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Academic researchers, come on! Integrate social media in pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning have changed tremendously from traditional teaching to teaching integrating social media (SM) because of immense educational technological advancements and pedagogical innovation. Teachers, thus far, use conventional teaching as a seasoning tool and meet adaptability issues to the new learning environment. In this paper, we define SM, its related aspects, the vitality of social media networks (SMN), and how SM facilitates teaching and learning in tertiary education. It also contends with the benefits of their integration into pedagogy by teachers and students and answers a few fundamental questions on integrating SMN in teaching and learning. Accordingly, a few challenges do appear at different stages that scare us to reflect on SM as a distractor to pedagogy. To integrate and identify challenges in learning and teaching, we claim that a curriculum should be designed incorporating SMN as catalysts and managed as a learning community. The resources needed to operate SMN are also illustrated for both stakeholders to utilize and work together to collaborate for the learner-centered approach to teaching where learners use SMN to share, discuss course materials, post their assignments, get feedback, and interact beyond time, place, and location without any restrictions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Technology-integrated teaching and learning were initiated in the twentieth century in the form of e-learning or distance learning in higher education; however, it's ushered immensely in the pandemic times. The challenging times were unheard, unexpected, and unparalleled bringing all outdoor activities abruptly to a halt, creating social isolation, no physical interaction, and psychological issues affecting all ages of people. The young generation (Gen Z) and millennials were the worst affected and left with technology-supported applications to get them engaged and updated with friends and the world around them virtually. Consequently, social media sites (SMS) gained prominence and precedence over other face-to-face (F2F) and online activities that include online learning, peer interaction, and social communication. E-learning flourished during the pandemic, and its negative impacts were mitigated substantially while teachers and students used SMS to communicate with each other. People of all ages resorted to using social media (SM) to engage, entertain and share concerns.

Besides, the sudden switch from F2F to online learning and teaching brought in many challenges that obstruct learning while SMS is used as an additive facilitating both teachers and students to stay connected beyond time, location, and place. Both stakeholders were previously unfamiliar with the

pedagogical values of SMS-enabled learning environments. Most fundamentally, SMS and online learning need requisite technical skills to handle critical issues in online lecturing, uploading assignments, and course materials, paving the way to accept SMS as facilitators for interacting and engaging with learners and ensuring uninterrupted learning. However, the operating knowledge and vitality of SM and SMS in pedagogical issues require even more than its familiarization with those technical skills but include care, empathy, compassion, friendliness, a sense of brotherhood, cooperation, collaboration, and a sense of community and inclusiveness.

Although SM is a valuable tool for informal information sharing between educators and students, many are reluctant to integrate it into the formal education process. However, incorporating SM into pedagogy presents both promising opportunities and significant challenges for teachers. While social media networks (SMN) offer unique avenues for engagement, collaboration, and interaction, their integration into educational settings requires careful consideration of various factors, including privacy concerns, digital literacy, equity issues, and the balance between informal communication and academic discourse. One of the primary challenges is ensuring the responsible use of SM within educational contexts. With the potential for misuse, including cyberbullying, distraction, and misinformation, teachers must develop strategies to promote digital citizenship and ethical online behavior among students. Additionally, we should guard students' personal information and maintain a safe learning environment. Another challenge lies in maintaining a balance between informal communication and academic discourse on SM platforms. While these platforms offer opportunities for authentic engagement and peer collaboration, teachers must guide students in using them as productive learning tools rather than purely social spaces. Balancing the informal nature of SM with academic rigor requires thoughtful planning and clear guidelines to ensure that learning objectives are met. Hence, the given explanation to the research questions addresses the major concerns that may arise in integrating SM in pedagogy.

SM usage is intensely used by students and teachers today. Social networking service (SNS) operating companies try to find ways how the young generation, technology-savvy teachers, and the old guards can take maximum benefit using applications, such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and Twitter. Despite these efforts, most users in academia seem to still have a narrow thinking of what the terms ‘SM’ and ‘SMN’ exactly mean; the succeeding explanation intends to illuminate to make it more comprehensive. After describing the concept of SM and SMN, we underscore the vitality of these in academia. Also, applying conceptual frameworks for SMN in teaching and learning, we evaluate how far its utility supports teachers, peers, and students. The succeeding segment in the article will shed light on a few challenges that appear at different stages to clarify the apprehensions of perceiving SM as a distractor to pedagogy. Furthermore, to integrate SM and unique challenges in learning and teaching, we argue for its integration into different curriculums. This newly designed curriculum unites SMNs to act as catalysts and managed as a learning group where both stakeholders work together as co-participants to collaborate for the learner-centered approach to teaching where learners use SMN to share, discuss course materials, post their assignments, and interact beyond time, place and location without any restrictions.

