The Impact of Social Networking Websites on the Improvement of Self-awareness among Students at Mu'tah University

Dr. Asma Naiyf Salti Saraireh

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, faculty of educational Sciences, Mu'tah University

Abstract

   The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using social networking websites on the improvement of self-awareness among students at Mu'tah University and whether the social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, Cyworld, Bebo, and Twitter could improve self- awareness from the students' point of view, and also aimed to investigate the effect of year, and GPA on the point of view of students. To achieve the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was distributed among students to measure their self -awareness.

    The study sample consisted of 45 students 24 males and 21 females from Mu'tah University. Means and standard deviations and t-test were used to analyze the results.

The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in the views of the students on the effectiveness of social networking websites on improving self-awareness, also showed a statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \geq 0,05$) in their views due to the gender variable, as there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \geq 0,05$) in their views due to the year variable, and results also showed the existence of clear statistically significant differences in the views of the students on the effectiveness of social networking websites on improving self-awareness due to the general point average of the students (GPA).

Key words: Social Networking Websites, Self- Awareness

Introduction

Social media networking has taken over the world. Face book is at the forefront of the social media craze, with over 500 million active users on its website every month. University students are one of the primary demographics using face book, with features such as photos, wall posts, and status updates becoming seemingly irresistible to those who want to connect with their friends.

The University culture loves face book, embraces it and has turned the site into a lifestyle, rather than just a hobby or a fun pastime. Academic success is paramount issues to any student, with the pressure to belong to social networks. Are they really meeting up with the pressure to succeed academically? In this paper, an attempt will be made to take a look at these two major forces in a university student's life in Nigeria and see if we could find a relationship between the two (Ogedebe et al, 2012)

Defining social Networks

Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, Cyworld, Bebo and other social network sites are, perhaps, the best examples of O‟Reilly‟s (2005) Web 2.0 environment, where audiences have become co-authors on interactive websites.5 In a similar fashion as blogs, SNS allow individuals to present themselves to other users using a variety of formats, including text and video. Just like chat services. Social-networking sites and facebook_Socializing via the Internet has become an increasingly important part of young adult life (Gemmill & Peterson, 2006). Relative to the general population, adolescents and young adults are the heaviest computer and Internet users, primarily using it for completing school assignments (46%), e-mail and/or instant messaging (36%), and playing computer games 38% (DeBell & Chapman, 2006). Social-networking sites (hereafter SNS) are the latest online communication tool that allows users to create a public or private profile to interact with people in their networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). SNS incorporate a list of other users with whom individuals share a connection. But unlike any other web service, SNS allow individuals to make visible their list of connections to others and to traverse their social networks (boyd & Ellison, 2007). Hence, more than virtual Lessons from facebook 5 communities born online, SNS are usually online communities created and maintained to reflect offline relationships.

Valkenburg et al. (2006) found that the more people used social networking sites, the greater the frequency of their interaction with friends was, which in turn had a positive impact on participants' self-esteem and their satisfaction with life. On the other hand, some researchers found no correlation between Face book use and GPA (Kolek and Saunders, 2008; Pasek et al, 2009) or found negative correlation between Face book use and academic achievement measured by self-reported GPA and hours spent studying per week (Karpinski and Duberstein, 2009; as cited in Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010). A recent study found that Face book users reported lower GPA's and spent fewer hours per week studying than non-users (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010).

 However, it's possible that the quality of Face book use (that is, the purpose Face book is used for, rather than just the quantity of it), is what's relevant to the impact Face book use has on academic performance. If Face book is used intensively for academic purposes and/or essential or supportive communication with others, positive impact on academic achievement could be expected. On the other hand, if intensively used for recreational purposes only (e.g., playing games, tagging photos, looking at video links), negative impact on one's academic performance may be expected since in this scenario, students possibly devote too much time to Face book on expense of studying.

