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Dlamini, Petros PN and Siphamandla, Mngwengwe Marvin, "The Use of Social Media Tools to Support Scholarly Knowledge Among Students at the University of Zululand" (2020). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 3941.

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The Use of Social Media Tools to Support Scholarly Knowledge Among Students at the University of Zululand

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Abstract

This article addressed the use and types of social media tools to share scholarly knowledge among students in the Department of Information Studies, University of Zululand. The study was guided by four research objectives: to determine the types of social media tools used to share scholarly knowledge; to understand how social media tools add positively to academic performance; to identify the factors that motivate students to use social media tools for scholarly knowledge sharing; and to find out the barriers to using social media tools for the sharing of scholarly knowledge. The theoretical basis for this study was informed by technology acceptance model (TAM). This study adopted positivism research paradigm to enable quantitative research approach. A total of 35 questionnaires were distributed to second year students in the Department of Information Studies and all the questionnaires were returned. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics with the support of statistical package of social sciences (SPSS). The study found that the availability of social media tools has transformed the lives of students academically and showed that the advent of social media tools provides a good platform for sharing scholarly knowledge. It was found that WhatsApp, Facebook, email, etc. were media tools used to share scholarly knowledge. The study also revealed that a large number of students were using social media tools to share scholarly knowledge. However, the study found that there are barriers that hinder the effective use of social media tools among students. These barriers include lack of trust, lack of money to purchase data bundles when students operate from home, and lack of privacy. One of the recommendations of the study is that the University of Zululand needs to have departmental trainings aimed at making students aware of all social media tools that can be used to share scholarly knowledge.

Keywords: Social media tools, scholarly knowledge, students and academic performance.

Introduction

Universities put a lot of efforts in the utilization of social media tools to share academic knowledge for the benefit of its students, academics, researchers, and support staff, just to mention a few. It is widely acknowledged that there is an increase in the use of social media tools by university students (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). This rapid growth in the acceptance of social media applications in a short period of time is due to its increasingly widespread operation by students (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010); and the increase in the use of these applications is because they are convenient, flexible and functional (Al-rahimi et al., 2013). It is believed that social media tools are highly beneficial to students in higher education as they modernise the process of student learning, interaction, collaboration and sharing (Chai-lee, 2013; Al-rahmi et al., 2013). However, it cannot be ignored that some students use social media tools for non-academic purposes. As observed by Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010), if students are not monitored and bombarded with work, they tend to spend quality time using social media tools to socialise and share non-scholarly knowledge. This implies that some students spend quality time generating irrelevant contents, such as funny clips, which affects their academic performance. The authors also state that too much non-academic use of these applications can impair students' academic life and learning experiences.

With the fourth industrial revolution at the door, students should be encouraged to use social media tools to in their school works. In a study by Ghazali et al. (2015), it was revealed that social media tools enable people to share knowledge. Social media tools play a pivotal role in generating scholarly knowledge and learning among students. Several authors, such as Kolan and Dzandza (2017) highlight four major advantages of social media use in higher education, and these include enhancing relationships, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities. Sharabati (2018) posits that the rapid exchange of information and knowledge via social networks has substantially changed lifestyles and promoted personal and organizational learning. Hence, Al Rebdi (2018) admonish people to take advantage of social media tools in order to socialise, increase in knowledge, and share the knowledge.

Based on the above statement, Dlamini (2016) states that socialisation eradicates selfishness and promotes knowledge sharing among communities and organizations for the benefit of all. In this regard, social media tools act as socialisation elements for sharing scholarly knowledge among students. Koranteng and Wiafe (2019) reveal that knowledge sharing among university

students has been recognized as an important and interesting area of study in academia. The concept of knowledge sharing is meant to emphasize the importance of exchanging information among students in order to create a valuable knowledge base for one another (Le et al, 2018). It is, therefore, imperative to assess how students use social media tools to share educational information.

A study by Bankole and Oludayo (2012) posits that information and knowledge disseminated through the slow process of oral communications, or with paper materials, can now be transferred rapidly from an individual to an infinite number of users through a number of media and formats. Amedie (2015) notes that this media outlet accommodates a wide variety of spontaneous, formal, informal, scholarly and unscholarly writings. It enables groups with common interests, such as students, to work on collaborative group projects outside the classroom. According to Ali (2017), the social media has enabled the reception of instant information. This study is premised on the submission of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) that social media tools allow the creation and exchange of user generated content, which can be used by students as a platform that allows one or more people to share information and other contents, regardless of location.

