

Understanding the use of social networking sites for academic learning in Bangladesh: Teachers' and students' perspectives

Comprender el uso de los sitios de redes sociales en el aprendizaje académico en Bangladesh: perspectivas de docentes y estudiantes

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ABSTRACT

The growing use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has transformed communication practices and created new opportunities for academic learning in higher education. This study explores teachers' and students' awareness, perceptions, and challenges regarding the use of SNSs as academic learning tools in an undergraduate college in Bangladesh. Adopting a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 25 teachers and five focus group discussions with 40 students across multiple subjects. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings show that, SNSs are widely used for communication, resource sharing, and collaborative learning, contributing to increased flexibility, engagement, and self-directed learning. However, their effective integration into academic practice remains limited due to challenges like distraction, privacy concerns, infrastructural constraints, and lack of institutional

support. A significant gap was observed between students' readiness to adopt SNS-based learning and teachers' pedagogical preparedness. The study contributes to the literature by providing the understanding of SNS use in a developing country and highlighting the transitional nature of its academic adoption. The findings give practical implications for educators and policymakers, emphasizing the need for structured integration, teacher training, and improved digital infrastructure to enhance the effectiveness of SNS-based learning.

Keywords. Teachers' and students' awareness, Social Networking Sites, digital learning, higher education, Bangladesh.

RESUMEN

El creciente uso de las redes sociales (SNS, por sus siglas en inglés) ha transformado las prácticas de comunicación y ha creado nuevas oportunidades para el aprendizaje académico en la educación superior. Este estudio explora el nivel de conocimiento, las percepciones y los desafíos de profesores y estudiantes en relación con el uso de las SNS como herramientas de aprendizaje académico en una universidad de pregrado en Bangladesh. Adoptando un diseño de investigación cualitativo, los datos se recopilaron mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas con 25 profesores y cinco grupos focales con 40 estudiantes de diferentes áreas académicas. Los datos fueron analizados mediante análisis temático. Los resultados muestran que las SNS se utilizan ampliamente para la comunicación, el intercambio de recursos y el aprendizaje colaborativo, contribuyendo a una mayor flexibilidad, compromiso y aprendizaje autodirigido. Sin embargo, su integración efectiva en la práctica académica sigue siendo limitada debido a desafíos como la distracción, las preocupaciones sobre la privacidad, las limitaciones de infraestructura y la falta de apoyo institucional. Se observó una brecha significativa entre la disposición de los estudiantes para adoptar el aprendizaje basado en SNS y la preparación pedagógica de los docentes. El estudio contribuye a la literatura proporcionando una comprensión del uso de las SNS en un país en desarrollo y destacando la naturaleza transicional de su adopción académica. Los hallazgos ofrecen implicaciones prácticas para docentes y responsables de políticas, enfatizando la necesidad de una integración estructurada, formación docente y mejora de la infraestructura digital para aumentar la efectividad del aprendizaje basado en SNS.

Palabras clave. Conciencia de profesores y estudiantes, redes sociales, aprendizaje digital, educación superior, Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital technologies has significantly transformed the pattern of higher education through redesigning how knowledge is accessed, shared, and constructed. Among the technologies, Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have emerged as powerful platforms for communication, interaction, and information exchange. Originally designed for social engagement, SNSs such as Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp etc. are increasingly being utilized in academic contexts, offering new opportunities for collaborative and flexible learning (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). With the increasing adoption of digitalization in education, it is very important to understand teacher's and learner's perception on effectiveness of integrating SNSs as an instructional platform in academic learning.

In the current world of knowledge, a noticeable part of online community has been attracted and made SNSs significantly popular on global scale. As institutions are shifting toward online and blended learning environments, SNSs became important supplementary tools for maintaining

communication and facilitating learning activities (Dhawan, 2020; Bond et al., 2020). These platforms help students to access learning materials, engage in discussions, and collaborate with peers beyond the constraints of time and space, aligning with the principles of student-centered and interactive learning (Ansari & Khan, 2020). The younger generation particularly using SNSs as one of the fundamental parts of daily life and integrating these as a significant element of their learning process (Greer & Sweeney, 2012).