We often use these terms as similar but are different from each other; however, interrelated, interconnected, and correlated. SM, primarily, is an umbrella that accommodates SMN to communicate. Hence, SM is a communication platform for the dissemination of information, whereas SMN is a platform used for two-way communication. Building on the conceptual and technological foundations of Web 2.0, SM is a set of Web 2.0-based applications that make it easier to create and share user-generated content (UGC) [1]. SM evolved as a result of the development of SNSs such as Wikipedia (2001), MySpace (2003), LinkedIn (2003), Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006), WhatsApp (2009), Instagram (2010), and Snapchat (2011); thereby, increasing its access to more than four billion active users across the world. Furthermore, these technological creations based on web technology and Web 2.0 applications support people to connect, communicate, and expand their friend circle. Social networking has emerged as a completely new form of interpersonal communication [2]. Alike, Agarwal and Mital [3] claimed that these applications have changed virtual interactions from being technical and impersonal in the past to being genuinely general, social, and interpersonal in the present. SM is described as a set of web-based resources that enable language learners to engage, communicate, and be willing to collaborate, plan, and follow up with others simultaneously, all to explore and develop to positively impact regular functions [4], [5]. Thus, the SMN has brought revolutionary changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of people across ages, especially the youth, which Hennig-Thurau *et al.* [6] claim is a game-changing development for corporations and individuals alike. These advancements and the number of SMNs form an essential part of today’s youth generation who are born with technology and electronic gadgets calling them millennials. In addition, meta-platforms have apps such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger, and other Facebook apps under its flagship monopolize the SMN. The SMN begins with the maximum energetic users on Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter, and the least users on LinkedIn.

The pandemic has impelled parents to alter their 'Get away' approach to the handling of mobile or electronic gadgets by their children to 'Get in' to attend online classes and use other sources to communicate in case of absence or stay connected for updates. Students are already under severe stress and strain, but SM media usage eases their concerns and gives room not only for enjoyment and entertainment, but also to share, discuss, and update on course coverage, course material, assignments, feedback, and reflective journals and reflective activities through cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. Accentuating SM in pedagogy Wheeler [7] emphasizes two diverse but related approaches to pedagogy, which include reflective and collaborative activities of learning. Additionally, incorporating SMN utilizes students' prior knowledge on the topics in the current situations by sharing ideas and deliberating on related issues; as a result, it keeps them interested and gives them the freedom to communicate with the teacher and their companions. Moreover, it frees them from the shackles of the traditional approach to teaching and proposes opportunities to provide prompt feedback to teachers, and to students, which guides them to the well-sought-for student-centered learning approach [5]. The consistent SM usage, positive perception, and engagement also mitigate constant distractions, disruptions, and universal procrastination that often unsettle students' willingness to write and the creative process of true writing. Besides, some prominent features of SMN applications, such as all-time easy access beyond time, day, month, and place are preferred over the traditional F2F classroom teaching. The students engaged via SM usage motivate and engross them in peer and collaborative learning and they freely ask and clarify their doubts, get prompt feedback, and produce products that are precise, concise, organized, and flawless. Underscoring the importance of SM in higher education Menkhoff *et al*. [8] affirmed that SM improves blended learning by letting students generate constructive circumstantial learning connected to educational goals, participate in collaborative learning, and, lastly, encourage students to post their concerns on blogs or Twitter about their coursework [7].

