Is social the new smart?

Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

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Authors: Pedro Bonilla
Mohammed Osman

Supervisor: Styliani Zafeiropoulou

Examiners: Markus Lahtinen
Azadeh Sarkheyl
Is social the new smart? : Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Authors: Pedro Bonilla and Mohammed Osman

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Abstract:
The versatility and pervasiveness of social media websites in human life have created an opportunity to employ them in several contexts other than the merely social ones. In particular, social media have been being used by students as an additional tool to help with their studies, even when academic institutions usually provide them with educational systems (also known as learning management systems). The prime goal of this paper is to investigate the factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes, an inquiry about which insufficient research has been performed to date. In this investigation, an initial framework was proposed, refined and extended in agreement with the qualitative data collected from the interviewee group, which was composed of students from Lund University. The results of the conducted interviews not only confirmed most of our tentative factors but also provided us with unexpected elements that students take into account when deciding whether to use or not to use social media with academic intentions. The final outcome is a simple framework which explains the phenomenon within its context and which, as a side effect, provides some insights into what aspects to consider when developing educational systems targeting students.
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To my beloved mother, father, and sister, whose unconditional emotional support was essential for my success in this endeavor.

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To my beloved mother, father, brother, sisters and fiancé, who supported me, helped me to become a soon to be MSc graduate.

Mohammed Osman
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1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of our research area (social media usage for academic purposes), and it continues to describe why this topic is relevant to the information systems field, what is the origin of the research question and what is the fundamental purpose.

1.1 Background

Educational organizations and the learning process, in general, have been highly salient in every culture since the commencement of modern civilization (Grendler, 2004). At present, such learning is being aided by technology and information systems. For example, learning management systems (LMS) were specifically designed to implement an infrastructure that took care of all the activities related to the educational process (Watson & Watson, 2007) and, since they are in charge of the distribution of course academic content (among other tasks), students are naturally encouraged to use the LMS of their respective institution (as opposed to external LMS).

On the other hand, Web 2.0 tools, in general, and social media applications, in particular, have been invading every activity of contemporaneous society. Social media has become a ubiquitous phenomenon in recent years, and some surveys report a penetration as high as 84% among teenagers in the United States (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). As a matter of fact, social media is already affecting and permeating many aspects of human society, ranging from personal development to professional or academic growth, social media have proven itself to be ubiquitous when it comes to potential use cases. For instance: 1- in the area of collaborative projects, wiki pages are helping teams to direct collective effort efficiently and to obtain a better result than if each of their participants worked in an isolated way. 2- in the business area, blogs (the social media replacement for personal web pages) are helpful for enterprises which want to keep customers and employees up to date with the latest news about them. 3- for the general public, content communities (such as Youtube) and social networks (such as Facebook) are an example of how social media can be employed to syndicate information that delivers value to their users. 4- in the entertainment industry, virtual games worlds and virtual social worlds are also generating new possibilities of interaction for their users (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

In the specific case of education, it has been found that, in the United States, 41% of college students use social media to “study or work on class assignments” (Caraher, & Braselman, 2010). Furthermore, 64% of the same sample reported using social media to keep in touch with classmates and to coordinate study or work sessions for their course assignments. Nonetheless, since social media was clearly not created with educational purposes in mind, we find it interesting to investigate what factors influence students to use it for educational purposes. By understanding the factors that affect student decision to use social media for academic purposes, universities and teachers can identify better communication channels and learning methods to increase the richness
of educational experience. Moreover, learning management systems vendors can develop a better understanding about students needs and preferences based on the identified factors. In fact, it is possible to state that the characteristics showed by social media applications are overlapping some of the features typical of traditional learning management systems (Wang, Woo, Quek, Yang, & Liu, 2012).

Up until now, academic literature provides a general understanding of why and how this is happening, as well as what are the consequences of the adoption of social media by the general public (Salehan, Kim & Kim, 2017). However, the literature has focused so far on explaining the general usage of social media, rather than inquiring into particular niche cases. This created an opportunity to investigate the motivations behind social media adoption in environments where it was not expected. An example of such environments is the educational one, where academic institutions already provide students with information systems specifically designed to support learning (also known as learning management systems) and where social media applications were not supposed to be necessary.

Taking these circumstances into account, it is our interest to investigate the factors impacting the student’s decision to use social media to support their learning process and their academic usage of it.

1.2 Problem area

As previously mentioned, social media is permeating many aspects of human activities. For example, people are already using social media to improve their personal and professional performance (Salehan et al., 2017) and there is evidence that, when used for learning purposes, social media increases engagement and academic performance among students (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011). In fact, and according to Tess (2013) and Garrigos-Simon et al. (2015), the advantages of the usage of social media websites (such as Facebook and Twitter) in enhancing student learning experience and outcomes are well researched and documented. Although a wide body of literature discusses what the motivations of students for academic usage of social media are, most of the literature is based on quantitative studies that support theory testing, not theory building. Moreover, the research discourse of academic usage of social media is significantly limited (Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014), and focused mainly on Facebook (Junco, Heiberger & Loken, 2011; Mbohila, Ndebele & Muhandji, 2014; Han, Volkova & Corley, 2016). Therefore, we argue that there is an interesting opportunity to research academic usage of social media in a qualitative manner to increase our understanding, while considering other social media applications such as WhatsApp and Google Docs. This phenomenon becomes even more interesting when it is taken into account that many universities already provide students with learning management systems (Machado & Tao, 2007), which are supposed to be thoroughly designed to support education, but yet, students complement their learning experience with social media. By understanding the factors impacting the academic usage of social media, institutions, universities, and teachers can better tailor the learning experience for the students, establish new
communication channels and develop a rich understanding of students learning preferences and hence build a richer academic atmosphere.

“Drawing from best practices in both online and face-to-face methods, blended learning is on the rise at colleges and universities as the number of digital learning platforms and ways to leverage them for educational purposes continues to expand.” (Becker et al., 2017)

1.3 Research question

Based on the previous background and problem area, we pose the following research question:

- What are the factors influencing the decision of students to use social media for academic purposes?

1.4 Purpose

The intended consequences of this thesis are to examine the factors that are leading students to utilize social media in their academic context on their initiative (as opposed to being an academic requirement). We believe that, by understanding the reasons why students voluntarily participate in social media applications for academic purposes, contribute to the design and development of more engaging educational systems and help educational institutions and teachers to better understand the potential of social media for academic purposes. Therefore, the main product of this thesis is expected to be a list of factors influencing students decision to use social media for academic purposes. As a side effect, the result of this study is supposed to be used by software developers or academic institutions as a list of guidelines or recommendations to identify the weaknesses of traditional learning management systems about their goal of engaging the academic community.

Our study took this particular case as a phenomenon and employed current literature as a lens to identify several factors impacting the decision of students to make academic usage of social media. Eventually, this led us to the endeavor of proposing a theoretical framework which explains why students opt to use social media as a tool to support their learning.

1.5 Delimitations

Inside the boundaries of this study, the concept of social media has been given a broad definition. Specifically, this research has embraced the definition suggested by Esteve Del Valle, Gruzd, Haythornthwaite, Paulin and Gilbert (2017), who stated that social media is every service whose foundation is the World Wide Web, exhibits web 2.0 capabilities and allows users to generate content. Therefore, websites offering services such as blogging, collaborative document writing or social networking are all considered social media in the context of this thesis.
Additionally, this study concentrated on the topic of social media usage from the students’ perspective instead of the one experienced by professors and other university staff. Moreover, Ph.D. students were excluded in this study due to their more research-focused and job-like academic programs. Lastly, due to time and budget constraints, it was decided that only students from Lund University were going to be taken into consideration as a source of information.
2 Literature review

This section presents the theoretical foundation upon which our research framework was built. It answers the question of “what is social media?” in the context of this thesis and shows several concepts found in the literature regarding our research question. In Figure 2.1, the IS body of knowledge was depicted as a raining-knowledge cloud, whose drops are collected and filtered through an analysis funnel. The result of such analysis was our initial research framework, which was placed at the end of this chapter in the form of a summary of the main factors shaping the core of our investigation: utilitarian motivations, hedonic motivations, social motivations, university/teacher support and technology characteristics.

2.1 Social Media (SM)

In this thesis, the definition of social media is the one suggested by Esteve Del Valle et al. (2017, p. 164), which states that social media is “any website or web-based service that includes web 2.0 characteristics and contains some aspect of user-generated content.” However, to complement the
latter broad interpretation, it has also been taken into account the four commonalities (or shared features) found in several literature definitions of social media by (Obar & Wildman, 2015):

- Social media are based on the Internet and the Web 2.0 philosophy.
- Social media rely on the content generated by their participants (in preference to the one generated by a sponsor organization).
- Social media require their users (individuals and groups) to create a profile.
- Social media applications encourage the emergence of networks by allowing their participants to connect with each other.