Despite these opportunities, the academic use of SNSs remains a subject of debate. While many studies highlight their potential to enhance engagement, collaboration, and digital literacy (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Tess, 2013), others point to challenges such as distraction, privacy concerns, and the unclear boundaries between academic and personal life (Cain, 2008; Rasheed et al., 2022). Moreover, the effectiveness of SNS-based learning depends not only on technological availability but also on users' perceptions, institutional support, and pedagogical integration (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018). However, it is often experienced that, unwillingness, ignorance and lack of awareness of learners and educators leading a large number of higher educational colleges of Bangladesh reluctant to embrace SNSs as academic learning instrument. It is found that, most of the educators and learners of Bangladesh have lower application, moderate negative perception but higher positive attitude towards the use of SNS in learning purposes (Saha & Guha, 2019). Although access to internet and smartphone usage have increased in recent years, disparities in access and digital competence continue to affect the adoption of educational technologies (UNESCO, 2021; Adarkwah, 2021). As a result, the use of SNSs in higher education in Bangladesh often remains informal and unstructured, driven more by individual initiative than by institutional policy.

Therefore, it is crucial to understand stakeholder's perception to incorporate social networking platform into the instructional process for today's learning communities. Meanwhile, a large number of research are found focusing on student's perception on using SNS in learning process, but in terms of understanding teacher's perception the relevant literature is very limited (Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012). But, in order to a meaningful and successful implication, it is very important to understand both the student's and teacher's perception and understanding of installing this type of learning platform. Moreover, in the context of Bangladesh, number of research are conveyed on the impact of social networks on various aspects of human life, but there has hardly been any study found on the perception or awareness on SNSs of learners and educators (Kabir et al., 2014).

Looking at the research gap, this study aims to explore how SNSs are perceived and used as academic learning tools in an undergraduate college in Bangladesh. By adopting a qualitative approach, this study investigates the level of awareness, the nature of perceptions and the challenges faced by both teachers and students in using SNSs for educational purposes. More specifically, this study answers the following research questions in an integrated manner;

It examines how teachers and students perceive the role of SNSs in academic learning, how SNS platforms are being used to support learning activities, and finally, what are the challenges that affect the effective integration of SNSs into the educational process.

This study incorporates perspectives from both teachers and students that makes the study offering a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of SNS-based learning. It also highlights the gap between technological potential and institutional readiness, offering practical insights for policymakers, educators, and administrators seeking to integrate digital tools into higher education in the context of developing countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) into higher education has attracted increasing scholarly attention over the past decade, particularly with the rapid expansion of digital learning environments. On the way to investigating according to the research objective and research

questions, this section tries to define and explain some of the important contents, their interrelationships and relevant theoretical frameworks based on the review of existing literatures.

Social networking sites and digital learning environments

Online Social Networks are web-based platform with numerous components for the individuals to introduce, identify, connect and share profile online with friends and others (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It supports web based social relationship among people through providing them services like finding people of same interest, searching interesting information on interested subjects, discussing on similar problems as well as storing and sharing private documents (Shohrowardhy & Hassan, 2014). Being launched in the '90s and renovated later, online social networking sites like Myspace, Facebook, Edmodo, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, YouTube and so on are becoming mainstream technology of this current century with additional features and increasing number of users (Prescott, 2007; Hurn et al., 2011).

In the context of education, SNSs are increasingly viewed as components of digital learning environment that enables communication, collaboration, and access to resources (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). Recent studies highlight that, SNSs can support interactive and student-centered learning environments, enabling learners to engage in discussions, knowledge creation, and access various learning materials (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Alenezi, 2023).

Theoretical perspectives on SNS use in education

Educational use of SNSs can be better understood through several theoretical contexts that explain how technology influences learning processes.

