

## The impact of using social networking sites for teaching and learning during emergency crisis

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### Abstract

Social networking platforms have changed modern communication and information sharing. This study determined the impact of using social networking sites in teaching and learning during the covid-19 pandemic. There were 65 public school teachers in basic education in the Philippines who participated in this study. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather the data. Findings from the quantitative data revealed that the top two most used Social Networking Sites (SNS) for teaching and learning were YouTube and Facebook. Also, teachers' main uses of SNS were for resources and knowledge sharing, educational and research purposes, collaborating with students and teachers, and communication and announcement. Based on the qualitative findings of the study, three themes emerged from the challenges encountered by the teachers which were: 1) Some information from the Social Networking Sites are unreliable; 2) Slow and unstable internet connectivity perennial issue; and 3) Limited use and access. It is concluded that SNS help in the delivery of teaching and learning in time of pandemic. It is also recommended the institutionalizing and adopting of SNS as support for teaching and learning even during the post-pandemic era.

**Keywords:** Experiences, pandemic, social networking sites, teaching and learning

### Introduction

Social networking sites revolutionized the means of communication and sharing of information in modern times. Based on the most recent data, 53 percent or 4.20 billion people all over the world are using social media (Kemp, 2021). These data are not surprising considering the current influence of social networking sites on the lives of people. Interestingly, social networking sites are the major sources of information nowadays. Ideas, thoughts, emotions, personal experiences, professional activities, and other human endeavors are shared on these social networking sites.

Social networking sites have been mainly used for entertainment, communication, and socialization. Tran (2022) previously pointed out that the use of social networking sites, like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, and WeChat have already been maximized in the classrooms to support the teaching and learning process. Though social networking sites have been widely utilized, no literature has yet established that it is useful or equally effective than other technologies designed for educational purposes. Despite the influx of their users and availability, social networking sites have not yet been maximized due to the face-to-face nature of the conduct of classes. Somosot (2022) mentioned that the usage of online learning created a number of obstacles that increased the workload for the students. Typically, students use a variety of channels to communicate with their teachers and fellow students.

In the academic world, the use of social networking sites for teaching and learning has caused major debates among the educational researchers and the academe considering its positive and negative impact on students' way of learning. It is well-known in the academic world that the use of social networking sites during classes is taboo since educators argue that the use of these during classes can disrupt and divide students' attention. It has also been the practice of schools to block social networking sites in school-owned gadgets and computers for students not to access these sites in order for them to focus on tasks given by the teachers.

In 2020, when the Covid 19 pandemic came where face-to-face classes were prohibited by the governments to prevent the widespread of the virus, teachers had to find immediate alternative ways of sharing information and communicating with their students since Learning Management Systems have not yet been fully developed. Their refuge were the social networking sites. Teachers have to use these social networking sites to communicate and share information with students across all age groups.

In the Philippine context, the technological divide among Filipinos is still a major issue, however, this does not prevent them from being social networking site users. In 2020, every Filipino on average browses social networking sites for at least four hours a day. Also, at least 74 million Filipinos are social media users (Statista, 2023). Considering the technological limitations that Philippine education has to cope with, teachers used social networking sites as an alternative to Learning Management System and other cloud software which are too expensive and complicated to use. It is apparent that the old normal in education will never be the same when the pandemic ends, considering the social networking skills and technological skills developed by the educators and students during the pandemic.

The use of social networking sites among teachers and students offers a wide array of opportunities for their use in teaching and learning. It is relevant to conduct research on this topic since it is still unknown if what social networking sites are maximized by the teachers for teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, their purpose of using those social networking sites, and their contextual experiences during the use of these social networking sites. Therefore, this research dwells on social networking sites utilized and the reason for using those by the basic education teachers and ascertain the issues and challenges they encountered in the teaching and learning process amid pandemic.

