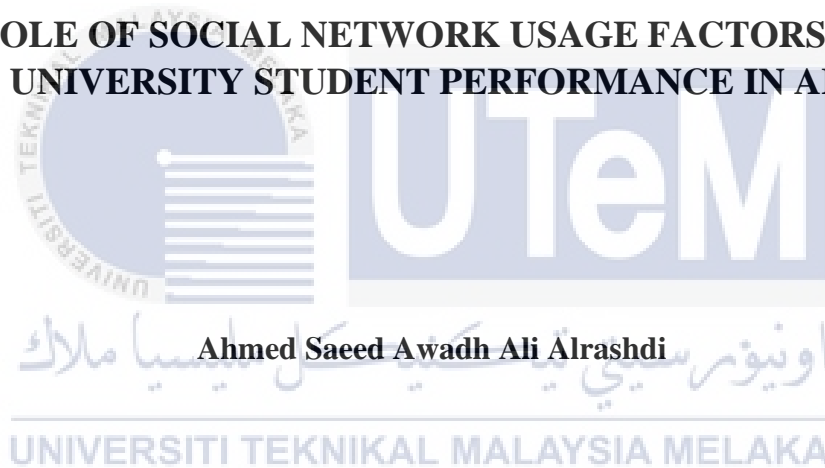




Faculty of Technology Management and Technopreneurship

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORK USAGE FACTORS ON THE
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN ABU DHABI**



Ahmed Saeed Awadh Ali Alrashdi

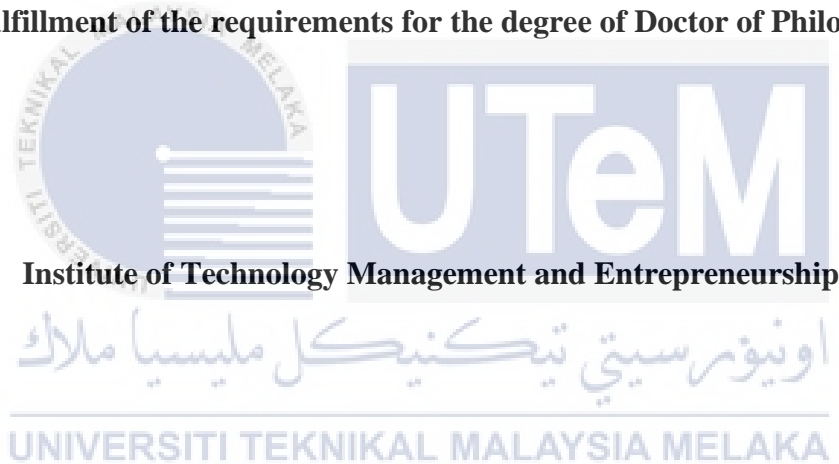
Doctor of Philosophy in Technology Management

2024

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORK USAGE FACTORS ON THE PUBLIC
UNIVERSITY STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN ABU DHABI**

AHMED SAEED AWADH ALI ALRASHDI

**A thesis submitted
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**



UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

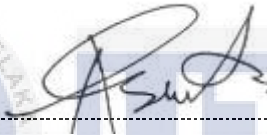
2024

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “The Role Of Social Network Usage Factors on The Public University Student Performance In Abu Dhabi” is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature

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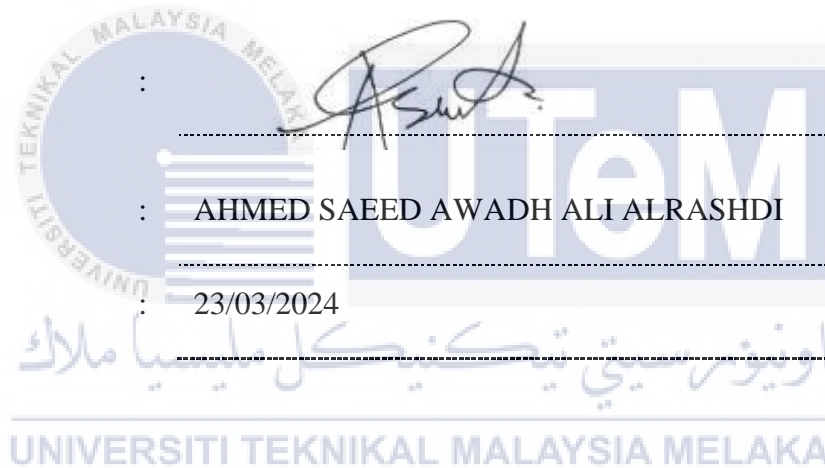
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23/03/2024



APPROVAL

I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and in my opinion this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date : 24/03/2024

اويور سيتي تيكنيكل مليسيا ملاك
UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the inspiring person towards my life... my dear father and my dear mother who always want me to have the best, for her love, the prayers that she made for me.