Although the explanation of the aforesaid SM and its applications may give a basic idea; however, we may have to distinguish the other related term: Web 2.0 Darcy DiNucci coined in 1999 and later promoted by Tim O'Reilly, and Dale Dougherty at the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in 2004. O'Reilly described that Web 2.0 tools (including SMSs) connect people to make the best use of the technology to ensure smooth interaction whereas Web 1.0 used to connect computers to make good use of technology, such as content publishing, static webpages: personal website content, and advertisement content publishing. The developed Web 2.0 refers to websites or internet-based platforms for end users and software designers to facilitate its handy use, multipurpose, provide ample opportunities to create or modify their content, share information, collaborate their creativity, and develop healthy social relations (synchronous) in personal, professional and community life. In an attempt to further clarify the related terms: Web 2.0 tools and generated content, UGC can be considered the result of the ways that people use SM [1]. The word 'UGC' is commonly used to refer to the different types of media content produced by end users and made available to the public. Web 2.0 is a symbol of the ideological and technological cornerstone. Therefore, these tools help students and teachers across disciplines share their assignments and products besides being commonly shared on digital platforms. These are handy that make students share their products, interact, and collaborate on approved and accepted topics. In further addition to the knowledge development and technological usages, we consider Web next-generation tools (3.0 and 4.0) as the platforms for the evolution of SMN to evolve a learner-centered approach, aligned curriculum and activities with the intended learning objectives and enhance the roles of the learners, and teachers (only as a guide and facilitator) beyond the classroom. The Web 3.0 tools, an advanced version, and an extension of 2.0 as the third generation of internet applications decentralizing various functions were first presented by John Markoff in 2006 that amalgamate all in 'the smart and scholarly Web based on artificial intelligence (AI)'. Also, a former Google CEO, Eric Schmidt stated that a group of integrated AI-based apps known as Web 3.0 are capable of intelligently learning and comprehending semantics making Web 3.0 technology more precise, customized, and brainy. Looking beyond Web 3.0, the fourth generation Web tools (4.0) would create a plethora of opportunities for students to be inventors-innovators to learn more not restricted to their disciplines, and become more active, self-regulated to partake and collaborative to create and customize databases of their content in activities using the new advanced technological facilities that of AI and machine learning (ML). Multiple reasons are there to explore more in the domain; however, there are some explicit motives to embark on the study that follow.

While undertaking any study, researchers often try to peep into past studies to allay their doubts and anxieties, like, herein, is the case of SM usage in university classrooms and beyond. Similarly, developing reliable learning environments in the classroom for inclusive participation in online collaborative learning needs sound pedagogical methodologies. In language learning, SM is the most talked-about new website, application, platform, and tool on the internet [4]. For this, SMN seems practical and useful to design a curriculum that engages students not only for better academic performance but also to prepare them to work in competitive business environments. This gained momentum from the changing market demands and the need for a multi-

skilling task force ready to meet challenges to transform into their favor through analytical skill, critical thinking, and cohesiveness working with different professional groups. Hence, we proceed to see some of the related studies that underscored the vitality of SM usage to get answers to the aforesaid research questions.

A few studies looked into how beneficial Web 2.0 tools, such as blogs Twitter, and SMNs are for teachers and students. Additionally, they said that SM presence has grown in higher education environments to enhance instruction and motivate students to participate in active learning [8]–[10]. Additionally, the use of SMN facilitates several pedagogical usages in the tertiary classroom, which include open sharing, messaging and communication styles, uniqueness, individuality, cooperation, and collaboration, fostering motivation and confidence, autonomy, and managing their learning. Technological developments and Web technologies have entered academia where teachers and students may use them to evolve, elevate, and supplement the way they learn conventional lessons. Similarly, group projects and collaborative learning allow students to work together on a task, which is how humans learn best [11]. Therefore, the concept of SMN builds a robust platform for students and teachers to interact, deliberate, and collaborate in online teaching and learning without any restrictions. A few scholars devised 'Learning 2.0' which refers to a wide range of pedagogical strategies that heavily rely on Web 2.0 resources like SM apps [7].

Ajjan and Hartshorne [12] assessed teachers' knowledge of the advantages of using Web 2.0 to enhance in-class learning to gain a better understanding of the decisions made by them to use these tools. They found that while some teachers think certain Web 2.0 technologies could improve students' learning, writing abilities, course satisfaction, and interactions with peers and teachers, very few of them decide to implement them in the classroom. Governments while realizing the value of the Internet in education have embraced the idea of "Government 2.0," to promote interactive, UGC which is helpful to both teachers and students [13]. Similarly, Web 2.0 can have a significant influence on lecturers and undergraduate students in teaching and learning and the findings expressed profound awareness of existing 2.0 technologies dominated by SMNs [9]. Mohammed *et al*. [10] investigated how incorporating Web 2.0 tools into foreign language instruction can help students learning Arabic as a foreign language enhance their four language skills. In another study on the usage of hands-on technologies, information literacy, and pedagogy 2.0, Farkas [14] offered a teaching methodology that teachers may apply to make the most of the resources in the classroom to boost learning.

