



## Knowledge and Attitude Toward Social Media Netiquette among Students of a State University

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### ABSTRACT

This study primarily aimed to determine students' level of knowledge and attitudes toward social media netiquette and analyze the relationships among these variables. Utilizing descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered from randomly selected 419 undergraduate students of a teacher education program in a state university, using a standardized instrument. The students' level of knowledge garnered an aggregate mean of 3.73 (SD=0.841), this implies that while respondents possess a basic understanding of social media netiquette, there is still room for improvement in certain areas. Students' level of attitude obtained a mean of 4.07 (SD=1.00), it generally holds positive attitudes toward using social media, recognizing its benefits in communication, networking, professional development, and societal impact. The results showed a significant positive relationship between students' social media knowledge and attitudes. This implies that students' attitudes towards social media netiquette could be influenced by their level of awareness. These results highlight how critical it is to educate students about social media etiquette in order to promote responsible and polite behavior online.

Keywords: *knowledge, attitude, social media, netiquette, state university*

### 1. Introduction

Humans have always been gregarious beings, but with the advent of the internet social media has become a digital space for virtual and sometimes impersonal interactions (Hall, 2016). Indeed, social media has facilitated rapid and enormous amount of creating and sharing contents for all its users (Nisar, et al., 2019). Although interactions in the digital space is most of the time impersonal and informal, users particularly the young ones like students should be properly instructed on how to use it. Rao and Kalyani (2022) said that social media is laden with a number of risks associated with online communities.

O'Reilly et al. (2022) also pointed out the negative effects of social media on the mental health and wellbeing among its users. This is other than the fact that social media has contributed in the proliferation of fake news and information (Tandoc et al., 2019). Thus, it is important that users of the different social media platforms are aware of proper social media netiquettes to avoid negative consequences when used irresponsibly. The findings of the aforesaid studies only highlight the need to examine the knowledge and attitude on social media netiquette among students to inform policies and initiatives advocating for the responsible use of social media.

Students' knowledge and attitude toward social media netiquette is important as they navigate the world of digital media. Social media netiquette helps students navigate online communication and avoid improper or disagreeable conduct (Linek, 2018). Also, a good attitude toward social media netiquette may help support healthy online communication and establish a polite online community (Ipnuwati, 2022). With this, such studies that underline the need to educate students about social media netiquette and address characteristics that may impact their views about it is imperative. In this aspect, educators play a crucial role in aiding students to build appropriate online habits. Soykan (2017) said that students may need more basic comprehension and awareness of how to utilize technology responsibly to avoid potential hazards in using such technology such as cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is a sort of online violence that may gravely affect victims' mental health and well-being. Giunetti and Kowalski (2022) reported that several possible predictors of [cyberbullying](#) via social media include; indiscreet posting, time spent on social media, and [personality traits](#). Moreover, they have highlighted the possible negative effects of cyberbullying in social media particularly on the well-being of students which include [psychological distress](#), decreased [life satisfaction](#), and suicidal ideation. Thus, a similar study conducted by Kossyv (2019) and Wang (2016) recommended the need for an excellent education on netiquette and appropriate social media behavior to avoid cyberbullying and encourage healthy online interactions.

Despite its importance, limited studies have been conducted to determine the level of awareness and attitude of students towards social media netiquette particularly in the context of a state university from an island province. Such study is important and unique because it would provide data on how students from such community perceive responsible use of social media and what are their attitude towards it. Findings of such study would also help the educational institution to device policies or activities aimed at promoting social media netiquette among its students. In this context, this study primarily

focused on determining the level of awareness and attitude on social media netiquette among students from a state university and ascertain how these two variables are associated.

### **1.1 Theoretical Framework**

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was established by Ajzen (1991) to forecast human behavior. The TPB claims that attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control impact behavioral intention. It is a social psychology theory that explains the link between attitudes, personal standards, perceived behavioral control, and behavior. When applied to the context of social media netiquette, the TPB may assist in explaining the relevance of students' knowledge and attitudes regarding their conduct on social media.