Social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978)

Social constructive theory emphasizes that, learning occurs through social interaction and collaborative knowledge construction. SNSs align closely with this perspective, as they provide platforms for discussion, peer engagement, and shared learning experiences. Greenhow & Robelia (2009) showed that, SNS-mediated interaction enhances participation and fosters deeper understanding through collaborative activities.

Technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1989)

Technology acceptance model explains users' adoption of technology based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In educational settings, both teachers and learners are more likely to adopt SNSs when they perceive them as useful for learning and easy to integrate into existing practices (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018).

Self-directed learning theory (Zimmerman, 2002)

Self-directed learning theory is particularly relevant in digital environments. SNSs enable learners to take greater control of their learning by accessing information, engaging in discussions, and managing their own learning pace. This perspective aligns with the findings of Broadbent & Poon (2015) that, social media platforms can promote autonomy and lifelong learning skills.

Together, these theoretical perspectives suggest that, while SNSs offer strong pedagogical potential, their effectiveness depends on user acceptance, instructional design, and contextual factors.

Teacher's and student's perception towards SNS based learning

Many studies report generally positive attitudes, particularly among students, who are often more familiar with digital technologies (Yue et al., 2009 and Alloway et al., 2013). Students tend to appreciate SNSs for its ability to facilitate communication, provide access to learning resources, and support collaborative learning (Tess, 2013; Munshi et al., 2018; Ansari & Khan, 2020). They also appreciate the flexibility and convenience of accessing educational content anytime and anywhere (Claros et al., 2016). Meanwhile, educators on the other hand, shown conflicting perception regarding the acceptance of SNS as academic instrument (Leskovec et al., 2010). While

some recognize the pedagogical benefits of SNSs, others express concerns regarding their informal nature, lack of control, and potential impact on professional boundaries (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2016). Additionally, integration of SNS in education has been explored by Chelly & Mataillet (2012) and Alsolamy (2017) confirming educators and faculty members are having positive attitude and perception on employing it.

Recent research suggests that a gap often found between student expectations and teacher willingness in the context of integrating SNSs in education where formal training and institutional support are limited (Bond et al., 2020).

Benefits and challenges of SNS integration in education

Enhanced communication, increased student engagement, collaborative learning opportunities, and improved access to information are highlighted in several studies as the benefits of using SNSs in education (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Carroll et al. (2012) proved that, initiating SNS into the formal learning brings positive result for students learning outcome and using SNS to their learning process makes it more innovative and longer lasting.

However, besides these advantages, number of potential challenges have been widely reported by previous studies. One major concern is the potential for distraction and misuse, as SNSs are primarily designed for social and entertainment purposes (Rasheed et al., 2022). Issues related to privacy, cyberbullying, and data security also exhibit risks for both students and teachers (Cain, 2008; Henderson et al., 2010; Landoll et al., 2013). Moreover, technological and infrastructural limitations such as limited internet access, lack of devices, and insufficient institutional support remain critical barriers, particularly in developing countries which can restrict the effective use of SNSs in education (UNESCO, 2021; Adarkwah, 2021).

Despite growing research on the use of SNSs in education, important research gaps are still remaining, particularly in the contexts of developing countries like Bangladesh where infrastructure, institutional capacity, and digital literacy limit the applicability of findings from developed countries. Existing studies also tend to focus on either students or teachers separately, overlooking the critical interaction between these groups. Moreover, much of the literature emphasizes either the benefits or challenges of SNS use, with limited balanced and context-specific analysis. Addressing these gaps, this study adopts a qualitative approach to examine both teachers' and students' awareness, perceptions, and challenges, offering a comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of SNS integration.

METHODOLOGY

Research paradigm

This study is conducted by a qualitative research design with limited descriptive presentations to explore teachers' and students' awareness and perceptions regarding the use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in academic learning. In the context of the exploratory nature of research questions which focus on the experiences, perceptions, and challenges, similar to the study of Wyse (2011), a qualitative approach is appropriate for gathering in-depth insights from participants.