Supplementing the use of Wiki, Wever *et al.* [15] claimed that scripting significantly improves students' sense of collective accountability and cooperative group dynamics. Similarly, the findings of a comparative study on Facebook in higher education [16], indicate that students use Facebook more frequently than teachers and are eager to use all related technologies to help them with their academic work. The explanation given above has given an explicit idea about the research carried out on the topic and the scope of web 2.0 tools usage in academia where these can be applied as collaboration tools to encourage, motivate, and positive changes in learners' attitudes to partake in class activities and discussions. The further usage of tools like SMN acts as catalysts in routine scholarly practice and provides a platform to share their creative and innovative ideas to contribute not only in a few science subjects but also to improve the language skills of the students. Therefore, the fast technological developments and extension of knowledge make the study more viable to reflect on students' learning to keep them updated with these abrupt momentary changes that would help in their future careers. Aligned with this explanation, the author has made a seminal attempt to answer the aforementioned questions in the succeeding discussion that may help teachers prepare a conceptual framework to integrate SNS with academic activities to operate in or beyond the classroom to accomplish the desired intended learning objectives.

2. METHOD

2.1. Reason for the study and what it intends to achieve

We often hear that necessity is the mother of invention, and, so, is the reason to undertake the study. The precarious situations in the pandemic impelled the authors to look for a convenient platform where students partake, interact, and collaborate freely. Secondly, every student, here in Saudi Arabia and India, has a mobile phone with Internet running SM applications to get connected with friends, peers, teachers, and communities. Hence, the authors were keen to execute already existing resources, but not executed by students for academic learning, which students usually make regular use of SMN for entertainment and enjoyment purposes. Thirdly, thinking of no novel teaching methodology but evolving the usage of SM in the right way in teaching and learning where students do not resist and easy to embrace and get benefits at large through fun. Fourthly, students are millennials or digital communities who are adept in using SMN using Web 2.0 technologies in their personal lives; therefore, a little boost may energize, direct, and guide them to use these SMN in their teaching and learning activities. Finally, after experiencing better academic performance by the students, the authors thought of exploring avenues to incorporate SMN into the curriculum. It includes the activities, their execution, feedback, assessment, and final evaluation of the course

using the SMN by all the participants: students, peers, and teachers. Moreover, this study is not the first in the series, but multiple studies have already been carried out that used various SMNs, such as Wiki, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and blogs. The instant availability of mobile technology, electronic gadgets, software, and digital environment created by the youth techno-savvy made it feasible and convenient to propose a conceptual model that includes SM-based exercises in the course syllabus, professional development, and other career-related programs.

2.2. Research objectives

The previous related studies are empirical, qualitative, conceptual, and theoretical depending upon the nature of the studies, which, however, have been elaborately discussed in the review of previous studies in the next heading. However, before moving on to the following section, we intend to get the answers to a few important questions after the research. These include the potential advantages of using SMN in higher education, the primary obstacles to pedagogy that arise from using SMN in regular studies, the viability of incorporating SM usage-based activities into higher education course curricula, and the personnel or resources needed to integrate SM into regular classrooms.

2.3. Research method

We integrated a qualitative analysis component with a descriptive study design to meet the specified research objectives. The conceptual and qualitative research provides adequate information regarding the use of technology and SM in pedagogy. To leverage learners' technological knowledge and their propensity to use SMN, this study focuses on the concept of SM, the variety of Web tools available, its significance in a global context, and the findings of previous studies. Additionally, it collaborates and studies from a learner-centered standpoint to gain an understanding of how technology is used in pedagogy learning, and teaching. The authors organized, examined, and synthesized data in educational contexts while compassionately creating interpretations to represent the learners' and teachers' perspectives and their passions for learning and teaching. As part of our critical analysis of the literature on SM integration in pedagogy, we also read journal articles, past studies, theoretical viewpoints, first-hand accounts from classrooms, and resources that were pertinent to the research questions. This allowed us to consider issues from several angles and consider how they might be used outside of the classroom. The authors, however, also looked into other studies on several related issues that the study raises on integrating technology in pedagogy and that are carefully discussed further.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aforementioned explanation portrayed the availability and usability of SMN by the youth in regular life and its usage in their academic life. However, it posits some serious concerns that need an immediate explanation to ensure its feasibility, operationalization, and practicality to make it more effective and productive for selecting and implementing strategies to support specific learning.