...To my children...

I am deeply grateful to my children for their unwavering support in pursuing of my objectives, as their presence continues to enrich and complement my sense of happiness and fulfillment..

اونيور سیتی تکنیکل ملیسیا ملاک
...To my great guide...

My dear supervisor, Dr. Nurul Zarirah Binti Nizam for her visions in the Social Network Usage Factors.

ABSTRACT

In the era of digital transformation, social networks have not only altered social interactions but have also significantly impacted educational systems. Despite its ubiquitous adoption, understanding the precise factors that influence student performance within the context of social network usage in higher education remains underexplored. This gap is particularly relevant given the rising importance of quality education in the increasingly competitive global landscape. Thus, the impetus for this research emerges from the need to articulate these influential variables, especially within the confines of higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The primary aim of this study is to identify and assess the factors that influence the utility of social networks and their subsequent impact on student performance. In addition, the research examines the moderating role of service quality within this relationship. Data were collected via questionnaire surveys from students enrolled at Zayed University and Emirates University who actively utilize social networks for academic purposes. A total of 407 valid responses were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through SmartPLS software. The findings underscore that performance expectancy and effort expectancy significantly and positively influence student performance. Conversely, variables related to social influence and facilitating conditions were found to have an insignificant impact. Moreover, the study establishes that service quality significantly moderates the relationships between performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and student performance. This research offers empirically supported explanations and predictions about online social network use and its impact on student performance at public higher education institutions in Abu Dhabi. The contributions of this study are threefold: For individuals, it elucidates how social network usage can enhance efficiency, knowledge acquisition, and decision-making quality. For educational organizations, the research provides insights into how social network utilization can positively affect institutional performance metrics. Finally, at a national level, the study offers evidence that effective use of social networks can have broad implications, potentially enhancing various facets of social, economic, and cultural life in the UAE.

**PERANAN FAKTOR PENGGUNAAN RANGKAIAN SOSIAL TERHADAP
PRESTASI PELAJAR UNIVERSITI AWAM DI ABU DHABI**

ABSTRAK

Dalam era transformasi digital, rangkaian sosial bukan sahaja telah mengubah interaksi sosial tetapi juga memberikan impak yang signifikan terhadap sistem pendidikan. Walaupun adopsinya yang merata, pemahaman tentang faktor-faktor tepat yang mempengaruhi prestasi pelajar dalam konteks penggunaan rangkaian sosial dalam pendidikan tinggi masih kurang diteroka. Kelemahan ini adalah relevan terutama memandangkan kepentingan pendidikan berkualiti dalam lanskap global yang semakin kompetitif. Oleh itu, dorongan untuk penyelidikan ini timbul daripada keperluan untuk mengartikulasikan variabel-variabel berpengaruh ini, terutama dalam konteks institusi pendidikan tinggi di Emiriah Arab Bersatu (UAE). Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti dan menilai faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kegunaan rangkaian sosial dan impak seterusnya terhadap prestasi pelajar. Selain itu, penyelidikan ini juga meneliti peranan perantara kualiti perkhidmatan dalam hubungan ini. Data dikumpulkan melalui tinjauan soal selidik daripada pelajar yang berdaftar di Universiti Zayed dan Universiti Emiratis yang aktif menggunakan rangkaian sosial untuk tujuan akademik. Sejumlah 407 respons yang sah telah dianalisa menggunakan Pemodelan Persamaan Struktural (SEM) melalui perisian SmartPLS. Penemuan menekankan bahawa jangkaan prestasi dan jangkaan usaha mempengaruhi prestasi pelajar secara signifikan dan positif. Sebaliknya, variabel yang berkaitan dengan pengaruh sosial dan keadaan memudahkan didapati tidak mempunyai impak yang signifikan. Selain itu, kajian ini menetapkan bahawa kualiti perkhidmatan memainkan peranan yang signifikan dalam memoderasi hubungan antara jangkaan prestasi, jangkaan usaha, dan prestasi pelajar. Penyelidikan ini menawarkan penjelasan dan ramalan yang disokong secara empirikal mengenai penggunaan rangkaian sosial dalam talian dan impaknya terhadap prestasi pelajar di institusi pendidikan tinggi awam di Abu Dhabi. Sumbangan kajian ini adalah tiga lipatan: Untuk individu, ia menjelaskan bagaimana penggunaan rangkaian sosial dapat meningkatkan kecekapan, perolehan pengetahuan, dan kualiti membuat keputusan. Untuk organisasi pendidikan, penyelidikan ini memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana penggunaan rangkaian sosial dapat mempengaruhi secara positif metrik prestasi institusi. Akhirnya, pada tahap nasional, kajian ini menawarkan bukti bahawa penggunaan rangkaian sosial yang efektif dapat mempunyai implikasi yang luas, berpotensi meningkatkan pelbagai aspek kehidupan sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya di UAE.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	-	Average variance extracted
CFA	-	Confirmatory factor analysis
CR	-	Composite reliability
DMISM	-	Delone and Mclean Information System Success Model
EFA	-	Exploratory factor analysis
GDP	-	Gross domestic product
GoF	-	Goodness of fit
IT	-	Information technology
PLS	-	Partial least squares
SDG	-	sustainable development goals
SEM	-	Structural equation modelling
SPSS	-	Statistical package for the social science
TTF	-	Task-Technology Fit
UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
UAEU	-	United Arab Emirates University
UTAUT	-	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
VIF	-	Variance inflation factor
ZU	-	Zayed University