### **Research objectives**

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of using social networking sites in teaching and learning during the covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, this answers the following objectives:

1. identify the different social networking sites utilized by the teacher in teaching and learning;
2. identify the use of social networking sites in teaching and learning; and
3. examine the issues and challenges encountered by the basic education teachers in using social networking sites in teaching and learning during the pandemic.

### **Methodology**

This study intends to provide significant insights regarding the influence of using social networking sites in basic education teaching and learning during the COVID-19 epidemic. The study on the influence of using social networking sites in teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic uses a mixed-methods approach to analyze the topic thoroughly.

### **Research design**

This study utilized mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research designs with the objectives of determining the social networking sites utilized by the basic education teachers and identifying the issues and challenges encountered in the teaching and learning process amid pandemic. Specifically, descriptive-survey method for the quantitative was utilized to find out the most common SNS utilized by the teachers. Quantitative data were tallied to find out the frequency, mean, and rank of the most used SNS and their uses. Meanwhile, phenomenological design was employed to dwell deeper into the firsthand accounts of the teachers. Teacher participants were interviewed via Zoom at the their most convenient time to gather their narratives. Thereafter, qualitative underwent narrative analysis to come up with the common themes, as supported by respondents' verbatim accounts.

Before the actual interview, participants were given formal request to participate in the study. After they agreed, they were provided with consent form for them to complete. Thereafter, they agreed with the researchers on the actual date and time of the interview. The interview was done individually, not exceeding 10 minutes. After all the data were tabulated, analyzed, and transcribed, the raw data were immediately destroyed to ensure the confidentiality of the responses.

### **Respondents of the study**

The recruitment strategy began with purposive sampling, which targeted public school teachers who were actively involved in teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and used social networking sites as part of their teaching methods. Then, a stratified random sampling strategy was used to ensure sample variety. Participants were stratified depending on criteria such as their geographic area (urban, suburban, or rural), educational level

(elementary or high school), and the types of social networking sites they frequently used. This contributed to ensuring that the sample reflected a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds. There were 65 public school teachers in basic education in the Philippines who were requested to respond to the tools via Google Form and participate in individual interview through Zoom.

### ***Instrumentation***

The questionnaire used in the study on the influence of using social networking sites in teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is an important instrument for gathering quantitative data from participants. It is usually broken into several sections or divisions to address various areas of the study objectives. The questionnaire is intended to collect quantitative and qualitative data relating to the research objectives, such as the types of social networking sites used, frequency of usage, and participants' perspectives and obstacles.

The data gathering instrument was a researcher-made questionnaires comprising of checklist and semi-structured open-ended questions which underwent validation and reliability tests. The questionnaire's structure and content are carefully developed to ensure that it properly meets the research objectives and delivers important data for analysis. The instrument was administered virtually via Google Forms, while the informal interview was conducted via Zoom.

### ***Validation and reliability***

The survey questionnaires were content validated by a group of experts in teacher education in one of the universities in Cebu City, Philippines. There were three (3) content validators of the questionnaires. The instruments underwent a validation process to extract the responses needed to attain the purposes of the study.

After its validation, the content validity index was computed. The result was 0.89 which means it has an average content validity index. It was also pilot tested to twenty (20) college faculty and it has 0.81 reliability coefficient which means the research instrument is reliable.

### ***Data analysis***

The quantitative data were analyzed using simple percentage and weighted mean. Meanwhile, the qualitative data underwent thematic analysis where the data underwent a coding process to capture the key or important elements of the data with the help of the pre-determined questions during the informal interview (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

### ***Findings and discussion***

The table contains information regarding the social networking sites used by teachers in teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as their weighted mean scores, which indicate the frequency of use.