i. What are the tentative benefits of SMN usage in a tertiary classroom?
ii. What are the challenges of using SMN in regular studies that are deterrents to pedagogy?
iii. Is it feasible to design SM usage-based activities in course curricula in higher education?
iv. What resources or manpower are required for SM inclusion in regular classrooms?

3.1. What are the tentative benefits of social media network usage in a tertiary classroom?

SM usage in academic research and practice focuses on distinct aspects: social, cognitive, and affective besides a few more complementary facets. Sharing topic content on the SMN facilitates social affinity, instant feedback, support, and cognitive thinking enhancing critical thinking and communicating their concerns and products in the achievement of a learning goal, which motivates and encourages learners to focus on their subject-related content through discussion, obtaining peers or friends or teachers' ideas to complete the assigned tasks accurately and efficiently. Menkhoff *et al*. [8] claim that using Twitter to discuss and exchange information about relevant topics provides students with a forum to express their opinions, increases student engagement and increases their freedom of communication with teachers and peers. Besides, SMN in academic learning through certain explicit and informal consensus on SMN usages and procedures develops social bonding, mutual understanding, a sense of belonging to the group, cooperation and collaboration on various projects, and metacognitive reasoning required to complete different learning tasks. SM applications such as blogs and Twitter are not only used for longer only used for relaxation but also developed into avenues for engagement and communication with students [17]. Furthermore, the strengths of the SM platform blended in academic activities can provide consistent support and explanation about basic methodological, practical, and metacognitive aspects of learning tasks, which can be further

improved and customized by the participants or with the help of technical experts. Adding on, the academic learning process using procedural SMN emphasizes learners to freely share their concerns, and course content, posit their opinion on the issue, and provide models of thinking while mitigating the knowledge gaps and moderating unnecessary cognitive load. Regular SM usage by students in academic activities leads to a learner-centered approach that enables learners to freely share their products, and get instant feedback beyond any time and space; escaping from the traditional teacher-centered approach in teaching. Dzvapatsva *et al*. [18] claim that their study, which discovered that "with electronic media, the world becomes the classroom," accessible at all times, highlights this new approach.

However, in argumentative, non-consensus, ill-structured, and fused situations, the teacher should guide students to agree on the correct solution to the assigned topic. Another feature is that students are allowed to use their mobile devices in classes and on campus enabling them to socialize non-sequentially among multiple groups of students or classes. The teacher or the students may plan an interface similar to a class with a specific activity, and a flexible time-frame to share the completed task. Through this, and successively, students can engage in several activities and better visualize complex tasks to concentrate more to get the correct solution using SMN in less time. The effectiveness of SM usage can instantly and simultaneously support numerous students to engage in a variety of demonstrations of the problem and to reinforce task trials and processes. The process activates the youth learners to create a conducive and user-friendly learning environment that helps them develop their knowledge, cognitive, and affective skills, and social relationships. A few additional benefits SMN empowers learners are affirmed by [7], [8] cited that significant use can enhance blended learning, allow learners to work on group projects, and motivate them to leave comments or questions on blogs or Twitter regarding the study material. Regarding English as a foreign language learning, Soares [19] investigated students' perceptions of blogs as learning resources at a Brazilian university where blogs were used as a teaching tool. He found that by using blogs to access tutorials in the form of podcasts and videos that they shared on their blogs, students could significantly improve their English writing skills.

Conole and Alevizou [20] conducted a systematic review of published papers and found that Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs and Twitter, are driving forces behind scholarly practice and the exchange of best practices which allows students to partake in a distributed network of researchers and educators, co-create knowledge, and hone their content critique skills. Wheeler [7] described reflective and collaborative activities of learning as the methods of pedagogy assisted by SM. The stated explanation herein has shown multiple benefits to students by SMN usage in academic accomplishments; nevertheless, when mediated by SMN, challenges may be triggered by its uncontrolled, unmonitored, and excessive usage, and thus be less responsive to emerging needs, detrimental to learners progress that needs further mention and attention.