Therefore, the concept of social media embraces not only the traditional social networks (such as Facebook and Twitter) but also collaborative tools (such as Google Drive and Google Docs) and other types of similar applications, which perfectly comply with the conditions to be deemed as “social.” Furthermore, the diversity of applications that can be considered “social media” is what motivated White (2014) to classify them in seven categories (see Table 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of social media</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Social connections</td>
<td>Staying in contact with family and friends</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/">https://www.facebook.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Multimedia sharing</td>
<td>Sharing pictures or videos online</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/">https://www.youtube.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Professional</td>
<td>Creating connections between professionals</td>
<td><a href="https://www.linkedin.com/feed/">https://www.linkedin.com/feed/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Informational</td>
<td>Providing answers to general everyday problems</td>
<td><a href="http://www.diychatroom.com/">http://www.diychatroom.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Educational</td>
<td>Facilitating collaboration among students and teachers</td>
<td><a href="https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/">https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Hobbies</td>
<td>Connecting people with shared interests</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ohmybloom.com/">http://www.ohmybloom.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7- Academic</td>
<td>Establishing connections among researchers</td>
<td><a href="https://www.academia.edu/">https://www.academia.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nevertheless, these seven types of social media are not mutually exclusive and, as pointed out by Boyd & Ellison (2007), many current social media applications provide the generic functions of sharing information, establishing connections and uploading content.

### 2.2 General motivations for using social media

Regarding the motivations for the usage of social media, Salehan et al. (2017) found in the literature three main categories of reasons why people use social media on a regular basis: 1- content gratifications, 2- process gratifications and 3- social gratifications. The first one refers to the value that users obtain by consuming interesting information from the social media (Cutler & Danowski, 1980). The second one is about the enjoyment of using the Internet in itself (for example, the pleasure of browsing the web) (Swanson, 1992). Finally, the last one represents the rewards that people obtain when they interact with others (Stafford, Stafford & Schkade, 2004).

In relation to content gratifications, Salehan et al. (2017) also identified the following subcategories: 1- utilitarian gratifications (or when the user employs social media to complete tasks) and 2- hedonic gratifications (i.e. when the objective of using social media is merely to generate pleasure). However, this does not mean that a person cannot use social media for both purposes since they can perfectly coexist. For example, a person might use Facebook at work to collaborate with their colleagues or to arrange meetings and, at the same time, employ Facebook to find entertaining videos.

Even though there is no explicit classification for process gratifications in the literature, it is possible to infer two taxonomies from the description proposed by (Cutler & Danowski, 1980): 1- tension avoidance motivations and 2- sensory stimulation motivations. Some examples of activities driven by process gratifications are the usage of television for political information consumption without any desire to actually engage in politics (Cutler & Danowski, 1980) and the usage of mobile phones as a mean to occupy oneself (i.e. kill time) (Song, Larose, Eastin & Lin, 2004).

On the other hand, social gratifications for using social media can also be divided into two main subcategories: 1- vertical social motivations and 2- horizontal social motivations (Salehan et al., 2017). The former is about keeping strong connections with people who are already acquaintances to the social media user (for instance, family and friends). The latter refers to the usage of social media to create new connections and to get to know new people with shared interests (i.e. expanding the network). As it was the case with content gratifications, both types of social gratifications can be used at the same time, since they are not mutually exclusive. However, depending on the nature of the social media application, it might be the user is encouraged by one social motivation over the other. For example, among Facebook-like social media, vertical motivations are noted to be more frequently present than horizontal motivations (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).
On the question: how do people use social media? There are two main categories of activities that a social media user can perform, according to (Salehan et al., 2017): 1- sharing and 2- collaborating. The first one refers to the phenomenon of people distributing information to make it reachable to others (Olorunniwo & Li, 2010). Uploading a video to Youtube or posting a comment in Facebook are both examples of information sharing. On the other hand, collaboration occurs when a group of users has the disposition to work together towards the achievement of a common goal (Seonghee & Boryung, 2008). For instance, two or more people writing on the same document is a typical case of social-media-based collaborative behavior (Blau & Caspi, 2009). Nonetheless, Salehan et al. (2017) also points out that, even though sharing and collaboration are different activities, they are mutually reliant and, in some cases, one leads to the other.

2.3 Social media in academia

Even though there is evidence that general use of electronic media negatively affects the academic performance of students (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011), it has also been found that, when used for learning purposes, social media has a positive impact on students’ academic outcome (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013). One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that social media usually encourages students to interact and to improve their relationships while strengthening their collaborative skills and increasing their motivation to learn (Salehan et al., 2017). For example, if a student has a problem, he/she can make it publicly known on a social media tool and obtain feedback from other users (Salehan et al., 2017). Eventually, such student might be able to solve the problem in less time than if he/she had done it by himself/herself. Moreover, in the case of students with an
introverted personality, social media helps them to reduce or eliminate social anxiety when certain activities, such as giving an opinion or asking a question, are required. Moreover, if it is also taken into account that many social media applications are freely available, then there is little surprise as to why they are intruding on the market of institutional learning management systems (Brown, 2010).

A number of frameworks have been developed to understand the motivations/factors of social media usage by students. For example, Al-Zedjali, Al-Harrasi & Al-Badi (2014) proposed a conceptual framework that includes (i) student-related factors (such as social influence, perceived ease of use or perceived enjoyment), (ii) institution-related factors (such as instructor influence or institution regulations), (iii) SNS-related factors (such as attractiveness or cost-free status) and (iv) discipline-related factors (such as course discipline). On the other hand, Alhazmi & Rahman (2014) suggested an engagement framework that embraces additional elements: (i) institutions (policy or support), (ii) faculty (support or encouragement/involved/relationship), (iii) technology (external or internal), (iv) peers (involvement/relationship/responsiveness/culture), (v) content (relevance/resourcefulness), (vi) privacy (relationship/content) and (vii) interest (social interest/academic interest). Subsequently, Alhazmi, Rahman & Zafar (2014) proposed a more parsimonious version of the model, including only the following factors: institutional, technological, faculty and peers. The study conducted by Han, Volkova & Corley (2016) about social media usage among PhD students identified three components: (i) personal purposes (such as sharing academic achievements, updates and thoughts), (ii) social purposes (such as making connections and engaging with students) and (iii) general purposes (such as seeking academic studies and keeping up to date). Salehan et al. (2017) introduced the MPP (motivation-participation-performance) framework to study the motivations leading to participation in social media and what is the impact on the performance. In particular, they identified social, hedonic and utilitarian motivations as the main drivers behind participation in social media.

However, despite the existence of these frameworks, most of the research has concentrated its efforts on a specific academic level such as graduate students (George & Dellasega, 2011; Han et al., 2016) alone or undergraduate students (Asemah & Edegoh, 2013) alone. The consequence of this is that the findings have generalizability issues and, therefore, they limit our understanding of the factors affecting students’ decision to use social media in the academic environment. Not only has the unit of analysis been limited and constrained to a specific taxonomy, but also most of the research has been quantitative in nature (Junco et al., 2011; Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Han et al., 2016; Guto, 2017; Salehan et al., 2017), thus promoting theory testing, rather than theory building (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Additionally, most of previous research provided us with a bounded view by examining only the factors that motivate students to use social media on the individual level (ignoring organizational and societal level) (Lau, 2016) or by only investigating how students use social media to collaborate and to share without considering the factors (Bosch, 2009). Furthermore, most of the research has centered on Facebook and Twitter. Thus the role of other types of social media such as WhatsApp, Telegram or Google Docs has been disregarded (Junco, Heiberger & Loken, 2011; Shah, Subramanian, Rouis & Limayem, 2012). Taking into account
these facts, we discovered that there was a knowledge gap in respect to what factors influence students decision to use social media for academic purposes and which we aspired to fill.

By borrowing Salehan et al. (2017) motivation concepts (social motivations, hedonic motivations, and utilitarian motivations), we synthesized similar aspects from several frameworks under the single umbrella term of “factors.” Moreover, we recycled the “technology characteristics” and “university/teacher support” ideas from (Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014; Al-Zedjali et al., 2014) in our literature review and used them as two of our primary factors. The result of this process was a condensed research framework of five main factors, which were used as the lens to analyze and research additional literature sources (as will be illustrated in the following section of this chapter).

2.4 Proposed research framework

This section shows the outcome of importing concepts from a vast body of literature and relating them to the five main factors that shape the theoretical backbone of our study. In the end, we proposed a unified framework aiming at comprehensively explaining the phenomenon of academic usage of social media by tertiary education students.

