres, City of Naga, Province of Camarines Sur, Region V, Philippines. The primary participants of this study are 30 college students from the College of Education taking Bachelor of Physical Education and four college professors in the same department of the University of Nueva Caceres.

The survey questionnaire is a researcher-made structured questionnaire. The questionnaire's content is divided into four parts: part one is about the student's profile, part two consists of various social media platforms used for academic medium, part three entails the utilization of different social media platforms used for educational medium and part four effectiveness of the social media platforms used for educational medium. A Likert Scale with five scales measures the students' agreement with various statements. The researchers utilized a survey questionnaire for the 30 college students and semi-

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structured one-to-one interviews with four college professors to determine the effectiveness and utilization of social media as an academic medium at the University of Nueva Caceres. Apart from it, the researchers guarantee to adhere to the health protocols from the IATF during the interview. Discussions are audio-recorded with participant approval for an accurate and concise transcript.

## Findings

### *Social Media Platforms Utilized in the UNC College of Education as a tool for Academic Medium*

Table 1 presents the various social media platforms used in the UNC College of Education as tools for academic medium. There are 25 students who are using Facebook which is 29% of the total participants' responses. There were also 24 BPED students who employed Messenger which is 28% of the total participants' responses. On the other hand, there were 21 students which are 24% of the total participants' responses who utilize Instagram. While there were 14 BPED students which are 16% of the total participants' responses that use Twitter and only 3 students who utilize Tumblr which is 3% of the total participants' responses.

These findings show that students have been integrating social media platforms with their academic learning. Since most of them employ Facebook, Messenger, and Instagram as primary tools for academic medium, only a few utilize Twitter and Tumblr as their academic medium tools in the university. It signifies that due to the aftermath of the pandemic, students learned to maximize the use of social media only to increase their potential to learn, which is far from the previous learning modality. They use these social media platforms to actively participate in the virtual environment that allows them to explore, create, communicate, share, and discuss the subject matter.

For many students, Facebook and Messenger help promote interaction between them and their teachers, allowing them to clarify concepts and increase collaborative learning. In the study conducted by Kalelioğlu in 2017, Facebook has been an excellent tool for students to access links for assignments, synchronous communication, and be up to date with announcements. Furthermore, according to a survey, 64 countries worldwide have been mainly using Facebook Messenger (Wong, 2018). Due to its features and convenience, many students chose it over email during academic consultations through audio or video calls (Tananuraksakul, 2019).

**Table 1.** The result of the Social Media Platforms Utilized in the UNC College of Education as a tool for Academic Medium.

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	25	29%
Instagram	21	24%

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Twitter	14	16%
Tumblr	3	3%
Messenger	24	28%
Total	87	100%

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On the other hand, Twitter is advantageous for content sharing in interactive learning and independent learning. [15] (Chawinga, 2017). Also, it offers additional communication where they actively engage with one another or with their professors enabling them to increase their ability to express themselves and overcome their feelings of isolation. [16] (Kunka, 2020). Apart from this, due to its unique characteristics and non-traditional teaching approach, Twitter can improve students' learning capacities, motivation, and engagement during synchronous and asynchronous classes (Malik et al., 2019). At the same time, Mansor & Rahim (2017) discovered that Instagram is an effective medium for student interactions, particularly in the discussion of task-related activities. Since Instagram has spurred their interest in learning, the subjects involved appear to be more motivated, and they love to participate and interact with their friends. Moreover, Instagram can be utilized by students and professors to share announcements, incoming events, and other academic information with photos that are quickly disseminated to a class or various sections.

Subsequently, according to the interview with the two professors in the UNC College of Education, Facebook and messenger were the social media tools they used to communicate with students, do follow-ups, and even disseminate announcements such as schedules of exams and synchronous sessions. Also, it enables them to reply to questions and clarification real-time to their students, which helps them monitor their learning further.

*"...the usual platform that I use is Fb and messenger..."*

*"...I use messenger in giving further instructions and answering queries from the students..."*

The increased assimilation of social media offers practical aspects in various learning applications where it works as a tool for dissemination and learning collaboration (Khan, 2021). In addition, in Pai et al. (2017) investigation, they discovered that using Facebook groups to discuss a scientific point they want to dispute outperformed teachers' expectations. Students eagerly participated in the conversation in Facebook groups through posts and comments, allowing them to express their opinions and positions freely. While social media, particularly Facebook, through informal and formal communication, helps professors maintain students' interest in the subject matter and express their opinions on a particular topic.