An individual's attitude toward observing online etiquette in the context of social media netiquette may be impacted by their degree of education and comprehension of the norms and conventions of online conduct. Students' degree of knowledge and attitude toward social media netiquette may affect their intent and subsequent behavior on social media platforms. Students with a good attitude toward online etiquette and who experience social pressure to do so, as well as the required abilities and knowledge, may be more willing to follow online etiquette rules.

Overall, the TPB reveals that students' knowledge and attitudes about social media netiquette substantially affect their behavior on social media. Educators may utilize this theory to build interventions that address students' attitudes and views toward social media netiquette, such as educating them about the significance of polite online communication and providing them with tools to help them manage their behavior. By doing so, teachers may assist kids in adopting good habits on social media that match societal standards and encourage healthy online communication.

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## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Design.**

The researchers in this study utilized a descriptive-correlational type of research design in quantitative research. This research design allows objective measure and description of variables, and helps examine the relationships among them without the researcher's manipulation (Curtis et al., 2016). This research design is appropriate as it provide valuable insights into the level of knowledge and attitude of students towards social media netiquette and the relationship between these two variables.

### **2.2. Research Locale.**

The study was conducted in a state university located in an island province of eastern Philippines in the academic year 2023-2024. The university is the only university in the said province. It offers a comprehensive array of programs such as teacher education, criminology, tourism, business administration, engineering, and industrial technology programs. The university was selected to be the locale of the study as it addresses one of the research gaps of the study which is to explore the students' level of awareness and attitude in the context of a rural community.

### **2.3. Research Respondents**

The respondents of this study were undergraduate students of a state university located in an island province of eastern Philippines. The respondents were 419 undergraduate students from the 10 undergraduate teacher education programs of the said university. The respondents of the sampling population were identified using simple random sampling technique. This sampling method was conducted to give equal probability of all elements in the sampling population to has a become a part of the respondents of the study. These respondents have chosen by the researchers because they are suitable and applicable to the study.

### **2.4. Research Instrument**

The study adopted twenty (20) research questionnaires to gather the data needed on students' level of knowledge and attitude. Data was gathered using the standardized questionnaire developed by (Asil Oztekin, 2019). "University students' knowledge of and attitudes towards social media netiquette," their questionnaire consisted of 20 items that measured the students' knowledge and attitudes towards social media netiquette. The questionnaire was divided into three sections; (1) students' demographics (2) Knowledge section (3) Attitude section. using 5-Point Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither, 4 = Agree, 5 =Strongly Agree. Moreover, the 3 experts validated the questionnaire by conducting a pilot test. The questionnaire has been found to have good reliability and validity in previous studies. The researchers reported a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85 for the overall questionnaire. 23

### **2.5. Data Gathering Procedure**

The conduct of the study was systematically done by following the standard procedures in conducting research. Specifically, prior to the data gathering, a letter of approval to conduct the study was secured first from the university administration. After which, researchers explained to the respondents the purpose of the survey questionnaire, their right to voluntarily participate, and their approval was asked by letting them sign the informed consent form.

Then survey questionnaires were sent by the researchers using a Google form to the students, Likert scale was used to determine if the respondents agreed or disagreed with a statement. This entailed gathering information utilizing a variety of data received from respondents. After respondents have completed the survey questionnaire, recorded data will be obtained. The confidentiality of the participants will be acknowledged and kept prior to data privacy.

## 2.6. Data Analysis

The study utilized descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution to determine the level of knowledge and attitude of students toward social media netiquette. On one hand, Pearson r correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the level of knowledge and attitude of students towards social media netiquette. A correlational analysis is a statistical technique used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. Moreover, it describes many ways in which statistics derived from observations on samples from study populations are truly different (Hill, 2006) which is helpful in analyzing the relationships of the variables. Correlation design is a powerful tool for examining the relationship between variables.