As previously mentioned, we imported three concepts from the MPP model into our research framework. Specifically, we imported the following three factors: 1- utilitarian motivations, 2- hedonic motivations and 3- social motivations. To formalize the term “motivations,” we resorted to the definition proposed by Bolar (2009) as follows: “a motivation is a collection of traits to elicit, control and sustain behavior required to achieve a certain need or purpose.” Moreover, we identified two additional factors from the literature: 4- technology characteristics and 5- university/teacher support.

2.4.1 Utilitarian motivations factor

Salehan et al. (2017) describe utilitarian users as goal-oriented users and decision-effective users who employ social media for strictly beneficial purposes, such as job searching, collaboration or self-marketing. Perhaps unsurprisingly, utilitarian motives are said to be one of the key drivers for students to adopt social media in their academic activities. In general, students use social media to solve exams together, to produce knowledge by discussion and reflection, to collect research data from the crowd (Nández & Borrego, 2013; Guto, 2017), to broadcast and to market academic research, to keep up with state-of-the-art academic research (Nández & Borrego, 2013; Han, Volkova & Corley, 2016), to self-market and to build brand, to look for jobs (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011; Nández & Borrego, 2013), to get relevant and resourceful content (Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014), to get course material, syllabus and test scores (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013), to get a personalized learning experience (Chen & Bryer, 2012; Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013), to communicate and to interact with others (Nández & Borrego, 2013; Al-Zedjali et al., 2014).

From a participation perspective, social media applications promote knowledge flow, since they make it easy for people to share and find the required information quickly and accurately (Kim,
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Kim & Nam, 2010). Also, the personal productivity of students is increased with social media as it allows them to share documents, to remotely discuss topics on chat, to share screenshots and to perform peer reviews (Kim et al., 2010). Furthermore, acquainted students, as social media users, can deepen their social life, to keep up-to-date with course announcements and to easily support each other (Salehan et al., 2017). Therefore, we concluded that academic participation could be intertwined with utilitarian factors.

The terms “engagement,” “students engagement,” and “academic engagement” are used interchangeably in this thesis. According to Alhazmi et al. (2014), engagement can be defined as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience.” Alhazmi et al. (2014) argue that social media can increase both 1- the behavioral engagement by making students participate with enthusiasm and 2- the emotional engagement by making the learning experience interesting and enjoying. Furthermore, Moquin (2015) describes how student affairs workers use social media to increase the engagement of students. In fact, a wide body of literature supports the notion that social media encourages the engagement of students (Junco et al., 2011; Chen & Bryer, 2012; Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Mbodila et al., 2014; Hassell & Sukalich, 2015; Han et al., 2016).

Sharing is another feature of social media that is well grounded in the literature. According to Al-Zedjali et al. (2014) and Guto (2017), students favor Facebook as it allows them to communicate and share documents. (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Nández & Borrego, 2013; Mingle & Adams, 2015) confirm this fact and adds that it also enables students to share ideas easily.

Social media tools such as Google Docs and Dropbox offer students the ability to create documents and collaborate on them (Nández & Borrego, 2013; Mbodila et al., 2014). Social media contribute to the learning experience by providing discussion wikis and feedback (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Guto, 2017). They also enable introvert students to collaborate (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013) easily and to solve examinations together (Mingle & Adams, 2015; Guto, 2017). Furthermore, they generate a more functional collaboration environment by allowing notifications and mentions (something that might not be available in traditional learning management systems) (Chen & Bryer, 2012).

Since social media allow information sharing, then the opposite task “information consumption” is also entitled to be among the list of activities that can be accomplished with it. For example, it is common for people to use social media to find captivating news or to consume multimedia content (Salehan et al., 2017). Interestingly, people consider the Internet to be as reliable as television or radio when it comes to information sourcing (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000).

2.4.2 Hedonic motivations factor

According to Salehan et al. (2017), hedonic users are people who are utilizing social media “just for fun.” In other words, the goal of their usage is merely for enjoyment and happiness. Indeed, it is interesting to find that hedonic motives play a role in motivating students to use social media for
academic purposes. Silius et al. (2010) argues that students use social media to combine study and leisure time because students can hold discussions with their colleagues on Facebook while also having the opportunity to look for pleasure. Hassell & Sukalich (2015) supported this idea by mentioning that students use Facebook to diverge from boring and challenging tasks to “take a break.” On the other hand, Alhazmi & Rahman (2014) states that social media changes the connection between the student and the teacher from a formal and rigid relationship to a more enjoyable and informal one. That is to say; social media websites bring together formal and informal learning (Chen & Bryer, 2012).

2.4.3 Social motivations factor

According to Salehan et al. (2017), social users are incentivized to build and enhance ties and connections with others when social media allows them to meet new people, develop their personal identity and acquire a sense of belonging. The literature divides social motives into horizontal and vertical ones (Salehan et al., 2017). Social horizontal motivations represent the natural desire of widening the spectrum of social connections by developing new relationships with new people (usually with similar interests, backgrounds and/or objectives). On the other hand, vertical social motivations refer to the urge of enhancing and maintaining existing social connections.

In general, the literature supports the fact that vertical social motivations are incentives to social media usage as indicated by (Salehan et al., 2017). Enhancing relationships with colleagues is a reason found by Al-Rahmi & Othman (2013), Alhazmi & Rahman (2014) and Rosli et al. (2016), while maintaining contacts was defended by (Shah et al., 2012; Nández & Borrego, 2013; Han et al., 2016). Moreover, Treem & Leonardi (2012) argued that social media “improve existing associations”.

Likewise, previous research suggests that horizontal social motivations do play a role in explaining the usage of social media. According to Shah et al. (2012), “Facebook increases the number and quality of connections in undergraduate students” and social media helps students to build new contacts, develop new relations and expand their friendship boundaries (Nández & Borrego, 2013; Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014; Han et al., 2016; Rosli et al., 2016). Furthermore, Treem & Leonardi (2012) argue that social media helps to start new associations.

On the other hand, literature has also emphasized the importance of social influence as a key factor to explain social media usage in academic environments. Rosli et al. (2016) have concluded that social media usage by students is a result of peripheral stimulation from both friends and the university environment. The research carried out by Mingle & Adams (2015) on college students found out that one of the main reasons for social media usage (namely, WhatsApp and Facebook) is to “follow the crowd” and to be compatible with what everybody else is using. Furthermore, the study conducted by Nández & Borrego (2013) about the users of the web portal academia.edu and twelve Catalan universities also indicated that the rationale “because other researchers are there” is one of the motivations for social media usage. This discussion led us to conclude that social influence is indeed a key factor in elucidating the phenomenon of social media usage.
Since our research question is related to the factors affecting academic usage of social media rather than its academic effects, we deliberately excluded the performance dimension encompassed by the MPP (Salehan et al., 2017). Specifically, we dismissed “Personal performance” and “Profession/Job performance” during the design of our framework, because we considered those variables resided outside the scope of our investigation.

2.4.4 University/teacher support factor

According to Alhazmi, Rahman & Zafar (2014) and Rosli et al. (2016), the concept of organization support (i.e. university support) is one of the factors for social media usage in academic settings. This idea was complemented by Chen & Bryer (2012) and Nández & Borrego (2013) when they pointed out that many of the individuals of their research complained about the lack of institutional support for social media usage. Furthermore, Alhazmi & Rahman (2014) proposed a social media engagement model for students, which contained professor usage as one of the factors influencing the employment of social media by students. Their findings indicate that the role of both faculties and universities in encouraging social media participation cannot be overlooked. For example, by posting Facebook updates or tweeting about courses, a faculty can drive the academic usage of social media. Moreover, Oppici, Basso & De Martin (2014) argue that universities can use social media as a channel to counsel students and as a platform to broadcast news. Finally, Lovari & Giglietto (2012) state that social media can be used as an interaction mechanism between university and students.

If a university, institution or faculty encourage students to take part in social-media-aided learning by, for example, fostering discussions in Facebook groups or polling pupils about courses, then the interest of students to participate in social media might increase (Chen & Bryer, 2012; Nández & Borrego, 2013; Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014).

2.4.5 Technology characteristics factor

Technology characteristics are one of the key factors affecting academic usage of social media. Some features include: mobility and the ability to get feedback easily (Mbodila et al., 2014; Rosli et al., 2016), higher user-friendliness compared to traditional LMS (Silius et al., 2010; Osatuyi & Passerini, 2016), higher flexibility compared to rigid LMS (Chen & Bryer, 2012; Rosli et al., 2016), higher familiarity (Silius et al., 2010; Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014; Mingle & Adams, 2015; Rosli et al., 2016), personalization and interactiveness of learning (Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014) and the cost-free status (Silius et al., 2010; Al-Zedjali, Al-Harrasi & Al-Badi, 2014). All the characteristics above make technology an important factor to consider when investigating the phenomenon of social media usage in academia.