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Alrashdi, A.S.A.A. and Nizam, N.Z.B., 2022. Factors Influencing the Adoption and Impact of Online Social Networks Use among Students within Public Universities in Abu Dhabi. *resmilitaris*, 12(3), pp.2875-2895. Index in scopus.

Alrashdi, A.S.A.A. and Nizam, N.Z.B., 2023. The Role of Social Network Usage in Public University Student's Performance in Abu Dhabi. *International Journal of Business Society*, 7(12), pp.853-865.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the background of the study, problem statement, which focuses on the problems that are faced by organizations in the UAE and is related to technology usage, and the impact of technology usage on students' performance. The next part is the explanation of the purpose of study, research questions, significance of study, scope of study, definition of terms, and organization of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the study

Throughout history, technologies have appeared that allow more private forms of communication; At present, the ability to access the Internet and smaller and less expensive devices have given rise to great concern about their possible effects on the school performance of their users (Xu et al., 2021). The massive introduction of information and communication technologies in everyday life has created a scenario of infinite possibilities, generating new forms of communication and interpersonal relationships, shaping lives, especially that of children and adolescents. Among the main purposes of technologies, communication, entertainment and academic uses stand out (Saqr and Alamro, 2019).

Although on some occasions the use of these technologies is appropriate, on others it has detracted from the school performance of students. There are different investigations such as that of (Xing, 2019) in which it was established that academic performance is affected by the use of social networks when the time of access to them is prolonged and

indiscriminate, despite the fact that they have great potential to improve activities of a cognitive and educational nature with the correct supervision of a teacher; and the one carried out by (Cazarez, 2022) in which it has been shown that the more hours of use of the Smartphone per week the students worsen the academic performance.

However, during the last decade in the UAE, society, and especially students, have been influenced by an external phenomenon that is the presence and intensive application of new technologies, which include sophisticated computer equipment, state-of-the-art software, mobile phones, portable tablets, internet access (Saqr and Alamro, 2019). Currently, a notable influence in the UAE academic environments is the possibility of student access through a mobile phone to social networks. In the immediate past (maybe 4 or 5 years), the aforementioned social networks were only available on desktop computers. That is, the student who went to university with a cell phone only had the possibility of communicating through calls or text messages (Li et al., 2020). However, as technology has advanced, it has been possible to design new phones, which today are called "smart," that allow almost automatic access to the Internet with certain applications or access to social networks, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. It is evident that these electronic media are now ubiquitous, and being a generation that was born with them, they are already part of the daily lives of students.