**Table 1**

*Social Networking Sites Utilized by The Teacher in Teaching and Learning*

Social networking sites	Weighted mean	Description
YouTube	4.52	Always
Facebook	4.45	Always
Instagram	3.81	Often
Twitter	3.36	Sometimes
Tiktok	4.22	Always
Pinterest	1.85	Rarely
Snapchat	2.15	Rarely
WhatsApp	2.61	Sometimes
WeChat	2.63	Sometimes
Viber	3.04	Sometimes
LinkedIn	3.43	Often
Flickr	2.66	Sometimes
Vimeo	1.85	Rarely

*Note.* 1-1.80 = Never, 1.81-2.60 = Rarely, 2.61 – 3.40 = Sometimes, 3.41 – 4.20 = Often, 4.21 – 5.00 = Always

The data show that the “always” used SNS for teaching and learning by the teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic are YouTube, Facebook, and Tiktok. Meanwhile, the least utilized SNS are Pinterest, Snapchat, and

Vimeo. Govindarajan (2022) states that teachers are continually challenged in today's varied classrooms to differentiate instruction to satisfy the learning requirements of all students.

YouTube is the most popular social networking site among teachers, with a high weighted mean score indicating that teachers utilize it on a regular basis. YouTube is well-known for its extensive library of educational content, making it an excellent resource for teachers to share video courses and tutorials with their pupils. This can be associated with the availability of educational and tutorial videos uploaded and can be downloaded from YouTube. YouTube is an SNS that enables people to be engaged with videos. Through YouTube, teachers and students can view, download, share, and make instructional videos, video clips, movies, vlogs, music, television shows, and amateur videos. These videos can be helpful in teaching and learning since students can easily remember what they see, hear, and do (DeWitt et al., 2013). Previously, the study of Sedigheh Moghavvemi et al. (2018) found out that some of the main purposes of people using YouTube are entertainment, information seeking, and learning. They further suggest that YouTube must be utilized for teaching and learning. This outcome is consistent with research showing YouTube's huge catalog of educational content. YouTube's ability in offering video courses and tutorials is likely to have contributed to its high acceptance rate among educators.

During the pandemic, videos that are relevant and useful for the teachers' lessons can also be shared for the students to view. On the practical side, teachers no longer need to prepare video lessons that they will share with their students since there are many available videos from YouTube to choose from which can help them share information with their students. YouTube is also useful for teachers to share their asynchronous lessons online. As long as teachers have their own email address, they can be able to create their own YouTube account which becomes a platform for sharing their self-made lessons.

The second most used SNS of teachers is Facebook. Facebook's versatility, including the ability to create educational groups, share resources, and facilitate discussions, undoubtedly made it an appealing alternative for educators looking for a comprehensive platform for their teaching needs. In the Philippines, educators and students are Facebook users.

TikTok obtained a weighted mean score of 4.22, suggesting that it was regularly used by instructors despite not being traditionally linked with education. This implies that some educators used TikTok's short video format to create creative and interesting educational content, which is consistent with recent trends in leveraging social media for educational purposes. For young kids, staying in class and listening to lectures from lecturers is not interesting. Nonetheless, a growing number of educators and content producers are attempting to add joy to learning. (Liu, 2023).

Even before the pandemic, Facebook has been widely utilized. According to several existing literature, students can benefit from Facebook because it is a major source of information, particularly news. Facebook, as well, connects students and teachers within the academic world (Sulaiman Ainin et al., 2015). In the study of Ketari and Khanum (2013), Facebook, followed by Twitter, MySpace, and LinkedIn were the most visited SNS during the pre-pandemic era where the main purpose of its users is to socialize, study, shopping, seeing friends and relatives, and others. Meanwhile, it is evident from the data in this study that YouTube is more useful than Facebook with respect to its usefulness for teaching and learning. However, studies have previously revealed that some of the benefits of using Facebook for teaching and learning increased student and teacher interaction, improved students' performance, convenience, and engagement (Chugh & Ruhi, 2018).

During pandemic, teachers' choice of social networking sites was impacted by variables including as the platform's usefulness for educational goals, content distribution preferences, and versatility. YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram emerged as main options, with other platforms supporting the teaching and learning experience. The data suggest that teachers are maximizing the use of SNS for teaching and learning in time of the pandemic. Therefore, these SNS are useful and effective aid for teaching-learning since teachers have to seek refuge from these SNS to continuously deliver education despite the current situations.