Technology characteristics play an essential role in the acceptance or the rejection of social media by students (Silius et al., 2010; Chen & Bryer, 2012; Mbodila et al., 2014; Rosli et al., 2016). Depending on the usability and fit of the technology in question, people will be more or less motivated to adopt it. Indeed, a myriad of technology acceptance theories have been developed in
the IS literature supporting this notion. Some of the most representative examples are the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

2.4.6 Summary

Table 2.2: Summary of factors influencing student usage of social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Sub-Factors</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Supporting literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University / teacher support</td>
<td>● Communication ● Broadcasting</td>
<td>● Fostering Facebook discussions ● Polling course evaluations ● Answering students’ inquiries from Facebook accounts ● Twitter as news channel ● Interaction dialogs with students</td>
<td>(Rosli et al., 2016) (Chen &amp; Bryer, 2012) (Nández &amp; Borrego, 2013) (Alhazmi &amp; Rahman, 2014) (Oppici et al., 2014) (Lovari &amp; Giglietto, 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology characteristics</td>
<td>● Ease of use (Familiarity) ● Flexibility (Customizability) ● Convenience</td>
<td>● Mobility ● Ability to get feedback easily ● Funny and friendly usage compared to traditional LMS ● Flexibility compared to rigid LMS ● Ease of use and familiarity ● Personalized and interactive learning ● Free-of-charge feature</td>
<td>(Mbobila et al., 2014) (Silius et al., 2010) (Osatuyi &amp; Passerini, 2016) (Chen &amp; Bryer, 2012) (Alhazmi &amp; Rahman, 2014) (Mingle &amp; Adams, 2015) (Rosli et al., 2016) (Al-Zedjali et al., 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic motivations</td>
<td>Social motivations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Hedonic motivations**
  - Getting course material, syllabus and test scores
  - Communicating and interacting with others
  - (Hassell & Sukalich, 2015)
  - (Han et al., 2016)
  - (Al-Zedjali et al., 2014)
  - (Guto, 2017)
  - (Mingle & Adams, 2015)
  - (Kietzmann et al., 2011)

- **Social motivations**
  - Social influence
  - Vertical social motivations
  - Horizontal social motivations
  - Maintaining relations with colleagues
  - Expanding connections pool
  - (Rosli et al., 2016)
  - (Mingle & Adams, 2015)
  - (Nández & Borrego, 2013)
  - (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013)
  - (Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014)
  - (Han et al., 2016)
  - (Shah et al., 2012)
  - (Treem & Leonardi, 2012)

- **Hedonic motivations**
  - Combining study and leisure time
  - Blending informal with formal learning
  - (Silius et al., 2010)
  - (Hassell & Sukalich, 2015)
  - (Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014)
  - (Chen & Bryer, 2012)

- **Social motivations**
  - Vertical social motivations
  - Horizontal social motivations
  - Maintaining relations with colleagues
  - Expanding connections pool
  - (Rosli et al., 2016)
  - (Mingle & Adams, 2015)
  - (Nández & Borrego, 2013)
  - (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013)
  - (Alhazmi & Rahman, 2014)
  - (Han et al., 2016)
  - (Shah et al., 2012)
  - (Treem & Leonardi, 2012)
3 Methodology

In this section, we introduce the methodology followed by our investigation. We begin with the description of the data collection process (interview conducting), then we continue with the analysis while pondering over quality issues and finally we provide the reader with an examination of several research ethical considerations as well as a short discussion about reliability and validity in the context of our thesis. The seven stages mainly drive the roadmap of this chapter for qualitative interviews journey introduced by (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.1 Research strategy and research paradigm

Since the purpose of this thesis is to investigate what factors impact the academic usage of social media by students, a qualitative approach would be suitable as it would allow us to examine this behavioral phenomenon in its natural context and to understand how students act in this highly contextual domain (Recker, 2013). We believe that qualitative methods might shed some light on the dilemma since this kind of methodology is appropriate when the boundaries of the phenomenon and the context are not completely clear and aim to develop a greater understanding (Recker, 2013). Additionally, a qualitative method would complement the vast amount of existing quantitative research (which was evidently focused on theory testing opposed to theory building as most of the literature indicates). Furthermore, by using a qualitative method, we considered that we would be able to get a holistic view of the phenomenon and to extract additional findings, which were not covered by quantitative methods (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Our choice of a qualitative and interpretive approach is motivated by the aim of exploring a subjective explanation of the context and also by the intention of understanding the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Furthermore, in this thesis, we believe that the phenomenon of social media usage for academic purposes constitutes an example of social order and that it should be investigated from the subjective perspectives of the students (as main participants). As a consequence, interpretivism was selected as the main research paradigm of this study, thus discarding radical structuralism, radical humanism, and functionalism (see Figure 3.1).
It is appropriate to point out that this qualitative study contributes to the body of knowledge by giving new insights into what motivates students to use social media in their academic contexts. However, we acknowledge that, due to the highly contextualized nature of this study, generalization (or external validity) might be difficult to achieve. This has already been identified as a weakness of qualitative research in the past (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and, therefore, we suggest that a careful analysis is performed by third-parties, before any attempt to apply this thesis’ findings to external cases. To facilitate the understanding of our research process, we introduce the seven stage of the interview journey suggested by (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

### 3.2 Seven stages of qualitative interviews

The interview journey introduced by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) advice that qualitative interviews should be performed in the following seven steps:

1. Thematizing: consists of specifying the purpose of the research and describing the topic concepts before conducting the interviews. (Section 3.3 and Chapter 2).
2. Designing: consists of planning the design of the study to obtain the required knowledge, the main output here is the interview guide. (Section 3.4)
3. Interviewing: consists of conducting the interview based on the interview guide, while reviewing the interviews continuously to improve the subsequent interviews. Informants selection step is included here too. (Section 3.5)

4. Transcribing: consists of converting the speech interview to a text, to prepare the data for analysis. (Section 3.6.1)

5. Analyzing: consists of deciding which of methods of analysis are appropriate and coding. (Section 3.6.2)

6. Verifying: ensuring the scientific generalizability, reliability, and validity. (Section 3.7 and 3.8)

7. Reporting: Communicating the findings of the study applied and producing a readable product. (Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

Figure 3.2: The interview path, according to (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

### 3.3 Thematizing of study

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), thematizing is needed to establish the thematic basis for the conducted research to set the right means for data collection and analysis. Thus, a significant part of the thesis work has been already done before the interviewing phase where we formulated our research question and clarified the theme to be studied (Ibid). As a part of this step, researchers should be familiar with the topic as much as possible. This is done in the literature review step in chapter 2, we examined a vast body of academic literature and research, to discuss how students use social media, what methodologies were used, what models and frameworks exist, and what are the research gaps. The theoretical standpoints were specified in Table 2.2, and they served as a guide to direct our interview questions and as a basis of coding. Moreover, this made us more knowledgeable in the topic and able to ask better probing and follow-up questions to the interviewees.

### 3.4 Designing

The theoretical framework inspired the design of the interview guide we developed in Chapter 2, Table 2.2. We used the theoretical categories to formulate interview; this is illustrated in Appendix 3. To construct our interview guide, we followed the recommendations proposed by (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012):

**Research should guide interview questions**: 18 interview questions have been formulated based on the theoretical research framework we developed in in chapter 2. In this way, we guarantee that we are asking meaningful interview questions that are aligned with our research. The open-ended questions aim at confirming/refuting introduced propositions as well as obtaining valuable insights from the interviewee.
Using a script at the beginning and the end of the interview: at the beginning of each interview process, we introduced ourselves to the participants, we stated the purpose of our investigation, thanked the informants for their time and we pledged to confidentiality and research ethics. We wrote down demographics of the interviewees and information about the interviewer, interview location and time as illustrated in Table 2. At the end of the interview, we thanked the interviewees again for their time and informed of the possibility of further communication in case we need it.

Questions should be open-ended and expansive: to avoid binary (yes/no) answers, we followed Jacob & Furgerson (2012) advice by asking big, opened ended and expansive questions as to guarantee simple and direct questions, while still giving the interviewee the possibility to elaborate more in different directions and to explore uncovered aspects of the phenomenon.

Using warm-up questions to facilitate the interview: to warm up the interview and to build trust with the interviewee, we ordered our questions from the easiest to the most difficult ones as suggested by (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). This was achieved by asking some easy warm up questions at the beginning before diving into the more complicated questions.