The adoption and use of social media tools by students to share scholarly knowledge have been viewed to tremendously transform the academic performance of students (Maya, 2015). Kyoshaba (2009) also pointed out that when social media tools are used properly by students, it can immensely improve the sharing of scholarly knowledge and academic performance. It is obvious that in today's world, students spend their time on social media tools and networking sites. Thus, this study assessed the use of social media tools by students in the Department of Information Studies, University of Zululand, by investigating the level of interaction of students with social media tools for the sharing of scholarly knowledge and how this affects their academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the use of social media tools to support scholarly knowledge among second year students of the Department of Information studies, University of Zululand. The study answered the following research questions: What are the types of social media tools used to support scholarly knowledge? How do social media tools add positively to academic performances? What factors could motivate students to support scholarly knowledge? What barriers affect the effective use of social media tools to support scholarly knowledge?

Literature Review

This section discusses the literature review and the conceptualisation/theoretical model of the study. It begins by explaining the types of social media tools that support scholarly knowledge; how social media tools support and create positive attitude in students to perform better academically; the factors that motivate students to use social media tools for scholarly knowledge sharing; and the barriers hindering the effective use of social media tools to support scholarly knowledge.

Types of social media tools used to share scholarly knowledge

Social media is a communication tool that allows individuals to integrate and collaborate with others, regardless of their destination. It is considered the revolutionary arm of the web that provides new ways of creating contents, collaborating, interacting, and sharing information online in an open social environment (Bakare, Bamigboye & Okonedo-Adegbaye, (2015). The authors highlight that one of the advantages of using social media tools is that they support the social aspects of the Internet as a channel for communication, collaboration, and interaction, which is characterized as Web 2.0. Web 2.0 resources emphasize active participation, connectivity, collaboration, as well as sharing of knowledge and ideas among users. Social media allows the type of Internet services where online contents are generated and shared by the users of the service (Ashraf & Haneefe, 2016).

Social media is highly used for learning where anyone can acquire knowledge and skills for life-long learning habits (Ong et al, 2011). Dahalin and Suebsom (2019) emphasize that there is a high level of knowledge sharing in this present day as a result of technologies such as Facebook, and Twitter. Ghazal et al. (2015) report that there are many knowledge sharing methods such as face-to face meetings, discussion in groups or through the use of social media applications. Mingle and Adams (2015) describe popular social network platforms on mobile and web applications as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, snap chat, and Google Plus, among others. These platforms have specific roles, functions and modes of communication although their functions are mostly related. In addition, Ali et al. (2017) note that social media tools, for instance, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter etc., support students in many ways, making it necessary to understand their use behaviour. Acheaw (2016) opines that young people spend a lot of time daily on social network sites and the time spent varies greatly.

Mensah and Nizam (2016) remark that social platforms are mainly used by students for socializing activities rather than for academic purpose. However, Omotayo and Salami, (2019) disagree with the above view; they argue that social media tools are used by students to empower themselves academically. In their findings, it was revealed that the students used social media platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, to share scholarly knowledge. Additionally, their findings show that students use social media tools like Facebook and WhatsApp to share knowledge with other students. It is noteworthy that Kustijono and Zuhri (2018) found that some students frequently use smartphones to access today's popular social networks like Facebook and WhatsApp, but only for entertainment. Going further, Mensah and Nizam (2016) reveal that Facebook users often experience poor academic performance. This is an indication that not all students use social media tools for academic purposes. Supporting this observation, Rouis et al. (2011) opine that Facebook is normally used for leisure activities that negatively affect students' academic performance. Sharabati (2018) cautions that even though social media tools affect the academic performance of students, it can never be taken away from them because a large number of students still benefit academically from these tools. Gupta, Singh and Marwaha (2013) reinforce this view in their submission that students who are serious with their academic works use social media tools, such as video sharing, social networking, web conferencing, blogging, photo sharing, podcasting, wikis, electronic portfolios, virtual world, tweeting and social bookmarking, for academic purposes.

Mingle and Adams (2015) postulate that when students use social media tools, they are able to formulate group discussions to exchange ideas and communicate with their teachers and friends about given assignments. Sharabati (2018) notes that the use of social media tools can be an essential way to achieve learning that offers emotional and intellectual support and that facilitates academic satisfaction, capability development and performance improvement. Sharabati (2018) concludes by stating that peer interaction encourages the development of communication skills and boosts the self-esteem of those who have good interpersonal skills. Thus, it is essential to ensure that these students spend their time with the right group of colleagues (Ainin et al., 2015). It can be said that even though social media tools have both positive and negative effects on the academic success of students, yet, they cannot be done away with.