Research setting and context

This research was conducted at a government college of Bangladesh named Government Brajalal (BL) College, Khulna. It is one of the oldest colleges of Bangladesh situated at southwestern region of this country having twenty-one undergraduate subjects from Science, Social Science, Commerce, Arts and Humanities. The selection of this institution is justified by its wide range of academic structure, large number of students, and its representativeness of typical public undergraduate colleges in Bangladesh, where digital learning integration is still evolving. Moreover, the selected college was chosen due to the accessibility and its active use of digital

communication tools among students and teachers. As a typical government college in Bangladesh, it provides a relevant context for examining SNS based learning in a resource constrained educational environment.

Sampling process

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation across different subjects. Five departments such as Political Science, Social Work, Accounting, English, and Chemistry were selected to reflect variation in academic orientation. From each department, five teachers (Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor levels) were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews, resulting in a total of 25 teacher respondents. Teachers were approached through departmental communication and participated voluntarily, introducing an element of self-selection.

For the student sample, 40 undergraduate students were selected to participate in five Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), with each group consisting of eight participants. A 'stratified purposive approach' was used to ensure representation across different academic years within each department. Demographic characteristics of all the respondents of this study is presented by the following Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic features of respondents

CATEGORY		FREQUENCY (IN NUMBERS)	
		Teachers	Students
GENDER	Male	15	26
	Female	10	14
	Total	25	40
AGE (IN YEARS)	18 - 25	0	40
	26 - 35	12	0
	36 - 45	5	0
	46 - 55	4	0
	55 <	4	0
BELONGING DEPARTMENT	Political Science	5	8
	Social Work	5	8
	Accounting	5	8
	English	5	8
	Chemistry	5	8
	Total	25	40

Source: Field survey.

According to the Table 1, 60% of the teacher's and 65% of the student's participants were male while 40% and 35% are female participants respectively. Meanwhile all the 40 participant students were aged from 18 to 25 years while 12 of the teachers were at the range of 26 to 35 years, 5 teachers were aged at 36 to 45 years and 46 to 55 years and more than 55 years' age group has 4 respondents each.

Teachers were selected for this study based on their teaching experience and familiarity with digital tools, while students were selected from different academic years and disciplines to capture diverse perspectives. Participation was voluntary, and efforts were made to maintain gender

balance within groups where possible. All the respondents provided informed consent prior to participation.

Methods of data collection

The following two qualitative data collection methods were used in this research:

1. *Semi-structured interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 teachers to explore their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward using SNSs in academic learning. An interview guide was developed based on the research questions, covering topics such as current use of SNSs, perceived benefits and challenges, institutional readiness and support, and pedagogical implications. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was conducted in a quiet setting within the college premises.

2. *Focus group discussions*

Five FGDs were conducted with undergraduate students to capture collective views and shared experiences. Each session lasted approximately 50-60 minutes and followed a semi-structured discussion guide aligned with the research objectives. FGDs explored the topics like patterns of SNS usage, academic vs. non-academic engagement, perceived effectiveness of SNSs in learning, challenges and concerns for the respondents.

All interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded with participant consent and supplemented with field notes.

Data analysis and processing

All the audio recordings were transcribed word to word. Most of the discussions were conducted in Bangla and were translated into English for analysis while maintaining semantic accuracy.

1. *Thematic analysis process*

Data were analyzed using 'thematic analysis' following Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis followed six systematic steps:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts.
2. Initial coding to identify meaningful units of data.
3. Searching for patterns and grouping codes into preliminary themes.
4. Reviewing and refining themes for coherence and relevance.
5. Defining and naming themes.
6. Producing the final narrative with supporting evidence.

2. *Coding and theme development:*

Coding was conducted manually, and similar codes were grouped into broader categories. These categories were further refined into themes based on patterns observed across participants' responses. Themes were continuously reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and relevance to the research objectives. An 'inductive coding approach' was primarily used to allow the themes to emerge from the data. However, some deductive orientation was applied based on the research questions. In order to enhance analytical rigor, codes and themes were reviewed multiple times to ensure consistency. Representative excerpts from participants were used in the results section to support interpretations. Descriptive statistics were derived from participant responses and are presented to complement qualitative findings.