What may be especially relevant to the negative impact of Face book use on academic performance is whether Face book use interferes with the performance of the academic tasks (for example through multitasking). Increasing number of studies show that today's college students watch television, type out instant messages or engage in Face book activities while simultaneously performing their academic tasks, like studying, doing schoolwork or homework (Junco and Cotten, 2010; Huang and Leung, 2009). However, evidence suggests that no matter how good one is at multitasking, he/she can never be as effective and efficient as when doing one thing at a time, because the switching back and forth between activities increases the mental work (Jackson, 2008).
Mayer and Moreno's cognitive theory of learning and information (Chandler and Sweller, 1991) explains why multitasking may also have a negative impact on learning. They took the idea from the cognitive load theory that the processing capacities of visual and verbal working memories are limited and further explained that presenting too many elements for processing can lead to overload, which then results in some of the elements not being processed. Once cognitive processes are overloaded, deeper processing and learning is impossible (Mayer and Moreno, 2003). Cognitive load theory can explain the negative effect of multitasking in terms of the split-attention effect. Information from two independent sources competes for visual attention and cognitive processes of the learner, causing a split-attention effect. Multitasking can impact the learning process through a form of information overload (Mayer and Moreno, 2003) and split-attention effect. Supporting this theory, research has shown that students who multitask report on detrimental effect on their schoolwork (Mayer and Moreno, 2003; Junco and Cotten, 2010). According to Mayers and Moreno (2003, page 45), essential processing refers to the focus of cognitive processes on making sense of the presented material, which includes selecting, organizing and integrating words and images; incidental processing are essential aspects of the presented material, and *representational holding* refers to processes aimed at holding verbal or visual representations in working memory. So, if a student frequently interrupts his/her academic activities with *Face book* activities, it may be expected that their academic performance will suffer, because splitting their attention between *Face book* activity and academic task at hand reduces the capacity for essential processing and for representational holding, while it increases the incidental processing. Based on this theory, this study hypothesizes that using *Face book* simultaneously with attempting to study or perform some other academic tasks (like writing essays for example), will result in impaired academic achievement, or at least in academic achievement not being as good as it could be.

From the methodological standpoint it is also important to differentiate the research which compares *Face book* users and non-users on personality variables and academic achievement and the type of research investigating the relationship between *Face book* use and academic achievement in *Face book* users. Therefore, this study will compare *Face book* users and nonusers based on age, academic achievement and self-esteem. Since it is expected that the majority of students are using *Face book* nowadays, *Face book* users may not differ from *Face book* non-users in academic achievement. Also, it is possible that non-users are older, since younger people are more inclined to use the newer technologies. However, since research in Croatia is yet to support any comparison between *Face book* users and non-users, this study formed research questions on these matters as well.

Significance of the Study
Because of its popularity among students in schools and universities, questions about the impact of Face book and other networking use on self- awareness need to be raised. Several studies have suggested that engagement in social networking is related to students' involvement (Heiberger and Harper, 2008), academic success and performance proficiency (Steinfield et al, 2008; Hwang et al, 2004; Yu et al, 2010). It has been suggested that students' social networking with peers and teachers can be a way for obtaining information, knowledge, social acceptance and support, which can then lead to higher levels of their self-esteem, satisfaction with university life and consequently performance proficiency (Yu et al, 2010).

Statement of the Problem
Students spend much time while using social networking. In most cases this time is a waste time because they only chat or discuss social issues, this also may affect their performance in all topics because they may not find

time to study and do homework. The researcher tried to engage students in learning through using networks, students will find it more interesting than traditional way. Besides, they will share information relating their topics with their peers and this will affect and develop their self-awareness. So, it is clear that teachers can make use of social networking websites and from the long time students spend while using it by engaging them in sharing links relating specific topics and also they may have their tasks done. The researchers conducted this study to investigate the effect of social networks on improving students' self-awareness, and whether teachers can change networks to an effective tool to develop students' personality.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using social networking websites on the improvement of self- awareness among students at Mu'tah University and whether the social networking websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, Cyworld, Bebo, and Twitter could improve self-awareness from the students' point of view, and also aimed to investigate the effect of year, and GPA on the point of view of students. To achieve the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was distributed among students to measure their self-awareness.

Questions of the Study
The researcher tried to answer the following question:
1- What is the point of view of students at Mu'tah University on the effectiveness of using social networking websites on improving self- awareness?
2- Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of the students at Mu'tah University on the effectiveness of using social networking websites on improving self- awareness due to the year (first year, second year)?
3- Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of the students at Mu'tah University on the effectiveness of using social networking websites on improving self- awareness due to GPA of the students (low, high)?