**Table 2**

*Uses of Social Networking Sites in Teaching and Learning*

Uses of social networking sites	%	Rank
Communication and announcement	15.38	4
Resources (notes, photos, videos, etc.) and knowledge sharing	21.5	1
Collaborating with students and teachers	16.9	3
The use of flexible technologies	7.7	7
Educational and research purposes	18.5	2
Personal presentation	10.8	5
Stay connected with friends and colleagues	9.2	6

Social networking platforms are great places to store instructional resources including lecture notes, images, videos, and other learning materials. Educators commonly use these platforms to communicate content

with students, making resources conveniently available and well-organized. Because these videos are more engaging and entertaining than traditional classroom instruction, learners choose to study from social media sites like TikTok. One of the most crucial subjects in education is how to draw students to the field (Liu, 2023).

Table 2 revealed that top four uses of SNS for teaching and learning for the teachers in the time of Covid-19 pandemic were it serves as 1) resources and knowledge sharing, 2) educational and research purposes, 3) collaborating with students and teachers, and 4) communication and announcement. The data imply that SNS are of great help to getting and sharing information, working with others, and communicating in these trying times in education. SNS can also provide teachers and students updated and timely information which are useful in this changing landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century (Munshi et al., 2018).

Social networking sites are extremely important in helping educational and research pursuits. Educators use these platforms to publish research findings, participate in academic conversations, and interact with peers in their field, all of which help to improve their professional growth and scholarly activities. Additionally, the SNS ought to offer instant access to content in a variety of media, including audio, video, and links. Additionally, the SNS configuration ought to educate students social media etiquette, offer ongoing assistance, and promote social sharing of academic output, such as multimedia, presentations, and blogging (Nkatha, Kimwele, & Okeyo, 2015). Years before the pandemic, studies show that people mainly use SNS for social reasons. In the case of students and teachers in the pre-pandemic era, they mainly used SNS to keep in touch with their peers and colleagues. Hence, this implies that there is a wide paradigm shift in the uses of SNS in time of the pandemic. This suggests that SNS play important roles in teaching and learning in time Covid-19 pandemic because teachers heavily rely on SNS in terms of information and communication.

### ***Issues and challenges encountered and experiences by the basic education teachers***

The researchers conducted an informal interview with teachers via messenger and video conferencing and the following themes emerged:

#### ***Theme 1: Some information from the social networking sites are unreliable***

Teachers noted that some information found in the Social Networking Sites cannot be trusted which takes their roots from fake news, misinformation, and disinformation. These were revealed from their narratives.

There is a lot of fake news or information in other social networking sites and we can't avoid being careless sometimes in terms of believing these news and information that we share to our students. And there are great possibilities that we misinterpret or we build incorrect conclusions about certain things due to the fake things that we see in some social networking sites (P17). The issues are the ads and the fake information spreading throughout those sites in that case I, as a teacher should be extra careful to avoid sharing wrong information to my students (P27). There were fake news and articles going around the sites, that's validating the data or news sometimes needs a lot of time and effort. There were articles that share worrisome contents instead of spreading awareness and facts (P32). There are information that are misleading. Looking for the right kind of video takes time. Some are really long (P40). The problem is that not all information in the social media is true that is why you really have to critique and find other sources to compare the information you found from the other site. And also the internet connection is not stable all the time (P48).