Trustworthiness and validity

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, multiple strategies were employed, including data triangulation (interviews and focus groups), member checking and peer debriefing. These measures helped enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings. Strategies employed in this study in such a way where, data were collected from both teachers and students, allowing cross-validation of findings for triangulation. Interpretations were grounded closely in participants'

expressed views for ensuring member sensitivity. Detailed contextual and narrative descriptions were provided. In the audit trial phase, systematic documentation of data collection and analysis procedures was maintained.

Researcher positionality

The researcher, being familiar with the Bangladeshi higher education context, acknowledges that, prior understanding may influence interpretation. Reflexive consideration was applied throughout the research process to minimize bias and ensure that findings are grounded in participant perspectives.

Ethical considerations

This study adheres to standard ethical guidelines for social research. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and no identifying information is disclosed in the study. Data were used solely for academic purposes.

RESULTS

From the demographic information it is seen that, this study gets opinions from wide range of variety of teachers and students respective to their age, gender, working positions and studying level which helps the study to have in depth and diversified information regarding the research objective.

Preference and purpose of using social networking sites

This section reveals the answer of the current trend (use, purpose and preference) of using SNS among teachers and students at undergraduate level. Here, the name of SNSs is taken according to the response of the participants at the time of data collection.

According to data shown in Appendix I, largest number among the participants are the user of Facebook and Messenger for both academic and non-academic purposes. WhatsApp and YouTube are also popular among them for both purposes. Almost all the other SNSs in the list are rarely used by the respondents for either reason. But very remarkably, apps like Imo, Instagram and TikTok are used by a large number of students for non-academic especially entertainment purpose. From the responses during interviews and FGDs, it is also known that respondents of this study were very frequent user of SNSs. Average use of these SNSs by the teachers is 3 to 4 hours a day, while for the students it is 6 to 7 hours per day for all the purposes.

Thematic analysis

The analysis of interview and focus group discussion (FGD) data revealed several recurring patterns in how teachers and students perceive and use Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in academic contexts. Four major themes appeared from the data which are discussed below;

Theme 1: SNSs as platforms for collaborative and interactive learning:

Both teachers and students emphasized the role of SNSs in helping communication and collaboration beyond the traditional classroom. Participants explained SNSs as facilitating continuous interaction among peers and between teachers and students.

Students mentioned that SNS platforms allow them to engage in group discussions, share materials, and seek clarification at any time:

“Through Facebook groups or Messenger, we can discuss our lessons anytime. Even if we don’t understand something in class, we can ask our friends or teachers online.” (Student, FGD 2)

Teachers also highlighted the potential of SNSs to support collaborative learning environments:

"SNS creates a space where students can interact more freely. It improves communication and helps them to participate more actively compared to traditional classrooms." (Teacher, Interview 7)

This theme reflects a shared perception that SNSs extend learning beyond physical boundaries and promote a more interactive and participatory educational experience.

Theme 2: Flexibility and accessibility of learning:

A prominent theme across both teacher and student responses was the flexibility offered by SNS based learning. Participants appreciated the ability to access learning materials and communicate regardless of time and location. Students particularly valued the convenience:

"We can access notes, videos, and instructions anytime from anywhere. This is very convenient for us." (Student, FGD 3)

Teachers also acknowledged that, SNSs reduce time constraints and support efficient communication:

"SNSs allow me to share materials instantly and give feedback quickly. It saves time and helps maintain continuity in learning." (Teacher, Interview 12)

However, some participants noted that constant accessibility may blur the boundary between academic and personal time, occasionally leading to increased workload for teachers.

Theme 3: Pedagogical and motivational benefits:

Participants identified several pedagogical advantages of integrating SNSs into academic learning. These include increased student engagement, development of digital literacy, and encouragement of self-directed learning.