Limitations of the Study
This study is limited to all female students at Mu'tah University.

Literature Review
In the study of Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), they found a significant negative relationship between Face book use and academic performance. Face book users reported lower mean GPAs and reported spending fewer hours per week studying on average than Face book nonusers. A majority of students claimed to use Face book accounts at least once day. Similar results are also reported in Vanden Boogart (2006), Canales et al., (2009) and Junco (2012).

Junco (2011) studied the relationship between Face book usage and student engagement, a construct related to positive college outcomes. Face book was found negatively correlated with engagement scale score and positively correlated with time spent in co-curricular activities.

Junco (2012) examined the relationship among numerous measures of frequency of face book use with time spent preparing for class and overall GPAs. Hierarchical linear regression analysis showed that time spent on face book was strongly and significantly negatively correlated with overall GPA.

Roblyer et al., (2010) reported that Face book have the potential to become an appreciated source to support students' educational communications and associations with faculty. A comparison between faculty and student responses indicates' that Students are more open to the possibility of using Face book and similar technologies to support classroom work while Faculty members are more likely to use more traditional technologies such as email.

Hargittai (2008) studied a sample of 1,060 students and found that overall 88% students use social network site, 74% report using at least one social network site frequently and only one student have not heard any of the six social network sites included on the survey. Over 12% respondents do not use any of them. Face book is the most popular service among these students, with almost four in five using it, and over half of the overall sample doing so repeatedly. Lenhart and Madden (2007) found that youngsters use social networks for the creation and the maintenance of friendships. 7% of the teens were using the Face book. 22% use social network sites several times a day, 26% once a day. 49% use social network sites to make new friends, 91% using to stay in touch with existing friends. Youngsters from middle and lower income families were more likely to say that they use the

sites to make new friends than higher income teens.

Khan (2009) found that 65 percent of Face book users accessed their account daily in several times to see if they had received new messages. The amount of time spent varied from just a few minutes to more than an hour on Face book at each login. The Ohio report shows significant lower GPAs among students who use Face book than those who didn't use the site. 79 percent students using Face book believed that the time spent on site had no impact on their academic performance. According to the study, teens spend an average of 31 hours a week online. Ellison et al., (2007) conducted research to examine the relationship between use of Face book, and the establishment and maintenance of social capital and one's ability to stay linked with members of a previously settled community.

Design and Methodology

Population of the study
The population of the study consisted of all first and second year psychology students at Mu'tah University.

Sample of the study
The sample of the study consisted of 45 students 24 males and 21 females from The World Islamic Science & Education University in Jordan; a questionnaire was distributed among them.

Instrument of the study
A questionnaire was distributed among the first and second year students at Mu'tah University and this questionnaire was designed by the researcher himself, it consisted of 25 items. Many variables were included such as the year and GPA of the students.

Reliability of the instrument
To ensure the questionnaire reliability, the researcher applied it to a pilot sample of (10) students excluded of the study sample in the same university with a two-week period between the first and second time it was distributed. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using correlation coefficient sand it was found 0.90 which is suitable to conduct such a study.

Procedures of the study
A questionnaire about students' point of view about the effectiveness of using social networking websites on improving self-awareness at Mu'tah University was given to 45 students. After that the researcher collected the questionnaires and collected data, and then this data was analyzed statistically.

Statistical analysis
The results were analyzed for each item in the questionnaire using suitable statistical methods such as mean and standard deviation. The researcher also used figures to clarify the results more.

Findings of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using social networking websites on the improvement of self-awareness among students at Mu'tah University and whether the social networking websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, Cyworld, Bebo, and Twitter could improve self-awareness from the students' point of view, and also aimed to investigate the effect of gender, year, and GPA on the point of view of students. To achieve the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was distributed among students to measure their self-awareness.