3.2. What are the challenges of using social media networks in regular studies that are deterrents to pedagogy?

SMN are internet-based applications that work on technological platforms of Web 2.0 and allow users to generate, exchange, and develop their material. SMN usage has brought in a life-changing development for users, especially in the pandemic times where the situations were alarming and created havoc in individuals' minds. The millennials and Generation Z and Alpha learners make the best use of SM applications, such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram. which have become an integral part of their lives, and, thus far, the academic communication landscape as well. We hope that more than half of the world's population uses these applications and that youth learners dominate more than half of the total users. Today, learners use SM to interact at personal and academic levels to share their course content and related information which is further augmented by online learning. Similarly, several studies conducted in the last decade found SM integration not as easy as seems, but posits multiple challenges in teaching and learning in the environment. The prominent one is developing materials that conform to the approved curricula and native culture. A few think inappropriate to use in the school curriculum and distract students in the classroom and beyond, whereas, some feel may be piloted at the tertiary level. Furthermore, students may take the liberty to misuse the freedom to engage in other ways like watching videos and social chatting for entertainment and fun leaving no control for teachers, hence, leading to a waste of time and resources. To add on, Schroeder *et. al.* [21] contend that it is disappointing to simply plan the exercises and allow the students to collaborate and share because students must be taught how to use SM sensibly to optimize learning outcomes if it is to be included in the course curriculum [22]. Besides, teachers and students may face unanticipated difficulties, like power supply failure, technical glitches, and internet connectivity issues, which make the process more complex and annoying. Most importantly, SM use may cause teachers and students to become less conscious of nonverbal cues in communication, which can lead to misconstructions or delusions. Thus, the points if not tackled timely and judiciously may lead students unable to develop 21st-century skills [23].

3.3. Is it feasible to design social media usage-based activities in course curricula in higher education?

The young generation has adopted technology to deal with routine affairs, thus, it becomes essential to tap up their efficiency and knowledge of technology and SM applications towards curriculum learning. Also, Sharma *et al.* [24] claim that Generation Z's strong reliance on SM and technology shapes their identity and ushers in a new cultural era. SM usages, in and post-pandemic, have been increased manifold by all stakeholders (students, teachers, and parents) to communicate for teaching and learning assignments. To comply with the idea, the focus should be on providing a conducive learning and interactive environment that motivates and encourages students to partake in activities freely to use SMN in and beyond the classroom. Also, prepare a few open-ended questions exercises in open-access materials aligned with the existing approved curricula in schools or universities. Additionally, developing coursework blended with SM-based activities creates a student-centered and student-regulated environment that makes students self-reliant, and autonomous and eventually prepares students for future corporate challenges. Teachers should draft, discuss, and design the course content that includes different segments based on SM applications and use these networks as instructional tools and for sharing information. This enables free access to students to involve, engage, evolve, and innovate their learning styles and strategies freely at their own pace, space, and time leading to a democratic, interactive, and student-centered learning environment to further support the existing curriculum. As a result, students may use SM as a reflective tool to engage in intense discussions and get prompt feedback on various topics with peers and teachers which strengthens their bonding while adhering to the social and cultural practices. This initiative will mitigate the existing overriding discourse circulating SM usage by children and youth, but, often leads to increasing willingness to partake in positive discussions, sharing knowledge, and peer-led pedagogical guidance keeping gossip beyond the context impacting students' learning and normal life negatively. SM technologies encourage learners to learn their topics when assimilated into course assignments [25]. Similarly, teachers may design and use an inclusive array of resources for sharing assignments, worksheets, for revision and also share important links for resources and activities to keep parents and students in the loop to act and monitor consistently. The researcher feels that the idea of SM usage in academic activities demonstrates creative and innovative ways in which students share, explore, create, and find novel practices in this newly student-centered version, which ignites their minds to work independently and collaborate with peer groups using SM networks for academic assignments and content. Moreover, by generating new opportunities for experiential and collaborative learning, the integration of SM applications into instructional strategies has the potential to significantly advance education [21]. Therefore, clubbing SM-based activities in the curriculum isn't only feasible but also practical and convenient for all stakeholders to use freely, 24x7 building strong relationships.