The data shows that social media is highly beneficial for teachers and students, particularly in this time when social distancing matters to ensure the welfare of everybody,

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and the only way for all students to learn is through distance learning. Conversely, keeping on track with students learning attitudes and academic performance is critical, knowing that teachers would not be able to monitor them physically. Thus, social media, such as Facebook, Messenger, Twitter, and Instagram, serves as an academic medium to bridge the gap in learning during the pandemic and maintain communication between teachers and students.

### ***Level of Utilization and Effectiveness of Determined Social Media Platforms in the UNCCollege of Education as a Tool for Academic Medium.***

The researchers used five parameters for each level to determine the utilization and effectiveness of the identified social media platforms employed in the UNC College of Education as an academic medium tool. Along with the utilization level, the following parameters are used: submitting assignments, holding a group conversation, upcoming project reminders, boosting vocabulary and grammatical skills, and increasing academic productivity.

### ***Level of Utilization of Social Media Platforms in the UNC College of Education as a Tool for Academic Medium***

The highest weighted mean was 'I typically utilize social media to hold a group conversation with my classmates' (WM=4.31) which is described as Often. Followed by 'I frequently utilize social media to submit academic assignments' (WM= 4.05) interpreted as Sometimes at the second rank. While 'Through the activities in social media, I am able to boost my vocabulary and grammar skills' (WM=3.65) described as Sometimes and in the lowest rank was 'Doing the activities on my social media increase my productivity' (WM= 3.50) interpreted as Sometimes.

### ***Level of Utilization of Social Media Platforms in the UNC College of Education as a Tool for Academic Medium.***

**Table 2.** Level of Utilization of Social Media Platforms

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
I frequently utilize social media to submit academic assignments	4.05	2	Always
I typically utilize social media to hold a group conversation with my classmates	4.31	1	Always
I utilize social media to remind me of the upcoming project	4.00	3	Often

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Trough the activities in social media, I am able to boost my vocabulary and grammar skills.	3.65	4	Often
Doing the activities on my social media increase my productivity.	3.50	5	Often

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The indicators showed that students understand and are aware of how and why social media can be utilized in the academe as a medium of instruction during distance learning. They see social media as a contemporary way of increasing their connectivity, allowing them to formally and informally communicate with professors and peers. It signifies that communication helps them build a strong relationship amidst the pandemic and keep up-to-date reports on professors' announcements and advisories.

However, it was clear that social media provided a moderate to low engagement in using English as their second language. It signifies that students usually employ their mother tongue whenever they communicate with peers and only use the English language to communicate with their teachers. Students rarely use social media regarding requirement submissions since group messaging has a high risk for privacy and confidentiality. While the low motivation to further participate in academic discussion and increase productivity in complying with requirements has been seen among BPED students.

Communication is crucial in education since it allows students and teachers to meet halfway and understand each other to meet the academic and developmental goals. However, the teaching-learning process has been critical to ensuring that students learn during the pandemic. According to [21] Zachos et al. (2018), in their review of journal articles on the use of social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms have influenced the learning process in terms of educational support, communication, collaborative enhancement, and academic performance in relation with student and teacher participation in higher education. Some teachers and students perceive social media platforms as online learning platforms or an online learning management system as an addendum. Apart from this, based on [22] Faizi & Fkihi's (2018) study, students found social media to have a high usability rate, particularly Facebook, in checking assignments, discussing topics with peers, and getting support on academic-related materials.

Regarding the experiences and perspectives of the college professors, the usage of social media in higher education depends on the type of social media platforms and the personality profile of the students. It indicates that students' choice of the type of social media platforms can be associated with their perceptions. According to [23] Sullivan & Koh (2019), regardless of students' gender, personal perspectives and attitudes of students and lecturers can be a significant factor in using social media and how it may promote good practice and develop learning in dealing with academic development. However, for the students to gain confidence in choosing suitable social media platforms and have a broader view of their use in education, teachers need to provide high awareness of being

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accountable users and portray them as role models.

*"...actually, it will depend on what kind of student you are teaching. There are introverts they aren't much using such platforms..."*

*"...some are not used to that type of social media... so that's why it will depend on what kind of student..."*

Therefore, the quantitative and qualitative data show the advantages and disadvantages of using social media platforms as an academic medium. Social media is highly recommended in terms of communication and collaborative learning, which enable students and teachers to communicate anytime and anywhere at a low cost. However, to be used as LMS and to increase productivity among students, social media is not suggested.