A questionnaire was distributed among 45 students from Mu'tah University in Jordan. Means and standard deviations and T-test were used to analyze the results

To answer the first question about students' point of view towards the effectiveness of using social networking websites on the improvement of self-awareness: What is the point of view of students at Mu'tah University on the effectiveness of using Social Networks on self -awareness? A questionnaire was distributed among them and means and standard deviation were calculated. Results were shown in table 1

Table 1: students' point of view about the effectiveness of using social networking websites on improving self-awareness

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	4.61	.698
Q2	4.49	.715
Q3	4.42	.805
Q4	4.49	.858
Q5	4.33	.848
Q6	4.32	.767
Q7	4.59	.693
Q8	4.51	.732
Q9	4.18	.907
Q10	4.43	.877
Q11	3.97	1.000
Q12	4.23	.884
Q13	4.47	.905
Q14	4.46	.880
Q15	4.30	.837
Q16	4.41	.806
Q17	4.47	.759
Q18	4.39	.879
Q19	4.54	.741
Q20	4.44	.784
Q21	4.33	.945
Q22	4.63	.679
Q23	4.52	.755
Q24	4.54	.672
Q25	4.42	.812
QALL	4.42	.584

Table 1 show that there are statistically significant differences in students' point of views about the effectiveness of social networking websites on self-awareness. It shows the results of the questionnaire which was distributed among (45) students about their point of views about the effectiveness of social networking websites on self-awareness. Means and standard deviations were calculated and results show that question 22 got the highest mean which was (4.63); question 11 comes next with a mean of (3.97).

Standard deviation for question 22 was (0.679) which is higher than ($\alpha \leq 0, 05$) so it means that it is statistically significant. Standard deviation for question 11 was nearly the same; it was (1.000) which is also statistically significant.
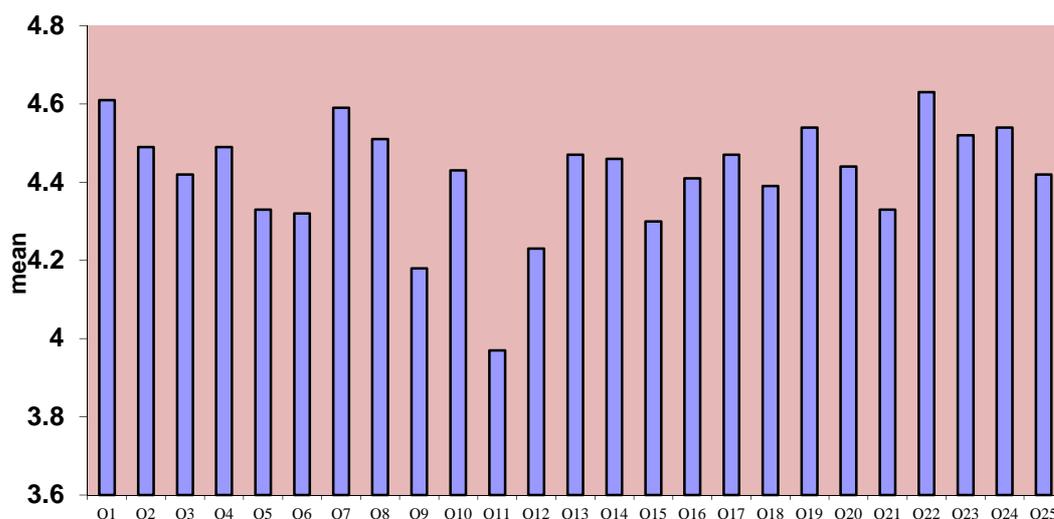
Diagram 1: students' point of views about the about the effectiveness of social networking websites on improving self- awareness

It is clear in the diagram that the mean of question 22 was the highest mean, question 1 comes next. The mean of the (4, 8, 19, and 24) are nearly the same, so students' point of view about the effectiveness of social networking websites on self- awareness.

To answer the second question about students' point of views and year: Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of the students at Mu'tah University on the effectiveness of using social networking websites on improving self-awareness due to the year (first year, second year)? Means and standard deviations were computed and table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: Means, standard deviations and t-test according to year variable

Year Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
First year	26	4.26	.722	-3.387	168	.001
Second year	19	4.55	.385			

Table 3 shows there are statistically significant differences due to year variable. It shows the results of the questionnaire which was distributed among (45) students about their point of views about the effectiveness of social networking websites on self-awareness. Means and standard deviations were calculated and results show that students who are in the first year got a lower mean than students who are in the second year which was (4.26, and 4.55) respectively; this indicates that year have an effect on students' point of views.