Students reported that, SNS based learning is more engaging and interactive compared to traditional methods:

"Learning through videos, images, and online discussions makes the lessons more interesting. It's not like just reading books." (Student, FGD 1)

They also emphasized the role of SNSs in fostering independence of learning:

"We can search for information ourselves and learn new things beyond the syllabus. It helps us to become more independent learners." (Student, FGD 4)

Similarly, teachers also observed increased student motivation:

"Students become more interested when technology is involved. SNSs can make learning more dynamic and encourage creativity." (Teacher, Interview 3)

Despite these advantages, some teachers expressed concerns about the appropriateness of SNSs for all types of academic content, particularly where formal instruction is required.

Theme 4: Challenges and risks in academic use of SNSs:

While participants acknowledged the benefits of SNSs, they also raised significant concerns regarding their use in academic contexts. These challenges can be broadly categorized into technological, behavioral, and institutional issues.

One of the most frequently mentioned concerns by both teachers and students was the potential for distraction due to entertainment content:

"When we go online for study, we often get distracted by other posts and videos. It's hard to stay focused." (Student, FGD 3)

"Students may use SNS for non-academic purposes during study time, which affects their concentration." (Teacher, Interview 10)

While the usefulness of SNSs for communication and resource sharing was acknowledged, concerns about distraction reflect the dual nature such as communication and entertainment of these platforms. Concerns about distraction may indicate a broader perception of pedagogical risk, where uncontrolled digital environments are seen as potentially undermining learning outcomes.

Meanwhile, both groups expressed apprehension about privacy and online safety, while teachers were particularly cautious about professional boundaries:

"Sometimes we receive messages from unknown people, which can be uncomfortable." (Student, FGD 2)

"Maintaining privacy and a professional relationship with students is a challenge when using social media." (Teacher, Interview 5)

Moreover, technological and resource constraints such as Limited access to devices and reliable internet was identified as a major barrier:

"Not all students have good internet or devices, which makes it difficult to participate equally." (Student, FGD 1)

"Without proper institutional support and ICT facilities, it is difficult to implement SNS-based learning effectively." (Teacher, Interview 14)

As digital natives, students are found more comfortable and positive for integrating informal platforms into learning context while, teachers more cautious attitude reflects concerns related to professional boundaries, classroom control and the appropriateness of using SNSs in formal educational setting. These differences highlight a gap between technological readiness and pedagogical adaptation.

Furthermore, teachers pointed to institutional and pedagogical barriers like lack of formal integration of SNSs into the curriculum and insufficient training. Some students also noted inconsistencies in teacher engagement:

"There is no clear guideline from the institution about how to use SNS for teaching." (Teacher, Interview 8)

"Some teachers are very active online, but others are not interested at all." (Student, FGD 5)

The reported lack of institutional support suggests that SNS use in academic learning remains largely informal and individual driven. This reflects a broader institutional culture where digital tools are not systematically integrated into teaching practices. In such environment, teachers may be reluctant to adopt SNSs due to the absence of clear guidelines, training, and administrative encouragement.

Overall, the findings suggest that while SNSs are widely used and positively perceived as tools for enhancing communication, collaboration, and engagement, their effective integration into academic learning is constrained by multiple challenges. These include technological limitations, lack of institutional support, concerns about privacy and distraction, and varying levels of digital competence among teachers and students.

DISCUSSION

From the set of continuous interviews and FGDs, this study has significantly explored teachers' and students' awareness, perceptions and challenges regarding the use of SNSs in undergraduate academic learning in Bangladesh. Most of the findings of this research are seen very much aligned with existing literatures in this context. While the results highlight key patterns in participants' perceptions, a deeper examination reveals that, differences are shaped by underlying social, technological and institutional factors. Rather than viewing these findings as isolated attitudes, they can be understood as reflections of broader dynamics like generational differences in digital familiarity, institutional readiness and concerns related to pedagogical control.