The main challenge in using SNS for teaching and learning is for the teacher to evaluate the reliability and credibility of the information they browse and search. The SNS are huge dumping sites where unreliable, useless, or harmful information is shared. Plagiarized works are also common in SNS for having no mechanisms for peer review or information verifications (Williams & Woodcare, 2016). Some of the most challenging aspects of using SNS in teaching and learning are the unreliability of information and the unavailability of technology to support teaching and learning. Though sharing of information may have a positive impact, it may also lead to inaccurate and misleading information which may intend to spread fake news (Koohikamali & Sidorova, 2017). Other stories of the teachers are following:

Issues and difficulties I experienced while utilizing social networking sites during pandemic is that a portion of the data are not based on realities so I need to lead further examination to check whether if the data I have learned is reliable. There are a lot of individuals spreading fake news so being a web-based media educated is an absolute necessity (P50). Some issues that were encountered are the spread of rumors and questionable information all over the internet (P58). What I encountered using social networking sites while having those as aid to teaching and learning during pandemic is that some of the information are not based on facts so I have to conduct further research to see if the information I have

learned is to be trusted. There are also a lot of toxic people in there, so being a social media literate is a must (P4). There are a lot of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation in Social Networking Sites (P6). Some sites nowadays are not that legit since fake news are spreading fast but all we have to do is make sure to check the sources for its legitimacy (P11).

The data suggest from the responses of the teachers that they do not easily trust the information found in SNS. They still have to verify the information they wished to share with their students to assure that they do not feed them with false knowledge and unreliable sources.

This is quite relieving to the extent that teachers are cautious when sharing information with their students and they are fully aware that there are “fake news, misinformation, and disinformation” in SNS. This attitude of the teachers means that they are technology literates to the extent that they have the capacity to evaluate correctly from misleading or wrong information. The SNS in a positive sense, if teachers cautiously and positively use will continue to enable them to gather, represent, process, and disseminate information positively. Essentially, SNS can develop a culture of learning beyond the classroom despite the threats they offer which can shape how teachers and students view the world.

### ***Theme 2: Slow and unstable internet connectivity perennial issue***

Based on the teachers’ experiences, slow and unstable internet connectivity have been one of the most challenging experiences they encountered when using Social Networking Sites for teaching and learning. These are apparent from their stories.

I encountered intermittent internet connection during the browsing of Social networking Sites (P12). So far, the most challenging part especially during pandemic is my internet connectivity. I am really having a hard time especially in accessing links because I live in a rural area wherein the network signal is really weak (P14). The most usual is the problem in accessing these various social networking platforms for it requires an internet connection for it to be available and accessible, but apparently we don't have the consistent means for internet connectivity so I find it hard to use these platforms for teaching (P15). The main factor that affects me in teaching with the help of Social Networking Sites this pandemic is the instability and weak connection of the internet signal that hinders me to search something which is connected to my teaching lessons (P19). Then there is the poor internet connection, which means I can't access Google Classroom or Google Meet, and that is crucial because that's where I can only meet my students during this pandemic (P20). The challenge of these social networking sites is the difficulty of accessing information because of the unstable internet connection to enable me to find my desired information (P34). I have encountered while using social networking sites is having a poor internet connectivity. There is no stable internet connection wherein I find it difficult to use these social networking sites and thus it really affects me as a teacher such that I am struggling on accomplishing my virtual lessons or submitting reports on time. Also, I cannot easily verify the reliability of available information on the networking sites because I really need to analyze them extensively. Especially that we are adopting flexible learning through online classes, and I need to evaluate everything I can acquire from any of the social networking sites (P36). The main problem is always the poor internet connectivity. Despite having ample options, one will still have a hard time if the connection won't coordinate (P47). My main problem is the internet connection. I cannot access Social Networking Sites If I do not have internet or having a low signal in my place (P55). Most of the time, both us, teachers and students have internet connectivity issues (P64). Internet connection is an integral part of accessing social networking sites. I usually experience having low signal in my area which is quite frustrating because I had to go outside or raise my phone just to have that connection (P65).

Boholano et al. (2021) previously revealed that unstable internet connectivity is one of the perennial problems in the Philippines during pandemic time where teachers had to participate conferences virtually. Similarly, the use of SNS for teaching and learning is also affected due to the poor and unstable internet connection in the Philippines. Several reasons which may be attributed to poor and unstable internet connectivity are associated with the location and type of internet subscription. (Internet connectivity has been a perennial issue in the Philippines despite all the government’s efforts to improve internet connectivity. Though data suggest that the internet connectivity in the country has been improving (Azcarra & Peña, 2019; Casillano, 2019), the cost, accessibility, and speed are still issues that need to be addressed. As recommended in Malik Mubasher Hassan et al. (2020), access to strong internet connectivity and devices can narrow the educational digital divide in the future landscape of education.