Standard deviation for students who are in the first year was (0.722) which is higher than ($\alpha \leq 0, 05$) so it means that it is statistically significant. Standard deviation for students who are in the second year was lower; it was (0.385) which is also statistically significant. So, table 3 shows there are statistically significant differences due to the year variable in favor of the second year students.
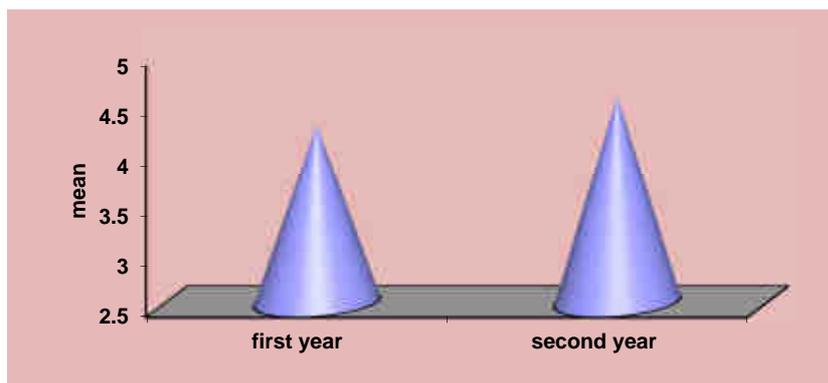
Diagram 2: Means, standard deviations and t-test according to year variable

Diagram 2 shows that students of the second year got positive point of views about the effectiveness of social networking websites on improving self- awareness than students of first year.

To answer the third question about students' point of views and their GPA: Are there any statistically significant differences between the views of the students at Mu'tah University on the effectiveness of using social networking websites on self- awareness due to GPA of the students (low, high)? Means and standard deviations were computed and table 3 shows the results.

Table 3: Means, standard deviations and t-test according to GPA variable

GPA	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Low	31	4.22	.853	-2.299	168	.023
High	14	4.47	.482			

Table 3 shows there are statistically significant differences due to GPA variable. It shows the results of the questionnaire which was distributed among (45) students about their point of views on the effectiveness of social networking websites on improving self-awareness. Means and standard deviations were calculated and results show that students with high GPA got a higher mean than students of Low GPA which was (4.47, and 4.22) respectively; this indicates that GPA of the students have an effect on students' point of view.

Standard deviation for students of high GPA was (0.482) which is higher than ($\alpha \leq 0, 05$) so it means that it is statistically significant. Standard deviation for students with low GPA was higher; it was (0.853) which is also not statistically significant. So, table 4 shows there are statistically significant differences due to GPA variable in favor of students with high GPA.

So, table above shows there are statistically significant differences in students' point of views due to GPA variable in favor of students with high GPA.
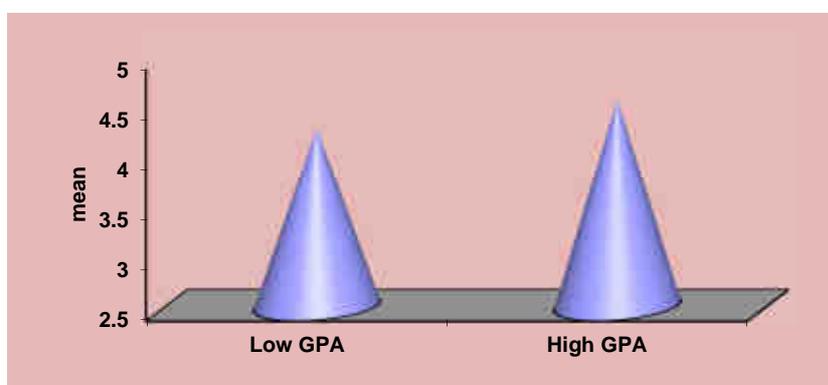

Diagram 3: Means, standard deviations and t-test according to GPA variable

Diagram 3 shows that students with high GPA got positive point of views about the effectiveness of social networking websites on improving self- awareness than students with low GPA.