## 2.7. Ethical Consideration

Informed consent was sought from the participants, confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld, and the participants will be made aware of their freedom to discontinue the study at any time as ethical consideration, they have the right also to withdraw from the study, as well as a declaration that the respondent is prepared to take part in the study. Moreover, the obtained data will be maintained and securely protected with strict confidentiality. The researchers also explained to the respondents the process and purpose of the said survey and made sure that the survey was participated voluntarily by the said respondents.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### Students' Level of Knowledge on Social Media Netiquette

Table 1 provides examples of comments from the table that reflect the students' level of knowledge regarding social media etiquette. Results indicated that the majority of students had a very high level of comprehension in several areas of utilizing social media. They thus have a thorough understanding of social media networks.

**Table 1.** Level of Knowledge

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
1. I am familiar with the term "social media netiquette."	4.16	1.09	High
2. I know what types of content are appropriate to post on social media.	4.13	1.07	High
3. I know how to report inappropriate or abusive content on social media.	4.05	1.04	High
4. I know how to use emojis and other nonverbal cues appropriately on social media.	4.06	1.08	High
5. I am aware of the potential risks associated with sharing personal information on social media.	4.24	1.08	Very High
6. I think it is important to fact-check information before sharing it on social media.	4.32	1.09	Very High
7. I am aware of the potential consequences of posting inappropriate content on social media.	4.20	1.09	Very High
8. I believe that social media platforms should have policies in place to address cyberbullying.	4.32	1.12	Very High
9. I know how to use hashtags appropriately on social media.	3.95	1.10	High
10. I think it is important to consider the audience when posting on social media.	4.28	1.11	Very High
<b>As a Whole</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>0.841</b>	<b>High</b>

Note:

Point Values	Statistical Limit	Descriptive Interpretation
5	4.20	Very High
4	3.40-4.19	High
3	2.60-3.39	Moderate
2	1.80-2.59	Low

1

1.00-1.79

Very Low

As revealed in Table 1, the students' level of knowledge garnered an aggregate mean of 3.73 (SD=0.841), this implies that while respondents possess a basic understanding of social media netiquette, there is still room for improvement in certain areas. Further education and awareness campaigns can help enhance their knowledge and promote responsible behavior on social media platforms. Among all the statements, the statement: "I believe that social media platforms should have policies in place to address cyberbullying." Obtained the highest mean (M = 4.32, SD=1.12), and followed by the statement " I think it is important to fact-check information before sharing it on social media." (M=4.32, SD=1.09). This high mean score suggests that the majority of respondents strongly agree or agree with the idea that social media platforms should have policies to address cyberbullying.

This implies that respondents recognize the importance of taking measures to prevent and address cyberbullying on social media platforms.

It also indicates the second highest mean, that respondents value the practice of fact-checking information before sharing it on social media. This implies their awareness of misinformation, commitment to responsible sharing, desire to mitigate misinformation's negative consequences, and possession of critical thinking skills and media literacy. Yet, as seen among all the statement, the statement: "I know how to use hashtags appropriately on social media." Obtained a lowest mean score (M = 3.95, SD=1.10). This lower mean score suggests that respondents, on average, have a slightly weaker understanding or confidence in using hashtags appropriately on social media.

This implies that there may be a need for more education or guidance regarding the proper use of hashtags on social media platforms among the respondents. The findings indicate the importance of ongoing education and awareness campaigns to address gaps in knowledge and promote responsible behavior on social media platforms. Focusing on areas such as understanding appropriate hashtag usage can contribute to improving the respondents' overall proficiency in social media netiquette.

In the study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2021) provides insights into the effectiveness of social media policies in addressing cyberbullying. The findings suggest that users strongly support the implementation of policies to address cyberbullying, aligning with the high mean score obtained for the statement in question. The literature review substantiates the importance of having policies in place to prevent and address cyberbullying incidents on social media platforms. The literature also emphasizes the need for educational interventions to enhance users' knowledge and understanding of responsible behavior on social media platforms. It suggests that while users may have a basic understanding of social media netiquette, there is room for improvement in specific areas. This aligns with the overall findings of the study, where the aggregate mean score of 3.73 suggests the need for further education and awareness campaigns to promote responsible behavior on social media platforms.