Social media tools that motivate students to perform better academically

Universities energize the utilization of social media tools for sharing academic knowledge for the benefit of students, academics, researchers, support staff and its community. It is widely acknowledged that there is an increase in the use of social media tools by universities, and the rapid growth in the acceptance of social media applications is attributed to its increasing widespread operation by students (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Universities promote the use of social media tools because of its convenience, flexibility and functionalities in supporting academic work (Al-rahimi et al., 2013). It is believed that social media tools are highly beneficial to students of higher education in modernizing the process of student learning, interaction, collaboration and sharing of scholarly knowledge (Chai-lee, 2013; Al-rahmi et al., 2014). However, it is observed that some students use social media tools in a negative way and not for academic benefit (Kuppuswamy & Narayan, 2010).

Zaidieh (2012) opines that human interaction through social media is a vital element in the learning process, as social networking provides participation through virtual classrooms, chat rooms and meetings by video, to mention a few. Social media tools have been a great platform to exchange knowledge and keep communities informed (Gaál, Szabó, Obermayer and Csepregi, 2015). In other words, social media tools keep people abreast of what is not yet known and experienced. Today, universities are experiencing high pass rates because social media tools keep students updated, even when not physically present in class, and they enable forums, such as chat rooms for social networking, that provide opportunities to exchange views on different topics of discussion (Sharabati, 2018). This is one of the advantages of being involved in the use of social media tools to share scholarly knowledge.

Factors motivating students to use social media tools for sharing of scholarly knowledge.

Knowledge sharing can be described as the process of communication in which two or more parties are involved in the transfer of knowledge (Ghazali et al, 2016). Paulin and Suneson (2015) define knowledge sharing as an exchange of knowledge between two individuals: one who communicates knowledge and the other who assimilates it. Students are highly motivated to share knowledge in order to be empowered. Thus, their motivation for using social media can also vary, depending on the domain (Sanghee & Sue, 2015). It can be said that students are motivated by two factors in the use of social media tools, that is personal interest and learning. Lubua, Semlambo and Pretorius (2017) posit that one of the factors for using social media tools by students is its usefulness as a platform that allows the exchange of text, audio and visual

recorded information. The author states that the platform has both educational and entertainment information. Jewitt et al. (2010) mention that the platform must have adequate relevant resources to support students' activities. Al-Zedjali, Al-Harrasi, and Al-Badi, (2014) submit that social media tools are motivational platforms if students find what is relevant to their needs at the time of information retrieval. According to Alabdulkareem (2015), in social media, students form an equal source of resources because of the enhanced interaction. Arkorful and Abaidoo (2007) conclude that when students access learning materials and interact with others through discussions, they become motivated to use social media tools.

At some point, Omotayo and Salami (2019) reveal that social influence is another input factor that can influence the level of knowledge sharing (KS) among students in higher institutions of learning. It comprises subjective norms, group norms, and social identity, which has been frequently used to study users' or customers' motives in pursuing certain acts and behavioural changes. However, Smith, Rainie and Zickuhr (2011) state that social influence is a common feature of everyday life: we either try to influence others or are influenced by them many times each day. Smith, Rainie and Zickuhr (2011) further explain that social influence occurs when an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by other people. In addition, Liu and Baumeister (2017) state that social influence drives human selection behaviours when numerous objects are competing for limited attention, leading to the 'rich get richer' dynamics, where popular objects tend to get more attention. Moreover, Al-Zedjali, Al-Harrasi, and Al-Badi (2014) observe that perceived usefulness is the extent to which a student believes that using a particular social media tool will enhance his/her academic performance. Goel, Islamia and Singh (2016); Zedjali, Al-Harrasi, and Al-Badi., (2014) argue that sharing relevant materials is important to the extent that the ability of sharing content and course-related materials increases the intention of students to take advantage of social media tools for learning purposes.

Eid and Al-Jabri (2016) emphasize that students are motivated to use different social networking sites (SNS) for the purposes of chatting and online discussion, creating knowledge, information content and file sharing in order to enhance their academic performance. Omotayo and Salami (2019) further reinforced that there is significant positive relationship between chatting and online discussion and file sharing, as well as knowledge sharing and motivation among students when they find that what they are learning in class is accessible and disseminated through social media tools. It can be said that social media offers the possibility

of maintaining friendship and work relationships among students where online contact is kept alive and active for the benefit of all (Zande, 2012).

