

# How Students are Using Social Networks? Emotional Intelligence as a Determinant

Sobuh Abu-Shanab, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Emad Ahmed Abu-Shanab, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

## ABSTRACT

Social networks are now being used by the majority of Internet users and are becoming an important part of social life. This exploratory study utilized a sample of 254 high school students to explore their social networks' use and its relationship to emotional intelligence dimensions. The study used a newly developed survey to explore the area, understand student's use level/pattern, and answer the research question. Results indicated that only the motivational dimension and social emotional management were significant in predicting the use of social networks. Further conclusions and analysis are described in this paper.

## KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence, High School Students, Jordan, Performance, Social Networks, Use Patterns

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is influencing our lives and even how we conduct business. Individuals are using social media for all purposes like socializing, education, entertainment, and many other purposes (Alquraan, Abu-Shanab, Banitaan & Al-Tarawneh, 2017). One of the major applications of social media is social networks (SNs), where millions of people are connected for the purpose of utilizing an open domain for interacting with others and socializing with all types of media (text, voice, images, or videos). This phenomenon has influenced student's behavior and even student's academic performance (Abu-Shanab & Al-Tarawneh, 2015). The influence of social networks on students' performance is based on formal interactions with instructors, acquiring help from their social network, and acquiring extra resources for educational purposes.

Social networks are "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). The use of social networks is open for all users (if they have an account on certain platforms). Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and other platforms are opening doors for all categories of society to participate and build their network. This is also valid for students. Students are building networks of colleagues: networks managed by instructors or by student society members. The society (or network) aims at exchanging information, helping in educational task, reminding and

DOI: 10.4018/IJCBPL.2019010104

directing members to specific tasks, and other options. Research indicated that social networks have crucial influence on students' education if utilized in the proper direction (Tuan & Tu, 2013). On the other hand, social networks might cause harm for students like addiction and information overload (Haq & Chand, 2012).

As mentioned previously, social networks are open for all categories of students. Still, students' gains from social networks are dependent on their personalities and demographic factors. Based on that, if formal channels of education need to utilize social networks, they need to be aware of issues related to personal differences. The major reason behind this argument is the equity and fairness of educational system. Some researchers relate this to the efficiency of such systems.

This study focuses on a major personal ability: emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) influences how people cope with stress and would influence their satisfaction with the job, emotional intelligence represents a personality trait that distinguish personal behaviors towards others (Jordan et al., 2002; Salovey & Mayer, 1997). Research indicated that individuals with managed emotional intelligence abilities are expected to socialize more and have more interactions on social media (Lopes, Salovey & Straus, 2003; Rossen & Kranzler, 2009). Based on that, this study will try to answer the following research questions: 1) Do the managed abilities of emotional intelligence influence social network use? 2) What are the EI dimensions that predict social networks' use?

The following sections will summarize the available literature in this area and try to understand what previous work has accomplished. Section three will describe the research method including the instrument used and the sampling process. The fourth section summarizes the data analysis and discussion of results. Finally, section five reports our conclusions, limitations, and future work.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

Social networks (Like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp) are being used extensively in the educational sector. They form societies that can exceed country's size. The society within social networks includes all categories of people; people with special needs, elderly, youngsters, and males/females. This study tries to identify the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) dimensions on the use levels of social networks (SN). Following is a brief introduction on EI.

### **2.1. Emotional Intelligence**

Being intelligent does not mean only knowing things, but also mean how you interact with others. The concept of intelligence evolved over time, but became more complicated and categorized. One of the major milestones in research was what Gardner proposes as the multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 1997). In his theory, Gardner brought attention to the existence of more than one type of intelligence. The following are the major types proposed by Gardner and in more than one publication: Logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). The interpersonal intelligence evolved in later publications into what we know now as emotional intelligence, where research defined it as the ability to identify, assess, and control one's own emotions, the emotions of others, and that of groups (Goleman, 1996).

Emotional intelligence (EI) represents a personality trait that distinguish personal behaviors towards others. More than one framework described this dimension and grounded research proposed instruments for it. Salovey and Mayer (1997) posit in their proposed framework four abilities that could be acquired through learning: perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions. Their framework is applicable in social and emotional adaptation. The second version of the scale proposed by Salovey and Mayer was modified and included 141 items measuring EI and its subcomponents (Rossen & Kranzler, 2009). Emotional intelligence (EI) influences how people cope with stress and would influence their satisfaction with the job (Jordan et al., 2002).

EI is used as a predictor or as a classifier of behaviors in most research studies. Many studies focused on EI and reflected certain conclusions based on the famous instruments measuring it. On the

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