The narratives of the teachers imply that they have been struggling with internet connectivity in which they badly need when connecting, communicating, and finding information through SNS. This problem, if given

an intervention would lighten the burdens of the teachers and students in these trying times where internet connectivity plays a crucial role for them to actively participate in school and academic-related activities (Fabito et al., 2020).

### ***Theme 3: Limited use and access***

The teachers encountered that some Social Networking Sites provide limited use and access, that some require payment for their full access. These emerged from the responses of the teachers.

Some social networking sites are not also free to use and explore (P1). There are some lessons and topics which are somewhat confusing and complicated, eventually even a few of the notorious social networking sites cannot give the exact explanation to those information. Furthermore, I encountered problems pertaining to some of those social networking sites that are not accessible for free. There are certain lessons that need other resources to be understood well, but sad to say some of these social networking platforms require to be paid so as to be accessed (P15). Google Classroom doesn't allow access from multiple domains. Furthermore, I cannot log in with my personal Gmail to enter it; I need to be logged in to Google Apps for Education. As a result, if I have already a personal Google ID, it may be frustrating to juggle multiple Google accounts. For example, if you have a Google document or a photo in your Gmail and you want to share it in the Google Classroom, you will need to save it separately in your computer's hard drive, log out, and then log in again with your Google Classroom account. Quite a hassle. No automated updates, Activity feed doesn't update automatically, so learners will need to refresh regularly in order not to miss important announcements (P21). Some sites require payment for using the other features. Also, some of Social Networking Sites have limited access (P31). Some Social Networking Sites are not user friendly that I need to click so many things and follow many instructions before I can access information (P47). Some SNS are free trial, that if the free trial expires, I can no longer access the site (P50).

Another challenge faced by the teachers when using SNS are their limited use and access that they could not fully navigate or use the sites without paying and registering. This is quite challenging for the teachers considering their limited salaries that paying for the access for the SNS is another financial burden for them. In the Philippines, the minimum monthly salary of a public-school teacher is Php 23,877 (488 USD). In private schools, the teachers' salary may be lower or a bit higher depending on the school where they are teaching. This would mean that if teachers still had to pay for the SNS for teaching and learning, it would be another burden on their shoulders.

Many social networking sites provide educational features and materials; however, they frequently have access restrictions. Some platforms, for example, may offer free access to fundamental functions while restricting access to more powerful educational tools, analytics, or content repositories. These constraints can make it difficult for teachers to fully utilize the platform's pedagogical potential. As such, Malik Mubasher Hassan et al. (2020) suggested that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should be improved to ensure the maximum utilization in the application to teaching and learning. Teachers must also be fully educated and capacitated about the different social networking sites and online platforms to better teach online in future normal (Saha, et al., 2022).

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The findings suggest that SNS help the delivery of education in pandemic situation despite the digital divide in the Philippines. Hence, SNS have one way or another contributed to the education sector in time of pandemic. In teaching and learning in the new normal, teachers' most utilized SNS are YouTube and Facebook. Teachers also heavily rely on SNS in terms of sharing and finding information and communicating. Results further show that teachers experience different challenges such as unreliable information, slow and unstable internet connectivity, and limited use and access to SNS as they use SNS for teaching and learning.

It is recommended that the use of SNS for teaching and learning be adopted and institutionalized by the basic education and higher education institutions even during the post-pandemic era since teachers have already acquired skills on the uses of these SNS for teaching and learning. Also, further investigations can be undertaken on the SNS information literacy, ethics on the use of SNS for teaching and learning, improvement of internet connectivity in the Philippines both in rural and urban places, and enhancing the use and access of SNS for teaching and learning.

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