Barriers to effective use of social media tools to share scholarly knowledge.

The potential influence of media multitasking behaviour has been under scrutiny for years. It is widely acknowledged that cognition, media multi-tasking is the cause of negatively use of social media tools among adolescents (Ophir, Nass & Wagner, 2009). Thus Lau (2017) postulate that there is poor academic performance among students because of multitasking. A study by Khamali, Thairu and Wanja (2018) uncovered a number of barriers that students face when using social media tools. These include lack of trust, poor communication skills, management support and technological barriers. In another study by Zaidieh (2012), privacy was detected as one of the obstacles to using social networking in education. The author further states that lack of privacy exposes students to text, audios and videos that are harmful to young people. In agreement with this view, Garfield (2018) also allude that privacy works hand in hand with lack of trust. The author opines that students become worried that sharing their knowledge will allow other students to be rewarded, without giving credit or something in return to the main source of information. Anderson (2019) also points out that the cost of airtime and data bundles require a lot of money from students when not on campus where Internet is free. This implies that if students have a task to perform when away from the university, it becomes a burden to them. In addition, Kwahk and Park (2016) note that the willingness of a user to share knowledge on social networks is influenced by the freshness of information in the network. That is, if the information on the social network is not up-to-date, there will be unsatisfied expectations of the value of information, and this will lower the willingness of such a user to share knowledge. A study by Shafieiyoun and Safaei (2013) caution that individuals are willing to use information that is up-to-date. In other words, the currency of knowledge on social media tools count for its use. Ahmed, Ahmad, Ahmad and Zakaria (2018) also testify that some key challenges might impact on an individual's willingness to engage in a relationship; for example, the personal benefits of doing so, lack of trust, and a low priority perception regarding the use of social media for knowledge sharing.

Theoretical Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM) by Davis (1989) was used to underpin this study. the model has become the most widely used model to explain user acceptance of new technologies.

TAM was developed from the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and provides a basis for tracing how external variables influence belief, attitude and intention to use new technologies (Wu, Li & Fu 2011). In simpler terms, TAM reveals that the use of a new technology depends upon the user's attitude towards that technology, the perceived ease of use of the technology, and the perceived benefits that can be derived from using it (Davis, 1989). The justification of adopting this theory was to investigate students' willingness to accept and use social media tools to share scholarly knowledge.

It must be noted that TAM is a widely used information technology framework for understanding users' adoption and use of emerging technologies, particularly among students in tertiary institutions. The theory posits that a person's intention to use (acceptance of technology) and usage behavior (actual use) of a technology is predicated by the person's perceptions of the specific technology's usefulness (benefit from using the technology) and ease of use (Davis, 1989). Simply, users are more likely to adopt a new technology with high-quality, design and durability. In TAM, there are two factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Davis (1989) defines perceived usefulness as the prospective user's subjective probability that using a specific application/system will enhance his or her job or life performance. In the same vein, Davis (1989) describes ease of use (EOU) as the degree to which the prospective user expects the target system to be free of effort. The implication of this is that, in TAM, ease of use and perceived usefulness are the most important determinants of actual system use. These two factors are influenced by external variables. The main external factors that are usually manifested are social factors, cultural factors and political factors. Social factors include language, skills and facilitating conditions. Political factors are mainly the impact of using technology in politics and political crisis. The attitude to use is concerned with the user's evaluation of the desirability of employing a particular information system application. Behavioral intention is the measure of the likelihood of a person employing the application (Davis, 1989).

Davis (1989) uses the diagram below to demonstrate how Technology Acceptance Model should be used.