3.4. What resources or manpower are required for social media inclusion in regular classrooms?

The resources and their effective usage are equally vital to teachers and learners in the offline and virtual classroom. The SM-based activities need digital resources and digital skills for a better learning experience for the learners, teachers, and parents in interaction teaching, and learning [3], [25]. A wide range of resources are available that enable stakeholders to access, connect, engage, and collaborate [4]. Teachers and students should collectively plan and decide on the SM application to be used to cater to students' learning styles. Teachers can provide the appropriate resources, such as study guides, worksheets, SM-based activity sheets, plays, multimedia, audio-visual and digital learning materials with infographics. Also, the designed material should warrant easy access, inclusiveness, interactiveness, and candidness to SM-based activities confirming students' operative participation, interface, and collaboration [4], [22], [25]–[27]. However, the students should have electronic gadgets and digital skills to operate the gadgets to ensure continuous learning.

Against the backdrop, the article corroborates the integration of SMNs in teaching and learning, highlighting several advantages like enhanced student-teacher communication, collaboration, and feedback that are consistent with the findings of numerous studies [3], [18], [19], [22], [25]–[27]. However, it underscores the major challenges like technical issues and distractions that impact student learning when incorporating SMNs into regular studies. The article advocates that well-designed academic activities with SMNs can create a learner-centered environment, enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. It urges further study into the educational potential of SMNs and their incorporation into pedagogy across academic levels. In addition, the discussion explores the use of social media networks (SMN) in tertiary education, highlighting both benefits and challenges [4], [28], [29]. Key advantages include enhanced social interaction, immediate feedback, critical thinking development, and increased student engagement. SMN usage fosters collaboration, metacognitive reasoning, and a learner-centered approach [26], [27], [30]. However, challenges such as potential misuse, technical issues, and the need for careful integration into curricula are noted. The paper suggests that incorporating SMN-based activities into higher education is feasible and potentially beneficial, but requires thoughtful planning and implementation. It emphasizes the importance of aligning SMN use with approved curricula and cultural norms. The discussion concludes by addressing

resource requirements, stressing the need for digital skills, appropriate technology, and well-designed learning materials to effectively integrate SMN into regular classrooms. Largely, the paper presents a balanced view of SMN in education, recognizing its potential to transform learning experiences while acknowledging the need to address associated challenges.

4. CONCLUSION

In sum, this paper shows the prominence of SM usage within tertiary education. This is done by defining SM, its networks, and related aspects, and shedding light on various studies that apply SMN usage ranging from grounded facts to operationalizing in academia. Together, the aforementioned explanation responds to how SMN usage in teaching and learning bridges the gap between the real and virtual worlds. The description presented herein reflects the remarkable speed of integrating SM usage in academia, given that, as suggested above, the SMNs support and help both teachers and learners, which did not even seem practicable at the beginning of the century. Answers to the fundamental questions on integrating social networking sites in teaching and learning paved the way to plan and execute SMNs in implementing various academic activities to achieve better learning outcomes. Also, the novel SM-mediated learning mitigates the constant distractions, interruptions, and often-seen procrastination in learners and assists in the creative process of correct writing. Nevertheless, teachers and students meet a few challenges, but timely support diminishes the chances of allowing SM to act as a distractor to pedagogy. Moreover, we claim that academic activities coupled with SMNs if designed and managed well carefully may act as catalysts to build a conducive learner-centered environment where learners use SM applications to share, discuss course materials, post their assignments, get feedback, and interact beyond time, place, and location without any restrictions. Despite the favorable conditions that integrate SM into curricula, it opens avenues for its inclusion in other levels and disciplines. The article gives a call to future perspectives, deliberation, and research by academic researchers and policymakers to integrate SM in pedagogy at all levels of education and also explore its potential to make an integral part and state-of-the-art teaching and learning tool for teachers and students to use freely without restrictions of time, place, and geographical location. Furthermore, SMNs and other AI-operated applications perhaps, are dynamic and evolving, and hence, have not yet been fully investigated in academia, but the aforementioned explanation gives a ray of hope as it has tremendous potential to be integrated into pedagogy and to become vital part of academia.

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