Using prompts and on-spot questions: for each interview question, we identified a set of related keywords extracted from the literature. These keywords helped as a directing tool for our interview and as a mechanism to generate and prompt follow-up questions during the interview without losing the context. The generic way in which we designed our interview questions and the prompts we identified allowed us to ask any emergent question that we might have regarded as important during the interview.

Managing interview time: in order to not lose participants interest nor make them tired, we limited the number of interview questions to 18. This considering that each question would take 1 to 2 minutes. Our interview time goal is 30 minutes (including start and end scripts).

Practicing and reflecting on the interview: we passed the interview question to colleagues so that they acted as unbiased judges and we used their feedback to improve and further clarify our interview questions. Even more, we have done a pilot interview, which was short because we discovered that some questions were close-ended in nature, identified vague questions which could be misinterpreted in the future interviews, and irrelevant questions. The pilot interview proved very useful in improving both the interview guide and our interviewing style.

Consulting School Institutional Research Board (IRB): Refers to the fact that research ethics and confidentiality must be considered, we comply to this by creating an Interview contest form. It is a form used to state the following clearly:

- How the collected data will be treated (record and transcription)
- Offer the possibility of asking for amendments
- Who are the analyzers of the transcription
- The fact that we will publish the transcript anonymously
The fact that recording will be kept.

Such form was signed by both the interviewee and the interviewer. These steps resulted in our final interview guide as presented in Appendix 3.

3.5 Selection of informants and interviewing

3.5.1 Selection of informants

We believed that the proper choice of information sources is critical to obtain accurate findings and conclusions. Therefore, we decided to follow the guidelines proposed by Tremblay (1957) regarding the selection of informants, so that the process was scientifically guided and grounded. Here we summarize the principles that we applied:

**Role of students:** the role of students in the society exposes them to the investigated phenomenon and, in that way, we ensured that the required knowledge was elicited during the interviews. In this regard, Tremblay (1957) suggests that the role of potential interviewees in the community should be used as an initial screening mechanism to discard irrelevant candidates. In particular, in our research, we selected bachelor students and master students as our key informants, because they are direct users of social media and, as such, they are expected to provide valuable information about the phenomenon.

**Knowledge:** the selected informant should be knowledgeable of the subject in the sense that they have a proper social media experience. Specifically, we require students to have at least three years of experience in using social media, before we qualify them as appropriate individuals to be interviewed. In other words, students who do not have prior social media experience and knowledge were excluded from our research.

**Willingness:** the chosen informants were asked to participate in our research voluntarily. We opted to choose only informants who were willing to share their experience, opinions, perspectives and views about how they use social media in their academic environment.

**Communicability:** having good English communication skills was a prerequisite for participating in this study. This was necessary to guarantee both the clarity and the coherence of the information during the analysis stage. As a consequence, we only chose informants who demonstrated a good command of the English language.

Regarding the process of contacting interview candidates, an invitation to participate in our study was published in a public Facebook group. Interested students were asked to fill out a Google form with their contact details in order to sign up for the interview process. In this way, voluntary participation was ensured. Afterward, a diversified set of students was selected taking into account academic level and current academic program. Table 3.1 provides the reader with an outline of the conducted interviews and their details.
### Table 3.1: Summary of selected interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview code</th>
<th>Interviewee gender</th>
<th>Interview duration</th>
<th>Academic level</th>
<th>Current academic program</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Geographical information systems</td>
<td>2017-04-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Development studies</td>
<td>2017-04-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18.5 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Information systems</td>
<td>2017-04-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14 minutes</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Biomedicine</td>
<td>2017-04-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>International development</td>
<td>2017-04-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Biological physics and computational biology</td>
<td>2017-04-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2017-04-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Information systems</td>
<td>2017-04-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Water resources engineering</td>
<td>2017-04-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18 minutes</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Development studies</td>
<td>2017-04-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.2 Interviewing

We applied Jacob & Furgerson (2012) recommendations on how to conduct a successful interview:

1. **Starting with a script**: we have begun all the interviews by reading the starting interview script, where we thanked the interviewees for their time and collaboration and asked for their permission for the interview being recorded.

2. **Collect consent**: we asked the interviewees to sign the interview consent form Appendix 2 we signed it too.

3. **Recording**: to mitigate risks, we implemented data redundancy and recorded the interviews using two devices: a mobile phone and a tablet. In this way, we guaranteed full recording of the interviews, even if some of the machines failed. This helped us to maintain continuous interaction and eye contact with the interviewees.

4. **Arranging the interview in a quiet place**: all interviews were conducted in quiet and isolated places to avoid interruption.

5. **Using counseling skills and keeping the interview focused**: we used follow-up questions, asked for elaborations and examples whenever we felt that the answer was vague or
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unguided. Probing keywords defined in the interview guide proved very useful in doing this. It also helped us to make sure that our interview is focused and kept on track.

(6) **Ending with the script:** we ended the interview by thanking the interviewees for their time and effort.

### 3.6 Data analysis process

#### 3.6.1 Transcription of the interviews

To analyze the data, we had to transcribe the interviews first. To ensure a fast and efficient transcribing process, we relied on technology to automate a high percentage of the transcribing process. This was done by following the recipe below:

1. Convert the recording to MP3 format using an online website ([http://online-audio-converter.com/](http://online-audio-converter.com/)) or audio editing software (Audacity).
2. Merge the MP3 recording with a random image to create an MP4 video. This was mainly done by using an online website ([https://mp3toolbox.net/mp3_to_video](https://mp3toolbox.net/mp3_to_video)).
3. The resultant MP4 video was uploaded to a private Youtube channel (to ensure data confidentiality), and it was left there for approximately 30 minutes (for further processing). Eventually, Youtube generated an automatic transcription of the interviews. In this way, our research was able to leverage machine learning algorithms to process the collected data.
4. The transcriptions were extracted in *.srt format (subtitles format) from the Youtube video by using [http://downsub.com](http://downsub.com) website.
5. The downloaded *.srt file contained timestamps and required cleaning before the analysis. “Subtitle Edit” software was employed to convert *.srt files into plain text files.
6. Next, “InqScribe” software was used to double-check the automated interview transcription results. This software allowed us to hear the transcription and to review the text simultaneously with the ability to stop/playback the audio without the need to switch between the text editor and the audio player, thus saving significant time and effort.
7. In the end, the text is spoken by the interviewee, and the interviewer was manually separated and explicitly distinguished.

This methodology saved significant time and effort and rather than relying on manual transcription; the resulting text file served as a basis for the coding process. This transcription led the separation of tone from content, thus transforming the interviews, which is considered a step in the analysis (Kvale, & Brinkmann, 2009). We reviewed the transcriptions of each other and gave comments to improve the interviewing style.

#### 3.6.2 Coding of the transcriptions

As suggested by Kvale, & Brinkmann (2009), the coding method employed to analyze our interviews was chosen beforehand (as opposed to conducting the interviews first). As discussed
previously, the main factors identified from the literature served as a basis for both generating interview questions and coding the conducted interviews.

For the coding procedure, we utilized the NVivo 11 software and we started by each of us performing coding separately (coming up with new coding codes when needed). This process took three days and was the result of the careful reading and analysis of the transcriptions and the identification of common patterns/themes amongst data. The objective of this separate coding strategy was to obtain two different interpretations of the same phenomenon, since different readers usually produce different perspectives, as suggested by (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Additionally, this strategy allowed us to perform “researcher triangulation,” which has the advantage of both mitigating personal influences (bias) and exposing disparities in the thoughts of the investigators (Seale, 1999). Following this principle, we compared our individual codings in a face-to-face meeting and discussed both the differences and the similarities with the goal of reconciling points of view and proposing a unified analysis. The final coding structure can be observed in Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Sub-Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>● Alternate between leisure and study time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Stress mitigation and integration planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Integration events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>● Vertical social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Horizontal social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Social influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian factors</td>
<td>● Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Information consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal concerns</td>
<td>● Distraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Self-discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Mixing academic and personal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Physical contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Information reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University and teachers support</td>
<td>● Academic policies (formality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Department sharing information/Interaction with teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Teacher sharing information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Technology characteristics

- Ubiquity
- User friendliness
- Familiarity
- Low cost or cost free
- Interactivity
- Openness
- Efficiency

The following is a screenshot from NVivo software, which we used to process and analyze the collected qualitative data.

![Figure 3.3: Screenshot of the coding process in NVivo software](image)
3.7 Scientific quality

Since our study was interpretive by nature, we tried to be in agreement with the six interpretive postulates condensed by (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Specifically, we applied the following principles:

**Naturalistic inquiry:** we believed that the relationship between students and social media applications should be examined within their context, as suggested by (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In this study, we did not subject the participants to isolated environments or experiments, even if it implied a reduction in the generalizability of our results. Instead, we conducted semi-structured interviews with students, which allowed us to gather detailed data about the phenomenon and the whole perspective that each student has on social media.