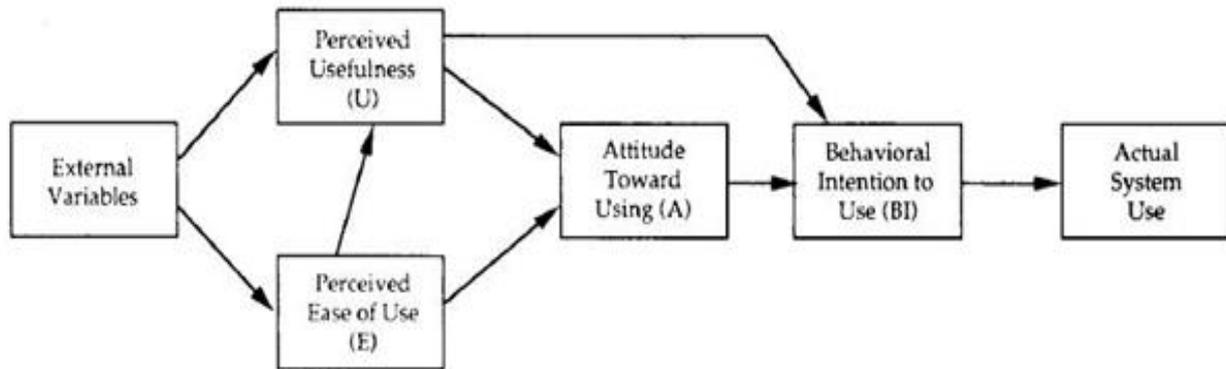


Figure 1: Technology acceptance Model (TAM) Davis (1989)

According to Davis (1989), Figure 1 above demonstrates two main things. It is explained as follows: perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), attitude, and behavioral intention to use. Among the constructs, PU and PEOU form an end-user's beliefs about a technology, and therefore, predict his or her attitude towards the technology, which in turn predicts its acceptance.

The study took advantage of this model because it has a good reputation and it is widely used by researchers to predict the use and acceptance of information systems and technology by individual users. TAM has been widely studied and verified by different studies that examine technology acceptance behaviour of individuals in different information systems' constructs. From this model, it is deduced that whenever an individual perceives that using a certain technology will assist in improving performance or will bring some benefits to the company, the individual will be eager to adopt it. At the same time, if the new technology is perceived to be easy to implement, people will not hesitate to adopt it. Thus, this study adopted technology acceptance model being the most common model used to explain the adoption and implementation of Internet technologies (El-Gohary, 2012; Wu et al., 2011). This study also employed this model to explore the adoption of social media by students for knowledge sharing purposes. Hence, it is assumed that if students understand the benefits of using social media tools and if they have the ability to utilise it without any challenges, they can easily accept social media tools to share scholarly knowledge. In this study, TAM is used to establish the factors that influence the use of social media for scholarly knowledge sharing among students at the University of Zululand.

Research methodology

The study adopted positivism research paradigm because the study is quantitative in nature. One of the advantages of positivism is that it strives to investigate, confirm, and predict law-like patterns of behaviour. It is commonly used in the natural sciences, physical sciences, and to some extent, in the social sciences, especially where large and small sample sizes are involved. In a nutshell, the focus of this research paradigm is on the objectivity of the research process (Creswell, 2014). The study further used descriptive survey design. One of the advantages of descriptive research is, of course, to describe, as well as explain, or validate the research objective, when it comes to a specific group of people, such as students in this case. The total population for this study was the second year information science students of the University of Zululand. Notably, the total number of information science students was 35. The study found that sampling was not important because the population was manageable and less than hundred (Leedy, 1997:211). Therefore, this study adopted the census method. The study collected data through the use of questionnaires. A total of 35 questionnaires were distributed to the information science students and all the 35 were completed and returned. The study analysed the data using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). The study presented data in the form of tables and graphs.

Results and Discussions

The findings are hereby discussed, starting with the demographic details of the respondents (Table 1)

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency
Gender	
Female	19
Male	16
Age	
17-22	12
23-28	21
29-34	1

35+	1
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The results confirmed that the study is dominated with the age group 23-28 with the frequency of 21 (60%). This is followed by the age group 17-22 with the frequency of 12 (34%) participants, the third was the group with 1 (2%) participant and age range 29-34 and the last with 1 (2%) being participants that were 35+. This depicts that the selected population is dominated by those within the age range of 23-28 years.

In the following section, the findings of the study are reported by themes derived from the research questions below:

- What are the types of social media tools used to support scholarly knowledge?
- How do social media tools add positively to academic performances?
- What factors could motivate students to support scholarly knowledge?
- What barriers could hinder the use of social media tools to support scholarly knowledge?

Use of Social Media Tools by Students

It was to determine if students were using social media tools to interact with other students. This question was meant to lead students to state whether or not social media tools were used to share scholarly knowledge. The results are provided in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Use of social media tools by students

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	33	94
No	2	6
Total	35	100

Table 2 above indicated that 33 (71%) students are highly active in the use of social media tools, while 2 (6%) do not use social media tools. These findings indicated that there is a high number of students who use social media tools in the Department of Information Studies, University of Zululand. The finding concurred with Mingle and Adams (2015) whose study also reported that a high number of students are fully involved in the use social media tools.

Types of social media tools used to share scholarly knowledge.

Students were asked to identify those social media tools they employ to share scholarly information. It must be noted that this question was not addressed by all students because 2 (6%) indicated they were not using social media tools. Therefore, 33 (94%) attended to this question. The findings are summarised in the Table 3.