Consistent with earlier studies, SNSs such as Facebook, Messenger, and YouTube remain predominantly used for personal and entertainment purposes (Mafiz et al., 2011; Shohrowardhy & Hassan, 2014). However, this study demonstrates a gradual shift toward their academic utilization, particularly for communication, resource sharing, and collaborative learning, which is also observed in more recent studies on digital learning adoption (Dhawan, 2020; Alenezi, 2023). This dual pattern can be explained through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), where users' adoption depends on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). In this study, although perceived usefulness is increasing, full integration is constrained by concerns regarding privacy, distraction, and institutional limitations. All those findings are consistent with number of recent higher education research (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018; Rasheed et al., 2022). In the context of

Bangladesh, this transformation found to be driven less by formal institutional strategies and more by informal adaptation by users. Similar patterns have been identified in developing countries where digital learning adoption often emerges organically rather than through structured policy frameworks (Adarkwah, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings of this study strongly support the idea that, SNSs function as platforms for collaborative and socially constructed learning, aligning with social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Participants emphasized peer interaction, discussion, and knowledge sharing, which are central to collaborative learning environments. This is also consistent with studies showing that, SNSs enhance interaction, participation, and knowledge co-construction among students (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Waral, 2018). However, the present study adds nuance by revealing an imbalance between student enthusiasm and teacher readiness. While students are more inclined toward self-directed and participatory learning, teachers often face challenges related to digital competence and institutional support (Brady et al., 2010 and Sahu, 2014). This gap reflects what recent research describes as a mismatch between learner expectations and pedagogical adaptation, particularly in developing educational systems (Bond et al., 2020).

Moreover, findings from this study indicate that, SNSs can enhance student motivation, engagement, and digital literacy, supporting the principles of student-centered and self-directed learning (Zimmerman, 2002; Broadbent & Poon, 2015). Students reported increased interest due to interactive and multimedia-based learning environments. Previous studies have similarly highlighted the role of social media in fostering engagement and active learning in higher education (Tess, 2013; Ansari & Khan, 2020). However, this study also demonstrates that, SNSs can simultaneously facilitate learning and create distractions, echoing findings from recent literature on digital overload and multitasking (Rasheed et al., 2022). Therefore, SNSs should be understood as pedagogically neutral tools, whose effectiveness depends on instructional design and structured integration rather than mere availability.

A significant contribution of this study also lies in identifying context-specific structural barriers in Bangladesh. Limited internet access, lack of devices, and insufficient institutional support emerged as major challenges. These findings align with global research on digital inequality, which emphasizes that, access to technology remains uneven, particularly in developing countries (UNESCO, 2021; Adarkwah, 2021).

Additionally, concerns about privacy, security, and inappropriate interactions were strongly expressed by both teachers and students which are widely documented in the literature, where SNS use in education raises issues of professional boundaries, cyber safety, and ethical conduct (Cain, 2008; Henderson et al., 2010). Teachers, in particular, face challenges in balancing accessibility with professionalism, a concern also highlighted in recent studies on digital identity in education (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2016).

Along with this, the findings of this study have important implications for business and management education, particularly in resource-constrained environments. SNSs offer cost-effective platforms for enhancing essential skills in modern business education such as collaboration, communication, and knowledge sharing (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Therefore, at the end of this discussion it can be concluded that, this research contributes to the existing literature through identifying the gap between student readiness and institutional preparedness, highlighting role of infrastructure and digital inequality, emphasizing the need for ethical and pedagogical frameworks, and providing empirical insights from a South Asian undergraduate context. It also contributes to the research world by moving beyond single group analyses and offering a comparative understanding of both teachers' and students' perspectives. Unlike prior studies that focus primarily on benefits or challenges, this research provides a balance and context-sensitive analysis that captures both opportunities and constraints.