**Researcher as an instrument:** we, as interpretive researchers, interacted directly with the units of analysis (students) and their natural setting (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Since we conducted the interviews, we deemed ourselves as the main device for the data collection process, and it was our duty to employ our perceptual abilities to collect the appropriate information and to give meaning to it. Even though biases are common to every human being, we attempted to identify them with the aim of generating a relatively impartial view of the phenomenon of social media usage in academic contexts.

**Interpretive analysis:** in this study, we tried to make sense of the phenomenon in two stages (Bhattacherjee, 2012). First, we interviewed students to find out how they were exposed to social media from their subjective standpoints. Afterward, we interpreted the experiences of the students, and we attempted to come up with a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon by using both our personal views and our proposed research model. In other words, we tried to unravel the reasons behind the behavior of the students.

**Use of expressive language:** following the advice of Bhattacherjee (2012), we sought to analyze the language used by our participants (i.e. the students) and we documented it both in our results (chapter 4) and discussion (chapter 5), so that the readers of this thesis could understand the phenomenon through our own interpretation.
**Temporal nature:** despite this being recommended by Bhattacharjee (2012), we discarded the idea of studying the relationship between students and social media in the long-term due to time limitations. In other words, our study was cross-sectional instead of longitudinal. Nonetheless, we acknowledged that our research question was related to a social and dynamic phenomenon that changes over time and, therefore, we decided to rely on the literature to grasp an overview of the evolution of such phenomenon from the recent past to the present.

**Hermeneutic circle:** in this study, we iterated between the collected data from participants and its context as a whole with the aim of generating an agreement. As indicated by Bhattacharjee (2012), the result of such agreement is usually a theory that represents all the standpoints of the interviewees up to now. We stopped such iterative process when we noticed that the addition of new observations did not destabilize the relationship between them and their context (i.e., when the theory was “saturated”) (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

### 3.8 Ethical issues

For the purpose of guaranteeing ethics in our research, we diligently followed the ethical postulates compiled by (Bhattacharjee, 2012):

**Voluntary participation and innocuousness:** we declare that our interviewees were voluntarily involved in this study. We did not force any student to be interviewed and, even if they had initially accepted the invitation to participate, they were allowed to retire at any time during the process and with no retaliation from our side. Furthermore, we made sure that no student was harmed as a result of the interview that we conducted with him or her. In fact, to satisfy these conditions, all of our interviewees were required beforehand to read and sign a document detailing their right to not partake in the study and their right to retreat (such document is also known as “informed consent”).

**Confidentiality:** due to the delicate essence of our study and the fact that it might expose some current defects of L@L as the institutional system of Lund University, we believed that it was important to ensure privacy among our interviewees to avoid any retaliation. Unfortunately, we could not achieve anonymity in our in-person interviews, but we believe that confidentiality is enough to guarantee the integrity of the interviewees. This means that, although we know the identity of each of them, we will not reveal such identity in this thesis or in any other way.

**Disclosure of information:** as disclosing the purpose of our study before the interviews get started was not thought to cause any perceptible bias on the answers of the participants; we provided them with a short depiction when we were contacting or approaching them. We believed that being clear about the objective of the research from the beginning was essential for potential interviewees to decide whether they want to participate or not mindfully. As a matter of fact, it is a mandatory activity (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

**Analysis and reporting:** it is not ethical that we, as interviewers and social researchers, manipulate or hide the data that we gather. Therefore, and to avoid this situation, we committed to revealing
all the information that was collected in this project, regardless of its detriment or usefulness of the goals that we have previously set. For example, if we encountered that some students did not employ social media at all in their academic context, that fact would have been included in this document along with the rest of the cases (even if it did not support our purpose). Other than being an ethical matter, we are in agreement with Bhattacherjee (2012) regarding the importance of openness in science as a debugging mechanism, which eventually protects other researchers from making the same mistakes. As a matter of fact, we believe that inconsistent data might contribute to the advancement of science in the sense that it generates new opportunities for research.

3.9 Research reliability and validity

**Reliability** is about the measurements of the constructs being trustworthy and congruous (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In other words, reliability answers the question: do we obtain the same results if we measure the same construct several times and under the same conditions? Taking this into account, we considered the following aspects to ensure that our research process was reliable:

1. All of the interviews included a brief explanation of the goal of the investigation and a definition of some relevant terms (e.g., social media).
2. The same interview guide (script) was followed in all of the interviews.
3. Based on the principle of dependability defined by Recker (2013), the transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed separately by us (the authors of this thesis) to check that we drew similar conclusions from the same data. This is also known as “researcher triangulation” (Seale, 1999).
4. Follow-up questions were planned in advance to ensure that the participants were not mistaken or misled.

On the other hand, **validity** is about the level to which a measure corresponds to the construct that it is intended to measure (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Three aspects must be present to guarantee validity in qualitative research: credibility, confirmability, and transferability (Recker, 2013):

**Credibility:** even though traditional triangulation was not possible due to the lack of external sources of information, we believe that, by having undertaken a meticulous literature review and by having strategically collected qualitative data relevant to our purpose, we have provided enough evidence to support both our research model and the interpretations proffered in the discussion section.

**Confirmability:** in this thesis, we have made available all the collected data (interview transcriptions) from students as well as all the inferences or conclusions drawn from such data, so that third parties could independently corroborate our research findings.
**Transferability:** in this study, we have also provided a rich and detailed description of the context, so that the characteristics of our findings could be employed in other fields of research. However, it is the responsibility of other researchers to determine the extent to which the features of our results can be applied to other cases, settings or domains.
4 Empirical findings

This chapter analyses the empirical findings of the performed interviews and exhibits them in detail. As summarized in chapter three, the questions of our interviews were strategically built based on our research framework, which embraced the following five main factors explaining the phenomenon: university/teacher support, technology characteristics, utilitarian motivations, hedonic motivations and social motivations. In this chapter, we employ these categories to introduce our observed findings and compile the answers of the participants about each factor.

4.1 Presentation of the empirical findings

The observed findings of this thesis are introduced in this section by narrating the key points that have arisen from the data of the conducted interviews using the summary specified in Table 2.2 (chapter 2), which consolidates the principal five factors of our research framework. Explicit and salient quotations are embedded where it is convenient under each of the factors. Afterward, the reader is provided with a comparative analysis of the interviewees’ standpoints about the main topic. Additionally, every observed finding has an allusion to the transcription of the corresponding interview by indicating the number of the interview in Appendix 4 and the line number. For instance, a sentence pointed out as (I1, 12) is alluding to a sentence located on the line 12 of the interview number 1. Furthermore, multi-line references are also used in this chapter. For example, a reference to (I2, 34-40) is alluding to all the sentences in the interview number 2 which are located between the line 34 and the line 40 (inclusive). Finally, when several references support a statement, these will be separated by semicolons (;). For instance, using the two previous examples (I1, 12; I2, 34-40).

4.2 Hedonic motivations

Table 4.1: Salient quotations regarding “Hedonic motivations”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-factor</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress mitigation and integration planning</td>
<td>“we use social media to plan the parties and trips after finishing the school” (I1, 68-69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“a couple of minutes with social media and to reduce the stress when I have like academic pressure” (I1, 38-39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“relieving stress when you are working hard on anything at the school” (I1, 160-161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternating leisure and</td>
<td>“you may want to get a break” (I2, 204-205)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

4.2.1 Stress mitigation and integration planning

There is weak empirical evidence supporting these sub-factors. One of the interviewees mentioned that relieving academic stress after working hard is one of the motives for using social media. Specifically, he expressed: “it helps me when I have a lot of academic work to do I use social media like a breeze” (I1, 37-40; I1, 160-162). Moreover, the interviewee mentioned that Facebook is used as a tool to organize fun and social integration events among classmates (e.g., parties and trips) (I1, 68-69).

4.2.2 Alternating leisure and study

Alternating leisure and study time is an activity that was mentioned 11 times in 7 interviews. The interviewee (I2, 164-166) conveyed the following: “it really feel that social media is contributing to what i’m doing and cause you pleasure” and that by taking study breaks, social media was able to give him/her pleasure (I2, 205). Furthermore, one of the students described the switching process between studies and leisure as an activity frequently put into practice by him, because it gives him a boost to continue with his studies: “I have done that a lot of times I think everyone else here you're sitting down reading and then then you don't feel like reading anymore so you go into some sort of social media and scroll down for a bit then as you get the energy again to store something so yeah I would say that's true” (I5, 112-115). Another student said, “it serves a good study break to do personal stuff on social media” (I10, 54). However, some students do not think that social media makes their studies more pleasant (I7, 62; I9, 47).