Table 3: Social media tools used by students to share scholarly knowledge

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp	20	60.6
WhatsApp and Facebook	9	27
WhatsApp and e-mail	2	5.7
WhatsApp, Facebook and e-mail	1	2.8
E-mail	1	2.8
Total	33	100

The study revealed that 20 (60.6%) students are use WhatsApp for scholarly knowledge, while 9 (27%) use WhatsApp and Facebook and there were only 2 (5.7%) that use WhatsApp and e-mail to share scholarly knowledge. Interestingly, there were only 1 (2.8%) student who use WhatsApp, Facebook and e-mail to share scholarly knowledge. These findings suggested that WhatsApp is highly used by students to share scholarly knowledge. The high use of WhatsApp might suggest that this type of social media is more user-friendly and does not require a large amount of data. This supports the theory of TAM by Davis (1989). TAM reveals that the use of a new technology depends upon the user's attitude towards that technology, the perceived ease of use of the technology, and the perceived benefits that can be derived from using it (Davis, 1989). The findings also agree with Nández and Borrego (2013) whose study also reported that social media tools are highly used to support the collaborative creation and dissemination of knowledge, to make online comments to articles, social bookmarking sites, wikis, websites to post slides, and text or videos, just to mention a few. The findings of the

study were also in line with Le et al, (2018) in their opinion that social media are tools highly used by younger people to effectively share knowledge and exchange information among individuals to create a valuable knowledge base for one another. Several studies (Kolan and Dzandza, 2017; Rifkin, Longnecker, Leach and Ortia, 2009) also revealed that higher education institutions are utilising social media tools to enhance relationships, improve learning motivation, offer personalized course material, develop collaborative abilities and allow students to share scholarly knowledge. Sharabati (2018) states that the rapid exchange of information and knowledge via social networks has substantially changed lifestyles and promoted personal and organizational learning. Rebdi (2018) posits that the wide use of mobile phones and computers has enhanced the accessibility to social networks, and as such, these tools have become essential necessities of individuals' everyday life. Social networks utilization, as an education aid, became an easy fantasy that blends pleasure and science to access knowledge and share it.

The reasons for the preference of a specific social media tool compared to others

The study asked the respondents to indicate the reasons for their preference of social media tools chosen above, compared to others. The question was asked in order to understand why some social media tools are more important than others. Again, this question was not addressed by all students because 2 (6%) indicated they were not using social media tools. In the light of this, 33 (94%) answered this question. Table 4 summarises the findings.

Table 4: Reasons for preferences for a specific social media compared to others

Reasons for preference	Frequency	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp is more user friendly and is quick to master	30	90.9
WhatsApp does not require a lot of data compared to Facebook	27	81.8
Through WhatsApp, we are able to make follow-up through video calls and to remind the recipient to respond	22	66.6
WhatsApp allows one to share documents and videos as well as calls	21	63.3

Facebook is able to deliver a message with large amount of data and videos	4	12
Facebook has messenger, which allows one to make a follow up in case there is a delay in responding	3	9
Through emails, large documents are able to be sent and delivered	2	6

Table 4 above revealed that students have various reasons why they perceived other social media tools to be more important than others. WhatsApp (with a score of 90.9%) was the most preferred social media tool because it is perceived to be more user-friendly and quicker to master than the other social media tools. This was closely followed by the reason that WhatsApp does not require a lot of data (with a score of 81.8%), compared to Facebook. Other preferences were that using WhatsApp, students are able to follow up on discussions through audio or video call (with a score of 66.6%), while 21 (63.3%) said WhatsApp allows students to share documents and videos, as well as make calls. These findings were in line with TAM, which reveals that the use of a new technology depends upon the user's attitude towards that technology, the perceived ease of use of the technology, and the perceived benefits that can be derived from using it. Davis (1989) also notes that the usefulness of a particular technology is subject to the probability that using a specific application system will enhance his or her job or life performance.

Reasons for not using social media tools

The 2 (6%) students who claimed they were not using social media tools to share scholarly knowledge were asked to state their reasons. Table 5 shows the summary of the findings, which permitted multiple responses.