For this reason, it is unthinkable to be able to eliminate them without generating great disorder and affectation in individuals. As a result, from an educational standpoint, it is critical to understand and quantify the impact of these mechanisms in order to capitalize on the potential of each of these social networks to help the university's objectives. However, it is also important to point out that this content, being so attractive and so easily accessible, has come to generate compulsive use of the Internet in many cases. Specifically, a situation is reached in which the individual claims to be permanently connected. This addiction can

generate various problems in the subject's relationships with the family, its development in the social environment, and in school performance, the latter being the objective of this research.

Currently, social networks are necessary for society because various activities can be carried out within them, which has caused a radical change in human beings (Al-Yafi et al., 2018). Their success is due to the simplicity and the large number of factors they offer to publish the thoughts of each individual (Verma and Sood, 2018). But it is well known that misuse by students leads to serious educational problems such as lack of concentration in the classroom, little interest when carrying out educational activities, absenteeism in the classroom and, on many occasions, sleep disorders. To these aspects it can be added that the network is more than just connecting to it, because it has to do with people, it is part of the environment; and as important as the network itself, is what is done in it (Bacca-Acosta et al., 2022). To a certain extent, it could be said that the Internet has advanced from information to socialization and collaboration; that is, it is returning to its origins (Li et al., 2020).

The main problem facing society in today's education is not being able to responsibly assume social, cultural and technological changes. It is important to know for what purpose these networks were created, in order to know what advantages, they would provide in the academic development of students. Alternative media have had a great growth from the development of technology, especially the internet (Vignery, 2022). Social networks can be defined as a social structure formed by a group of people linked by common reasons and that make up a structure made up of nodes linked to each other by more than one type of relationship (Vignery, 2022). In the current context, social network web services would come to specify this general definition allowing people with common interests to get in touch

through the network, and jointly exploit resources such as the establishment of subgroups, public or private messaging or the chat, among others.

The origin of these social networks is as heterogeneous as themselves, some, like Facebook, were born to support different groups of students on North American campuses, while others are more professional, like LinkedIn, aimed at establishing work-type contacts. and commercial through what we call network (Baruah and Baruah, 2021). Academic performance is a measure of the student's ability, it expresses the knowledge acquired in the field of education (Zeineddine et al., 2021). In other words, academic performance is a composure of the abilities of an educated person and expresses the knowledge that she has learned throughout the training process. Also, it assumes that students have the ability to respond to educational stimuli. In this sense, academic performance is related to the talent that each student presents during their learning process.

The internet and social networks in particular, are important for the youngest, since on many occasions they give the opportunity for children, young people, adolescents and individuals of all ages feel integrated into a group, in addition, users connect to social networks in search of communication, support and entertainment. Social networks cover basic psychological needs of adolescents: make themselves visible, reaffirm identity before the group, have fun or stay connected to friends (Xie et al., 2018). There are several types of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, WhatsApp, which are the most visited by young people (Shih et al., 2020). People like social networks because they can find new friends of their age, interests social, tastes, among others. In this way they entertain themselves and maintain continuous communication with their network of contacts.

Social networks can undoubtedly be a positive influence in the lives of students, as long as they are used moderately, because they are a great means of communication that allows chatting to carry out tasks and planning some type of virtual work (Popescu, 2021).

Social networks can sometimes be an optimal resource to achieve student learning, as they allow them to work collaboratively, which undoubtedly increases motivation to learn and favors higher academic performance, since there is feedback between the individual and group learning; they improve the retention of what has been learned; enhances critical thinking; and multiply the diversity of knowledge and experiences acquired. And, in the same way, they make learning more interactive and meaningful (Yang and Li, 2018).

The vast majority of students at least have an account in one of the social networks that govern the Internet, due to the ease of creation, filling out and accepting a form where they describe certain guidelines that these networks establish, forming part of them in minutes, starting to experiment or exploit themes never seen before (Saqr et al., 2018). This, with the proper guidance, can be used for students to use social networks as a tool for their learning; however, excessive use of any of these social networks causes poor academic performance in a student (Uceda et al., 2021). During the course of the educational stages, and of the learning processes; the forms and paradigms of teaching have been evolving according to technological, psychological, social advances, among others in the educational environment (Liu et al., 2021), these advances facilitate the use of work factors for students as online forums, where students can share their knowledge in order to facilitate the completion of their academic activities; thereby improving their academic performance.