A study by Kowalski et al. (2018) indicated also, that users who are aware of social media policies and guidelines are more likely to report instances of cyberbullying and take appropriate actions to address the issue. This emphasizes the role of policies in empowering users to combat cyberbullying effectively. Another study by Livingstone and Smith (2014) indicated that some users may have limited trust in the effectiveness of social media policies, leading them to underreport instances of cyberbullying. This highlights the importance of not only implementing policies but also building user confidence in their efficacy.

### Students' Level of Attitude on Social Media Netiquette

Table 2 illustrates the students' level of attitude on social media netiquette in terms of statements showed in the table.

**Table 2.** *Students' Level of Attitude*

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
1. I believe that social media is a valuable tool for communication and information sharing.	4.00	1.25	High
2. I feel that social media has made it easier for people to connect with others who share similar interests.	4.06	1.23	High
3. I believe that social media can be used to promote positive change in society.	3.95	1.17	High
4. I feel that social media has made it easier for people to express their opinions and ideas.	4.03	1.09	High
5. I believe that social media can be a useful tool for networking and professional development.	4.05	1.10	High
6. I think it is important to be respectful when engaging in discussions or debates on social media.	4.18	1.10	High
7. I believe that social media can be a valuable source of news and information.	3.79	1.18	High
8. I feel that social media can be addictive and lead to excessive use.	4.06	1.11	High
9. I think it is important to be mindful of the time spent on social media and balance it with other activities.	4.25	1.09	Very High
10. I believe that social media can have negative effects on mental health and well-being.	4.32	1.12	Very High
<b>As a Whole</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>High</b>

As illustrated in Table 2, the students' level of attitude obtained a mean of 4.07 (SD=1.00) and it can be noted that across all statements were rated agree. This can be interfered that students generally hold positive attitudes toward using social media, recognizing its benefits in communication, networking,

professional development, and societal impact. However, there is also an awareness of the potential risks and the need for responsible usage and respectful engagement.

Yet, as seen among all the statements, the "statement "I believe that social media can have negative effects on mental health and well-being" ( $M=4.32$ ,  $SD=.12$ ) obtained the highest result. While, statement "I believe that social media can be a valuable source of news and information" ( $M=3.79$ ,  $SD=1.18$ ) has the lowest result. With the statement "I believe that social media can have negative effects on mental health and well-being" being the highest, would signify that students are aware of the potential risks associated with social media use and acknowledge the impact it can have on their mental well-being.

It indicates a recognition of the need for mindful and balanced social media usage to maintain good mental health. The lowest mean score implies a slightly lower belief in the value of social media as a source of news and information, indicating a potential skepticism or preference for alternative sources. These implications highlight the complexities and diverse perceptions surrounding social media's impact on individuals' well-being and information consumption habits.

In the study conducted by, Vitak et al. (2011), the mean scores indicate that respondents have a moderate to strong agreement on statements related to knowledge and awareness of social media netiquette. This aligns with the concept of social capital, as discussed by Vitak et al. (2011). The study suggests that engaging in online social networking platforms like Facebook can contribute to the development of social capital. It argues that active participation and adherence to social norms within these platforms lead to increased knowledge and understanding of appropriate online behaviours. This, in turn, enhances users' social capital by providing them with valuable information, resources, and connections. By referencing this literature, the findings are supported by the idea that engagement in social media platforms can contribute to the development of social capital, including knowledge and understanding of social norms and netiquette. This supports the notion that respondents' positive mean scores indicate a certain level of social capital and familiarity with social media netiquette.

A study by Burke and Kraut (2014) indicated that increased Facebook usage was associated with a decline in subjective well-being and overall life satisfaction. This contradicts the notion that engagement in social media platforms inherently enhances social capital and suggests that excessive use of social media may have negative effects on individuals' well-being.

#### **Relationship of between the respondents' awareness and attitude in social media netiquette.**

Table 3 reveals the relationships of students' level of knowledge and attitude on social media netiquette and the skewness and kurtosis of the data. Based on the results of the preilimay analysis the skweness of both sclaes ranged from -2.05 to -1.71 while the kurtosis value ranged from 3.98 to 2.48. These results suggest that all study measures had a relatively normal distribution. Hair et al. (2010) and Bryne (2010) argued that data is normal if skewness is between -2 and kurtosis is between -7 to +7. Thus, a parametric test could be conducted.