Table 5: Reasons for not using social media tools to share scholarly knowledge

Reasons for not using social media tools	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Social media tools consume the time meant for academic work.	2	100

Social media tools destroy relationships	1	50
Social media tools expose and corrupt young people in many different ways	1	50

The study found that the students who were not using social media tools had negative attitude towards using such tools. The findings showed that this set of students were of the opinion that social media tools consume the time meant for academic work, while another some felt that such tools destroy relationships. Some also believed that social media tools expose and corrupt young people. The views of the respondents were also supported by the findings of Kuppuswamy and Narayan's (2010) that social media applications are highly utilized by students for a lot of non-educational purposes. To these authors, social media tools may badly affect students' academic life and learning experiences.

Table 6: Factors motivating students to use social media tools

Factors motivating students to use social media tools	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Makes its users aware of current information	29	87.8
User-friendly and easily used to access and share scholarly knowledge	12	36
Convenient and delivers a message instantly	7	21
Affordable or less expensive	6	18
Fast and quick to use	5	15
Easy to interact with other people	3	9
It is not time consuming and less expensive	2	6

The study established that there were strong factors motivating students to use social media tools to share scholarly knowledge as shown in (Table 6) above. The reasons behind the use of social media tools are as follows: makes its users aware of current information; user-friendly and easily used to access and share scholarly knowledge; convenient to use and delivers instant messages; its affordable and less expensive; fast and quick to use; easy to collaborate with other people; and lastly, it is not time consuming and less expensive. The findings of the study were

in line with Davis' (1989) TAM, which showed that whenever an individual perceives that using a certain technology will assist in improving performance or will bring some benefits to the company, the individual will be eager to adopt it. At the same time, if the new technology is perceived to be easy to implement, people will not hesitate to adopt it (Salwani et al. 2009). The study findings align with what Siemens (2005) mentioned in his theory of Connectivism that students are encouraged to seek out current information online on their own and to express what they find, and that learning may reside in non-human appliances. The findings were in line with Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup, and Gonyea (2007) in their report that students are using social media tools in order to meet the fast flow of information that is currently available. Social media tools are highly used by majority of young people because it makes them aware of current happenings. Moreover, increase in the awareness of availability of social media tools encourage students to share scholarly information (Rutherford, 2010).

Time spent on social media in a typical day

This theme was attended to by only the students who indicated that they were using social media tools; that is 33 (94%) students. The results are summarised as follows:

Table 7: Time spent on social media in a typical day

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5 – 20 minutes	5	15
21 – 30 minutes	11	33
1 – 2 hrs	13	39
More than 3 hrs	4	12
Total	33	100

Table 7 indicated that 13 (39%) students spend between 1 – 2 hours on social media tools on a daily basis. This was closely followed by 11 (33%) students who spend between 21 – 30 minutes daily on social media. There were 5 (15%) who said they spend between 5-20 minutes and only 4 (12%) students indicated that they spend more than 3 hours daily using social media

tools. The study findings corroborated Ali et al. (2017) that all students cannot spend the same amount of time on social media, as their commitment differs. A study by Acheaw (2016) tallies with the findings of this study by pointing out that the amount of time spent daily on social network sites varies greatly, and that it depends on an individual's other commitment at hand.

Social media tools and motivation in academic studies

Students were asked if social media tools motivated them in their academic studies. The study wanted to be aware if social media tools had a positive impact on the academic success of students. Table 8 summarises the findings.

Table 8: Social media tools and motivation in academic studies

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	33	94
No	2	6
Total	35	100

The study showed that majority 33 (94%) of students were of the view that social media tools motivated them in their academic studies. On the other hand, 2 (6%) students claimed that social media tools do not motivate them in their academic studies. These findings suggested that a large number of students see social media tools as vital platforms for academic success. These findings agree with Sharabati's (2018) finding that the use of social media tools assist students to perform better in their academic work. The author also mentioned that the use of social media tools by students facilitate academic satisfaction, capability development and performance improvement.

How social media tools motivate students in their academic studies

Students were asked to describe how social media tools impact positively on their academic studies. It must be noted that this question was not addressed by all students because 2 (6%) indicated that social media tools do not add any value to their academic achievement. Hence, 33 (94%) answered this question. The findings are summarised in Table 9 below.

Table 9: How social media tools motivated students in their academic studies

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Social media tools allow the sharing of various information that help to improve academic work	14	42.3
It is quick to reduce uncertainty when addressing queries	9	27
Allow students to quickly learn from others through online group discussions.	7	21
Supports online collaboration	3	9
Total	33	100

The study found that social media tools allow the sharing of vital information for the improvement of students' academic work. Secondly, social media tools are quick to reduce uncertainty when addressing queries among students; thirdly, social media tools allow students to quickly learn from others through online group discussions; and lastly, social media tools support online collaboration. The findings of the study concurs with Chiu's (2010) findings that some students use social media tools to share scholarly knowledge in order to equip other students. Successful collaborative learning relies greatly on knowledge sharing among students (Chiu 2010).