4.3 Personal concerns

Table 4.2: Salient quotations regarding “Personal concerns”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-factor</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addiction</td>
<td>“when you say social media it is like a negative impact of my life wasting time, addiction, spending a lot of time on it and something like that” (I1, 14-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“there's a lot of the distractions on social media, and some of them can be even they are addictive” (I2, 166-167)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes</td>
<td>“I guess unfortunately people would have become so dependent on Facebook” (I7, 168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distraction</td>
<td>“you end up watching something like something irrelevant” (I1, 64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“you use for example Facebook for you know discussing an assignment you end up somehow distracted by the homepage” (I7, 41-42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“there's a lot of the distractions on social media” (I2, 166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information reliability</td>
<td>“you come to know how to verify information” (I2, 124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“there is high high chances that we kind of get misled with some information” (I8, 109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“people seem to share a lot of things without really looking into it” (I4, 53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I guess the best thing is to double check and do some research yourself if you come across difficult information” (I5, 98-100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing academic and personal life</td>
<td>“so teachers find it not so easy to have students following them on Facebook and Twitter” (I2, 281-282)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am not sure if you want to if you want to have your teachers to be able to see everything that you do or uploaded” (I5, 184-185)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“some people might find it I am intruding to their personal life I would definitely wouldn't want them to think that way” (I7, 113-114)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I would not like to have my teachers or my professors in my personal social media” (I6, 119-120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical contact</td>
<td>“Personally, I am like face-to-face person” (I1, 85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“the relationship is better built if you speak to them in person” (I4, 84)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“if you do not hang out with them I do not think the social media will change something” (I6, 208-209)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“in order to really meet those people after know them the first time you have to you have to have a natural communication like physical communication” (I9, 61-63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>“we have a group... a secret group created in Facebook on which we are sharing like... I do not know... articles and things that are that we are using for the University” (I3, 63-65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“you do not want your teachers to know everything about you” (I5, 190-191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“then you want to discuss only with these three people then you do not want to discuss... or to have a public discussion about it, so I do not know if Live@Lund has this facility” (I6, 414-416)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“there is this illusion that in the outside apps you have privacy actually when you also have no guarantee of it” (I2, 356-357)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>“it is not easy, and you need to have strong control yourself” (I1, 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I need to have some degree of discipline, you know because there's a lot of the distractions on social media” (I2, 165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You have to restrict yourself only to what it is interesting” (I6, 438)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“it becomes a bit of an addiction for some people, so I try and avoid it taking up my time” (I10, 41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.1 Addiction

Although students reported in general that social media is useful for their studies, some of them expressed their concern about social media being time-consuming or even having addictive properties (I1, 10). They even call it an “addiction” (I1, 14). Others conveyed that only some types of social media are addictive (I2, 166-167) and that it is up to each person to become dependent or not (I2, 197). Indeed, some social media applications are thought to be generating enslaving tendencies (I2, 198). This was backed by the fact that Facebook and Twitter are some of the most employed social media websites (I3, 21-22) and that some people become dependent on them to get information (I7, 168).

### 4.3.2 Distraction

Social media might sometimes be a distraction in the completion of tasks, and thus it increases the required level of willpower (I1, 63; I7, 41-43; I10, 39-41). It is easy for students to find themselves diverted by the vast amount of irrelevant information (I1, 66) and distractions (I2, 166; I6, 183-184; I7, 39; I8, 140) offered by social media. Some consider that it is important to know exactly what you are looking for before resorting to social media for academic purposes (I2, 174). Otherwise, they will be used by people in an inefficient way (I4, 11). On the other hand, the usage of social media should be avoided during attention-requiring activities such as lectures (I2, 192-193). Indeed, instant notifications from social media can be disturbing during academic tasks (I5, 267; I6, 82; I7, 69-70) and some prefer to turn them off (I5, 269; I6, 76).
Additionally, it is reported that students may go to their study group on Facebook, but they end up scrolling down on their news feed and consuming information that is not necessarily related to their initial task (I5, 71-73). In fact, some compared social media to a candy shop, where there are usually too many options to choose from, thus making it harder for people to make a decision about what to consume (I10, 153-154).

4.3.3 Information reliability

Students reported that social media websites have irrelevant or “junk” information and therefore it is important to know what they want from them (I2, 110-112). Despite this abundance of low-quality information, students manage to get by (I2, 127-128). Some ways to do this is by checking the trustworthiness of the information source (I3, 89; I10, 48-49) or the validity of the content (I8, 111-114). However, it is still a concern that most people are not critical enough with what they share (I4, 50-52) or the fact that they do not check it at all (I4, 53). Perhaps this is the reason why students are hesitant to quote or cite information from Facebook (I4, 57; I9, 42-43) and they state that if some data looks suspicious, there is a high probability that it is simply not true (I5, 96-97).

To make it worst, the information that can be uploaded to social media is unrestricted, and it is not peer-reviewed (I5, 83-85). However, some convey that it is precisely this freedom of social media what makes it a valuable tool to get insights and to get to know people, which would not be possible in other ways (I10, 164-167).

4.3.4 Mixing academic and personal life

Students, in general, are worried about the effects of mixing the academic and the personal life due to the usage of social media. They report that there should be boundaries or some mechanism that guarantees a respectful interaction (I1, 80-82). Additionally, some state that the relation student-teacher is complex and hierarchical and therefore it is not easy either for the student or the teacher to disclose personal matters to each other (I2, 279-285; I5, 184-186; I5, 190-191; I7, 113-118). Perhaps that is also why students prefer to relegate most of their interaction with teachers to the physical world (I2, 290-292; I6, 275) or to more professional means such as email (I4, 72-74; I4, 98-100; I5, 220; I7, 120-123). Whatever the mean of communication, students were categorical and emphatic about their decision of not connecting with teachers on social media (I6, 118-120; I7, 120-123; I7, 126-131; I8, 197-199) and some even reported that, when they were in high school, teachers were not allowed to connect with them due to institutional policies (I10, 106-107). However, they consider the student-student interaction in social media as normal (I4, 35; I6, 112-113). Furthermore, students would be willing to connect with former teachers (or ex-teachers) in social media if they have had a good relationship with them in the real world (I6, 309-311; I8, 208-210). Having said that, students convey that traditional learning management systems (such as Moodle or Live@Lund) are a good way to separate school from other aspects of their life (I4, 141; I8, 289-291; I8, 322-324).
4.3.5 Physical contact

Even though students stated that social media is useful for their studies, they also acknowledged that they still prefer in-person communication when it comes to group interaction (I1, 85) and that relationships become stronger when you do face-to-face communication (I4, 84; I6, 208-209; I9, 61-63). In other words, virtual interaction does not replace real-world interaction (I10, 136). In fact, some students argued that new social connections are mostly initiated outside the virtual world of social media (I2, 213-216). However, they recognize that virtual interaction might be helpful for people with shy personality since it allows them to start a conversation with others in a less challenging way (I5, 133-135).

4.3.6 Privacy

Social media seems to have an advantage over traditional learning management systems in the sense that it is possible to create isolated groups or chats, which teachers or third-parties cannot have access to (I5, 190-191; I3, 63-65; I6, 420-423). This has to do with the impression that students have of social media as a private environment (I2, 290-291; I2, 356-358), unlike institutional platforms which are controlled by universities (I2, 340) and where usually everyone can see other people’s discussions (I7, 162-165). This causes students to minimize the usage of learning management systems (such as Live@Lund) and to relegate them to the activities that cannot be done anywhere else, such as downloading course content or submitting assignments (I2, 347-348). In general, students are very reluctant to allow their teachers to see the content they are generating in the virtual world (I5, 184-186), one of the reasons being that they are afraid of being judged based on such content (I6, 118-120). Instead, they prefer email for the student-teacher interaction, because it gives them a feeling of privacy or secrecy (I5, 220-221).

4.3.7 Self-discipline

Due to the distraction generated by social media and its opulence of information, students reported that it is necessary to have a high level of self-control (I1, 63) and self-discipline (I2, 165) to smoothly complete academic tasks. Some tactics employed by students to mitigate this issue are: trying to follow in social media only people or groups which are of academic interest (I6, 438) or limiting the overall time devoted to social media usage (I10, 41).