In recent years, the proliferation of Internet-enabled devices has pervaded various aspects of life, significantly impacting communication patterns, interpersonal relationships, and the educational landscape. Particularly in the UAE, where the adoption of state-of-the-art technologies is not just a phenomenon but a governmental directive, understanding the influence of technology on educational outcomes has become a pressing concern. It is widely recognized that technologies, such as social networks, hold the potential to transform

educational processes, fostering cognitive and academic development (Saqr and Alamro, 2019).

However, their impact on student performance remains a subject of controversy. Some research points towards a detrimental effect on academic outcomes when social network usage is prolonged and unregulated (Xing, 2019; Cazarez, 2022). In the UAE, the integration of sophisticated technologies, including smartphones and tablets capable of running a myriad of social network applications, has radically shifted the dynamics within academic settings (Li et al., 2020). Such transitions call for an evidence-based understanding of how social network use may be affecting the academic performance of students in the UAE's public universities.

To lend a quantitative perspective to this discussion, Figure 1.1 indicates that the UAE's student performance index in 2021 stands at 18.1, significantly below the OECD average. Rather than viewing this merely as an educational shortcoming, this study considers this underperformance through the lens of educational technology. Could the high penetration of technology, particularly social networks, be one of the contributing factors to this academic lag? To juxtapose, Figure 1.2 shows that the UAE ranks tenth in the world in terms of the impact of technology on organizational performance. Surprisingly, this technological prowess has not translated into superior educational outcomes, revealing a palpable research gap.

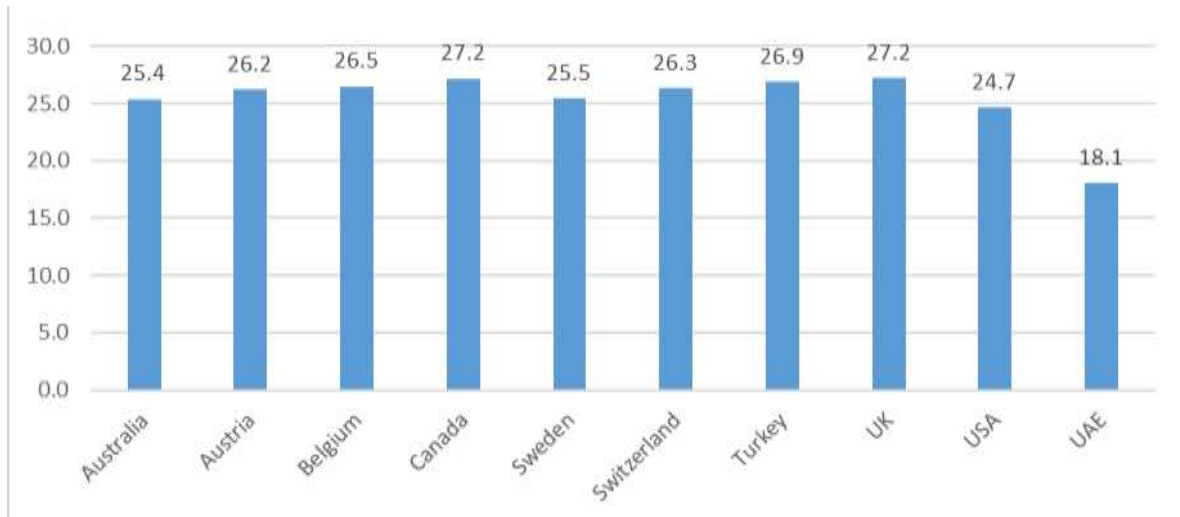


Figure 1.1: Student performance index (OECD, 2021)

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, emphasizes that the nation's vision is to be a global leader in all facets, including technology adoption. Despite this vision, there is a dissonance between the high rate of technology usage and its sub-optimal impact on student performance (Figure 1.2). This disparity amplifies the need for this study, which aims to scrutinize the nuanced relationships between social network usage and academic performance within the specific context of UAE's public universities.

The integration and impact of technology in education are multifaceted issues that demand a comprehensive, empirically supported study. The prevalent social network usage, against the backdrop of the UAE's technological advancement, adds a layer of complexity that this research endeavors to unravel. This study aims to contribute significantly to the corpus of knowledge by not just evaluating the direct impacts of social network usage on student performance but by also introducing moderating variables like 'Service Quality' to update existing theoretical frameworks.