Conclusion

Social networks are powerful tools with which students can develop some social skills in a low anxiety setting and interesting, rich and comprehensive input. Previous research shed light on the deep impact of using social networks on the development of self- awareness. Students show positive attitudes towards using social networking websites to communicate with peers.

References

Boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13, 210-230.

DeBell, M., & Chapman, C. (2006). Computer and Internet use by students in 2003 (NCES 2006–065). US Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics

Chandler, P. and Sweller, J. (1991). Cognitive load theory and the format of instruction, Cognition and Instruction, 8, 293±332

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook ''Friends'' Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 12, 1143–1168. Facebook (2011) Statistics [Electronic] Available: http://www.Facebook.com/press/info.php?statstics

Gemmill, E. & Peterson, M. (2006). Technology use among college students: Implications for student affairs professional. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 43(2), 280-300. Retrieved from http://journals.naspa.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?content=jsarp&article=1640&date=&mt=MTMxNjA1MDg4OA==&access_ok_form=Continue

Hargittai, E. (2008). Whose Space? Difference s Among Users and Non-Users of Social Network Sites. Jour nal of Computer Mediated Communication, 13, 276–297

Huang, H. & Leung, L. (2009). Instant messaging addiction among teenagers in China: Shyness, alienation, and academic performance decrement. Cyber psychology& Behavior, 12(6), 675-679

Hwang, A., Kessler, E. H. & Francesco, A. M. (2004). Student networking behavior, culture, and grade performance: An empirical study and pedagogical recommendations. Academy of Management Learning and Education, 3(2), 139-150

Junco, R. (2011). The relationship between frequency of Facebook use , participation in Facebook activities, and student engagement. Computers & Education, 58, 162 – 171.

Junco, R. (2012). Too much face and not enough books: The relationship between multiple indices of facebook use and academic performance. Computers & Education, 28, 187-198.

Junco, R. & Cotten, S. R. (2010, in press). Perceived academic effects of instant messaging use. Computers & Education, In Press. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2010.08.020

Khan, U. (2009). Facebook students underachieve in exams. Digital and media Correspondent.

Kirschner, P. A., & Karpinski, A. C. (2010). Facebook and academic performance. Computers in Human Behavior, 26, 1237–1245.

Kolek, E. A., & Saunders, D. (2008). Online disclosure: An empirical examination of undergraduate Facebook profiles. NASPA Journal, 45(1), 1–25

Lenhart, A., & Madden, M. (2007). Teens, Privacy & Online Social Networks. Pew internet and american life project report.

Mayer and Moreno, 2003 R.E. Mayer, R. Moreno Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning Educational Psychologist, 38 (2003), pp. 43-52

Ogedebe, P., Emmanuel, J. & Musa, Y. (2012) International Journal of Engineering Research and Applications (IJERA) Vol. 2, Issue 4, pp.788-797

O'reilly, T. 2005a. What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the next generation of software. O'Reilly website, 30th September 2005. O'Reilly Media Inc. Available online at: http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html

O'reilly, T. 2005b. Web 2.0: Compact Definition. O'Reilly Radar (blog), 1st October 2005. O'Reilly Media Inc. Available online at: http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2005/10/web_20_compact_definition.html

Pasek, J., More, E., & Hargittai, E. (2009). Facebook and academic performance: Reconciling a media sensation with data. First Monday, 14(5).

Roblyer, M. D., McDaniel, M., Webb, M., Herman, J., & Witty, J. V. (2010). Findings on Facebook in higher education: A comparison of college faculty and student uses and perceptions of social networking sites. The Internet and Higher Education, 13, 134-140.

Steinfield, C., Ellison, N. B. & Lampe, C. (2008). Social capital, self-esteem, and use of online social network sites: A longitudinal analysis. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 29, 434-445

Valkenburg, P.M., Peter, J., & Schouten, A.P. (2006). Friend networking sites and their relationship to adolescents' well-being and social self-esteem.Cyberpsychology & Behavior, 9(5), 584–590.

Yu, A. Y., Tian, S. W., Vogel, D. & Chi-Wai Kwok, R. (2010). Can learning be virtually boosted? An investigation of online social networking impacts, Computers & Education, 55, 1494-1503