CONCLUSION

This study explored teachers' and students' awareness, perceptions, and challenges regarding the use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in undergraduate academic learning in Bangladesh. The findings indicate that, while SNSs are widely used and increasingly recognized for their academic potential, their integration into formal education remains partial, informal, and constrained by multiple structural and pedagogical factors.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital pedagogy by offering a context-sensitive understanding of SNS use in higher education within a developing country setting. While prior research has largely emphasized either the benefits or drawbacks of SNSs, this study provides a more balanced and integrative perspective, showing that, SNSs function as both opportunities and challenges depending on contextual conditions. The findings reinforce the relevance of social constructivist learning theory, highlighting how SNSs facilitate collaborative knowledge creation, peer interaction, and participatory learning. Importantly, the study introduces the notion of a "transitional adoption phase" of SNSs in higher education in Bangladesh, where students demonstrate high readiness and adaptability, while institutional frameworks and pedagogical practices lag behind. Here, the concept of transitional adoption phase refers to a stage where SNSs are increasingly used for academic purpose but remain informally integrated, lacking structured institutional support and pedagogical alignment. This contributes to theoretical discussions on technology adoption by emphasizing the role of contextual and systemic factors in shaping educational innovation.

The findings of this study offer several actionable insights for policymakers, educational administrators, and faculty members, particularly in the context of business and management education. First, there is a need for structured institutional policies and guidelines for integrating SNSs into academic learning. Institutions should clearly define the role of SNSs in teaching, assessment, and communication to ensure consistency and effectiveness. Second, targeted professional development programs should be introduced for teachers. These programs may include training on digital pedagogy, online classroom management, content moderation, and maintaining professional boundaries in digital environments. Third, the development of ethical guidelines and digital conduct policies is necessary to address concerns related to privacy, cyber safety, and appropriate online behavior. Encouraging the use of separate academic and personal accounts can also help maintain professional boundaries. Finally, SNS-based learning should be strategically integrated into curriculum design, rather than used informally. Structured activities such as moderated discussion forums, group assignments, and feedback sessions can help maximize the educational benefits of SNSs while minimizing distractions.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First of all, the study was conducted in a single public undergraduate college, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions or regions. Moreover, the findings are based on self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by personal bias or social desirability. Not focusing on specific SNS platforms or pedagogical models can be identified as another limitation of this research. Further research should focus on suitable pedagogical models regarding particular SNSs, assess the long-term impact of SNS-based instruction on teaching-learning, and explore institutional framework for sustainable technology integration in higher education.

In conclusion, Social Networking Sites hold significant potential to transform undergraduate education by enhancing communication, collaboration, and access to knowledge. However, their successful integration requires more than technological availability. For example, it demands institutional commitment, pedagogical innovation, and responsible usage frameworks. By addressing existing challenges, SNSs can become a valuable component of modern higher education systems in Bangladesh and similar contexts.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I. List and frequency of using SNS (Percentage in the Parenthesis)

Name of SNSs	Teachers (Frequency) N=25		Students (Frequency) N=40	
	Personal or non-academic use	Academic use	Personal or non-academic use	Academic use
Facebook	25 (100%)	19 (76%)	38 (95%)	37 (92.5%)
Messenger	25 (100%)	20 (80%)	39 (97.5%)	38 (95%)
WhatsApp	24 (96%)	20 (80%)	32 (80%)	28 (70%)
YouTube	22 (88%)	17 (68%)	32 (80%)	30 (75%)
Twitter (Currently "X")	5 (20%)	4 (16%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)
Skype	15 (60%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
MS Teams	4 (16%)	10 (40%)	0 (0%)	7 (17.5%)
Instagram	14 (56%)	0 (0%)	24 (60%)	0 (0%)
Imo	10 (40%)	0 (0%)	16 (40%)	2 (5%)
Viber	10 (40%)	0 (0%)	8 (20%)	5 (12.5%)
TikTok	13 (52%)	0 (0%)	7 (35%)	0 (0%)
LinkedIn	5 (20%)	7 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Snapchat	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (10%)	0 (0%)
Myspace	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)

Source: Field survey.