Barriers to the effective use of social media tools to share scholarly knowledge

In this section, we discuss the barriers to the effective use of social media tools for scholarly knowledge sharing among students. It is important to note that this question was only relevant to the students, that is 33, who indicated that they were using social media tools. The findings are summarised in the table below.

Table 10: Barriers to the effective use of social media tools to share scholarly knowledge

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of trust	22	66.6

Lack of money to purchase data bundles when students are not on campus	21	63.6
Lack of privacy	21	63.6
Poor network	17	51.5
Negative attitude	16	48.4
Lack of confidence	13	39
Technological factors	13	39

The study established that there are barriers encountered by students that hinder the effective use of social media tools to share scholarly knowledge (Table 10). The barriers were identified as: lack of trust, lack of money to purchase data bundles, lack of privacy, poor network, negative attitude, lack of confidence and technological factors. These findings are in line with the findings by Khamali, Thairu and Wanja (2018) who reported that students encounter a number of challenges when using social media tools. The problems encountered are as follows: lack of trust, poor communication skills, management support and technological barriers. Anderson (2019) notes lack of privacy as the main cause for students not to utilise social media tools. On the other hand, Garfield (2018) submits that students do not fully utilise social media tools because of lack of trust. Ahmed, Ahmad, Ahmad, and Zakaria (2018) also testify that lack of money to maintain social media tools is problematic among students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the use of social media tools to support scholarly knowledge among students. This study confirms that social media tools could be used to support scholarly knowledge among students in tertiary institutions in diverse ways. The study took advantage of Davis' (1989) technology of acceptance model, which supports the use of social media tools by creating new opportunities for people to learn and share information, using the internet, among themselves. Based on the information acquired, it is fair to say that students from the Department of Information Studies at the University of Zululand are exposed to various types of existing social media. It is evident that 94% of the sampled students use social media tools to share scholarly knowledge. The use of WhatsApp among

students seems prevalent as an appropriate social media tool for sending and receiving instant messages. Therefore, people create WhatsApp groups to increase access to information. The highlighted multiple purposes of WhatsApp makes it the most appropriate social media tool for students to access and disseminate scholarly knowledge for the benefit of all (Table 4). The reviewed literature in this paper also indicates that socialising through social media tools eradicates selfishness and promotes knowledge sharing among communities and organizations for the benefit of all. This study did not obtain much details from students on the depth and breadth of the use of other social media tools for sharing scholarly knowledge, but the study notes this for further research. It was noted that one of the reasons students use social media tools was that it keeps them up-to-date with current information and makes them relevant in the society (see Table 6). They (students), as was noted, have the advantage of staying connected to social media tools because of the availability of free Wi-Fi in institutions of higher learning. However, it was observed that even though students have free Wi-Fi within the university, they were not spending much of their time on social media tools (see Table 7); the highest time spent being 1-2 hrs by 39% of the respondents.

Some students also agreed that social media tools motivated them in their academic studies (see Tables 8). The study found that students were motivated in different ways to use social media tools. In other words, their motivation was based on the fact that their performance in class improved tremendously (see Table 9). Some of the emerged benefits are: social media tools are quick to reduce uncertainty when addressing queries among students; the tools allow students to quickly learn from others through online group discussions; and the tools support online collaboration. The study unveiled several barriers to the effective use of social media tools (see Table 10). Among them are: lack of trust, lack of money to purchase data bundles when students operate from home, lack of privacy, poor network, negative attitude, lack of confidence and technological factors.

Using social media tools to share scholarly knowledge is a relatively broad area of study, therefore, gaps in specific media tools (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Emails, Instagram), just to mention a few, are to be expected and require attention. Social media tools awareness (e.g. through workshops and seminars) for students of the University of Zululand is crucial for them to effectively access and use all media tools at their disposal. Advisably, such workshops and seminars could be organised as part of community outreach programmes.

Since social media tools are available for use, this study recommends that the University of Zululand should conduct awareness training for students on available social media tools to increase the sharing of scholarly knowledge. Further recommendations are as follows:

- There is an urgent need for the University of Zululand to have departmental training aimed at making students aware of all social media tools that can be used to share scholarly knowledge;
- There is an urgent need for the University of Zululand to have a special module for first year students on the use and importance of social media tools scholarly knowledge sharing.

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