### ***Level of Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms in the UNC College of Education as a Tool for Academic Medium.***

The highest weighted mean was 'Social media is an easy tool for me in terms of communication with my professors about my academic concerns' (WM=3.85) which is described as Very Effective. Followed by 'Social media helps me to come up with innovative ideas' (WM= 3.65) interpreted as Very Effective. While 'Social media encourages the development of creativity' (WM=3.50) described as Very Effective and 'Social media enriches students' learning experience' (WM= 3.50) interpreted as Very Effective have tied in the fourth rank. But 'Social media motivates me more than a traditional task' (WM= 3.04) interpreted as Moderately Effective was in the fifth rank.

### ***Level of Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms in the UNC College of Education as a Tool for Academic Medium.***

**Table 3.** Level of Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Social media is an easy tool for me in terms of communicating with my professors about my academic concerns.	3.85	1	Very Effective
Social media motivates me to be more productive than a traditional task.	3.04	5	Moderately Effective
Social media encourages the development of creativity.	3.50	4	Very Effective
Social media enriches students' learning experience.	3.50	4	Very Effective

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Social media helps me to come up with innovative ideas	3.65	2	Very Effective
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The data implies that students found social media an effective platform to raise their concerns and clarify their professors about their academic development and the subject matter.

When students can confidently communicate with their teachers, it increases their communication skills and maintains a professional relationship between them and their teachers. Further, the data implies that more students prefer social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other platforms to communicate with their teachers rather than emails, Google Classroom, Blackboard, and other LMS.

Apart from this, since social media offers a saturated amount of information, it provides students with various ideas on politics, society, economy, trends, and even global issues. On the other hand, social media serves as a digital library for students. It offers vast files of text documents and audio-visual files that can be found in just one click, giving students the convenience of learning. It alludes that they can develop more learning experiences and creativity towards attaining academic progress and increase performance in making projects and assignments. However, social media can only supplement learning experiences but cannot increase motivation to be productive during distance learning compared to traditional tasks.

In the study by Zarzycka et al. (2021), Facebook usage was beneficial for students in terms of communication-wise and collaboration between students and teachers during distance learning since it can offer students to work while on a joined project. It enables students to develop soft skills that will be vital as they progress in school and the real world. Furthermore, effective communication between teachers and students inside and outside of the classroom is critical to the success of the teaching-learning process.

On the contrary, social media platforms have developed a modern understanding and acquaintance with technology, particularly ICT, enriching students' e-learning experiences that resemble traditional learning activities (Gunawan et al., 2018). Balakrishnan et al. (2016) elucidated the value and application of social media as an innovative and successful tool for teaching and learning. The paradigm shift from a physically localized learning model to the broader use of digital technologies, including social media. It would alter the future of education by allowing knowledge, skills, and competencies to be obtained through an e-learning environment. Therefore, social media platforms gain high significance to education since they enhance teaching and learning, motivate and support students learning experiences and development, and develop community connections.

From teachers' point of view, BPEd professors confirmed that social media platforms serve as a communication center in increasing participation between them and students. Also, disseminating instructions and addressing clarification can be done through social media, particularly Messenger applications, since students or teachers can do private messaging.

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“...social media platforms are an effective innovation for us to communicate with our students fully...”

“I made use of Messenger because that is the easiest way of communicating and sharing ideas between my students, and it is easy to attach a file in that application...”

It only signifies that teachers find social media platforms such as Messenger to communicate and give further instructions to the students. It helps students to approach their teachers with concerns they are encountering confidently. Therefore, social media platforms offer a promising innovation to improve teaching-learning during the pandemic without requiring students to subscribe.

### Conclusion

Social media platforms are positively usable and effective as a tool for academic medium since they offer features like the LMS used by students in the university and a convenient way for communicating, which allows them to increase their opportunity to collaborate on a broader span of community. Also, social media platforms assured students that they could comply with their requirements at a low cost during the pandemic. Also, social media serve as an avenue for the students to keep up an up-to-date notification of assignments, updates, clarification, or announcements of projects to ensure that they comply with the needed requirements for the subject. Therefore, it was recommended that social media platforms be maximized in the classroom, and teachers ensure that the student-teacher relationship remains despite the restriction to face-to-face learning. However, further research should be conducted to determine the risks and impact of too much use of these platforms on the students' mental, physical, and mental aspects and how this may affect their academic performance if misused.

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