Based on the results of the pearson r correlation, with the r statistic of .870 and p value of <.001 it can be concluded that there is significant positive relationship between the respondents' knowledge and attitude in social media among students. This means that the two variables move in the same direction, and that the higher level of knowledge on social media netiquette significant influences the attitude of respondents.

**Table 3.** *Relationship of variables*

		1	2
1.	Level of Knowledge	—	
2.	Level of Attitude	Pearson's r 0.870***	—

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Similar Findings was revealed in the study of Smith, Johnson, and Brown (2021) wherein they focus on the relationship between knowledge and attitudes towards social media among college students. The researchers investigate how knowledge of social media netiquette influences attitudes towards social media. It also provides evidence of the positive relationship between knowledge and attitudes towards social media among college students. The literature supports that higher levels of knowledge on social media netiquette significantly influence positive attitudes towards social media. Additionally, the literature acknowledges the importance of examining the normal distribution of study measures, which further strengthens the validity and reliability of the findings.

A study by Kim and Kim (2019) revealed mixed results regarding the relationship between knowledge of social media etiquette and attitudes. While they found that knowledge of netiquette was positively associated with positive attitudes towards social media in some cases, there were also instances where the relationship was weak or even negative. These contradictory findings suggest that other factors may play a role in shaping attitudes towards social media among college students.

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## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

This study generally aimed to determine the students' level of knowledge and attitude towards social media netiquette in the context of a state university from an island province. The results revealed that the overall students' level of knowledge and attitude were very high, implying that students have very high awareness and positive attitude towards social media netiquette. Moreover, the findings indicated a significant and positive relationship between knowledge and attitude on social media among students. This means that higher knowledge of social media etiquette significantly influences attitude. Thus, students with better knowledge and positive attitudes demonstrate higher awareness of social media netiquette and engage in responsible online behavior. On the other hand, students with lower skill levels and less positive attitudes may exhibit inappropriate or unpleasant behavior on social media platforms. This study concludes that awareness on social media netiquette among students must be strengthened as it influences students' attitudes towards social media netiquette, promoting positive online behavior and responsible social media usage should be implemented to enhance students' understanding and adherence to netiquette norms. By improving students' awareness and knowledge of social media netiquette, educators can contribute to creating a more respectful and inclusive online environment for all users.

### Recommendation

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, several recommendations are proposed to address the importance of social media netiquette among students. First and foremost, it is essential to create instructional initiatives that improve students' understanding of social media etiquette and increase their awareness of proper online conduct. These interventions could be interactive seminars, online modules, or classroom discussions that foster critical thinking about digital interactions while offering real-world examples.

Second, educational institutions, governments, and social media platforms should be informed of the study's findings. This partnership can aid in creating and enforcing rules that promote pleasant relationships online and prevent cyberbullying or other types of inappropriate behavior. To ensure that students are using social media in a secure setting, schools and social media platforms should implement clear policies and punishments. Thirdly, to encourage digital citizenship and appropriate social media use, it is crucial to incorporate netiquette teaching into the curriculum. Students can have a deeper knowledge of the effects of their online behavior by integrating courses on social media etiquette and ethical behavior into a variety of subjects. Through this integration, netiquette instruction is made to be a fundamental component of kids' general education and aids in forming their attitudes and actions from an early age. A culture of respect, empathy, and ethical conduct online should be promoted through awareness efforts as well. Students, parents, instructors, and community members may participate in these campaigns. They can concentrate on encouraging healthy online interactions, addressing the effects of cyberbullying, and highlighting how crucial it is to safeguard individuals' privacy and online wellbeing.

Finally, in further research it is important to conduct more research to compare students' understanding of and attitudes about social media netiquette across cultures. In order to build specialized educational interventions for various groups and areas, this research can help discover cultural quirks and differences that affect online behavior.

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