4.4 Social motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-factor</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal social motivation</td>
<td>“one of our friends he created a small group and added seven or six people from our class” (I1, 88-89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“in my year when we came, we already knew each other by name at least and by photo” (I2, 381)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“when we started, for example, we were a lot of people from around around the world so we did not know each other and I was using the social media to recognize the people” (I3, 128-130)

“I find someone interesting once, and I find that I really would like to communicate or to get to know them more I was at just hey I would add you on Facebook in that way I will make sure that I can access them” (I7, 91-93)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social influence</th>
<th>“social media it puts all the pressure of you to do it also so that you do not feel left out or isolated” (I1, 103-104)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“a lot of content at least in this moment not from part of the professor but just from my schoolmates from my classmates... yes... so that is I why... otherwise I think wouldn't use it that much” (I6, 136-138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“she had an older phone … it was really hard for her to get along because all of us were using Messenger and so it was hard for her to be part of any group” (I2, 238-242)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“if everyone and everybody is using it then I should use it too because otherwise I cannot I mean... I can reach them” (I3, 145-146)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vertical social motivation</th>
<th>“you may find it convenient to continue talking and interacting and knowing more about each other” (I2, 214-215)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“so social media to just bridge the gap between people and make them more closer” (I1, 78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“if you have a question about something school related you might go to them for opinions or reviewing or whatever so yeah it contributes” (I4, 80-81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“because we are connected all the time so we can chat with them… speak about anything connected to the University, to the academic program… so I think yes, it improves” (I3, 120-122)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4.1 Horizontal social motivation

It was found that students use social media to coordinate non-academic events (specially at the beginning of their programmes but not restricted to it), which help them to get to know other students (usually with shared interests) and thus eventually growing their academic network (I1, 86-91; I5, 148-152; I6, 218-220; I9, 60-65). In some cases, social media and learning management systems allowed students to recognize their colleagues even before arriving in Lund (I2, 381-382; I8, 164-170). In others, social media helped international students to identify their classmates when they just arrived in Lund and needed to establish their first relationships (I3, 128-130; I6, 227-229). However, students reported that in-person communication is still important and that social media should preferably be used when physical contact is not feasible due to, for example, high
geographical distance between the individuals (I4, 84-86). On the other hand, social media is a great tool to create new social relationships if the person in question is shy or finds it difficult to start a conversation with new people in the physical world (I5, 133-135).

Social media may be an excellent complement to physical socializing, because it can be used as a mechanism to keep in touch with recent acquaintances (I7, 91-97), sometimes as a replacement for traditional contact information collection methods (such as a telephone number written on a piece of paper) which are susceptible to information loss (I10, 87-89). The latter also suggests that students see social media as a reliable (perhaps bulletproof) tool when it comes to information storage. Finally, social media also allow students to create relationships with teachers and colleagues from external universities, unlike institutional learning management systems (I8, 303). In some cases, social media has also encouraged the gradual appearance of study groups (I10, 59-61).

4.4.2 Social influence

Students report that social media has become a trend and therefore it influences everyone’s decision to use it for academic purposes through “peer pressure” (I1, 98-101; I6, 137; I9, 69-70). One reason for this is that everybody wants to be up to date on what is happening in the group or the academic program and nobody would like to feel left out or isolated (I1, 103-104; I5, 161-163). Even students that do not consider society as personally influencing them recognize that it is a common phenomenon (I2, 237) and that when someone does not fit into the social media trend, he or she will find it difficult to catch up and to get along with his or her classmates, mainly because many aspects of group work are coordinated through social media (I2, 238-245; I5, 170-172; I6, 142-144). In other words, if someone wants to be part of a group, basically he or she has to use the same social media as his or her group (I2, 249-250; I6, 60-61; I8, 51-53). According to some, this influence is driven by obligation rather than inspiration (I2, 246-247; I2, 264-265; I6, 252-253).

However, this effect is bidirectional and therefore it is also possible for an individual to influence their peers. For example, if someone is using a particular social media application, his or her acquaintances might be encouraged to use the same application to contact such individual (I3, 136; I3, 145-147). Students acknowledge that the power of a particular social media website is precisely how many users it has (I4, 91-93; I8, 184-185; I8, 249). Indeed, the effect of peer pressure is so strong, that even people who have canceled their social media account in the past, due to its disturbances, eventually end up signing up for the same social media again (I10, 98-100). Some state that is socializing is a human need and that social media is exactly the virtualization of such need (I10, 101-102; I10, 134-135).

4.4.3 Vertical social motivation

Students believe that means of communication such as email are not the most appropriate when it comes to strengthening human relationships (I1, 72-74). Instead, they think that social media is the catalyst that might turn formal classmate relations into real friendships because it allows people to get to know each other better (I1, 74-75). In other words, social media has the capability to “break
the ice” among people and to get them closer (I1, 78). Besides, it is a valuable tool to continue the interaction with a recent new acquaintance after the first encounter (I2, 214-215). Indeed, such follow-up communication improves the relationship regardless of the topic (academic or nonacademic) and might eventually result in future collaboration in school projects (I1, 221-224; I4, 77-81). It was found that social media is used as an instrument to ameliorate relationships with interesting people (I7, 96) and that sometimes it might even foster real physical encounters which might otherwise be unlikely to happen (I10, 90-93).

Students report that the fact of being easily connected all the time sharing personal details through social media might make the existing relationships better (I3, 120-122; I4, 151; I5, 129-131; I7, 78-79). Furthermore, exposing their lives in social media help them to find interesting aspects in other students, even if they did not frequently talk at the beginning or were not initially “compatible” (I7, 80-84). In other words, social media mitigates both prejudice and the “first impression” effect to a certain extent (I7, 85). However, they emphasized that the improvement through social media is only achieved in student-student connections and that it is not their desire to use social media to interact with teachers or supervisors (I4, 72-74).

### 4.5 Technology characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-factor</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>“you can work with without having to meet” (I2, 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sometimes it is very difficult to meet your group … that is the only way you can meet them” (I9, 36-39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“less time spent on conversation and also getting responses and are easy” (I7, 153-154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Familiarity</strong></td>
<td>“Everyone uses Facebook” (I4, 44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“we are also acquainted with it we are also familiar with it” (I8, 80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“they rather to use social network that they already know, they do not have to learn anything new” (I6, 386-387)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Perhaps that is just like an old habit that you do not think about it to just do it you just go directly to Facebook” (I5, 230-231)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interactivity</strong></td>
<td>“More of interactivity between between the both side of like me and other people sharing information” (I1, 138-139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low cost or cost free</strong></td>
<td>“you can choose to have be notified when there's anything new shared, so you do not miss anything” (I2, 455-456)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“they do not check their email regularly so it might be easier to just connect and talk on Facebook or WhatsApp” (I7, 26-27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I do not know if Moodle has a chat function … you cannot interact as quickly, so I think that is again they use Facebook for everything else” (I4, 135-137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Openness</strong></td>
<td>“it is very cheap it is very fast, and it has high presence, so I feel that the social media has really made my life easier when it comes to studies” (I8, 90-91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“in social media I can interact with my friends who are studying into other universities … social media is quite open” (I8, 251-254)</td>
</tr>
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<td>“a closed space of Live@Lund as students and teachers but now when you go to Twitter it is the whole world has opened up” (I2, 414-416)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Live@Lund is pretty close that is specifically for my master program” (I8, 322)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ubiquity</strong></td>
<td>“you can work simultaneously being anywhere anytime” (I8, 133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“when you have an app it is instant” (I2, 460)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Facebook... because you have the app I guess, and then you can have all the notifications in your mobile” (I6, 364-365)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“it is accessible all the time since I am having my phone with me all the time that's that's the most important reason why I am using social media” (I9, 93-94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>User-friendliness</strong></td>
<td>“if you think about the University portal is not that more like graphically attractive as Instagram or Facebook or Snapchat” (I1, 135-136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Live@Lund is a... I mean first of all it is already a confusing website I am still having a hard time finding every document” (I5, 236-237)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yeah, at least more friendly than Live@Lund” (I6, 452)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“they are user-friendly, so you do not have to click a lot of things to find something” (I3, 194-195)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.1 Efficiency

It was found that social media is an efficient way of interaction because it allows students to work (or collaborate) in a group without physically meet and, the same time, they can keep others posted about their progress (I2, 53-55). This means that students can work in a distributed way and only get together sporadically (I2, 136-138), thus saving commuting time and avoiding real-world distractions. This is especially favorable when, for one reason or another, it is difficult for people to meet in-person (I9, 36-37). Furthermore, since its users frequently monitor social media, it is a more convenient and quicker way to coordinate group work (I5, 119-120) than traditional means such as email (I7, 150-153). However, they reiterated the importance of physical meetings and that social media is a complement rather than a replacement for real-world encounters (I2, 148-149; I6, 405-407).

On the other hand, social media is efficient in the sense that it enable students to choose the kind of information that they want to receive by allowing them to follow only the people or the groups they are interested in (I2, 398-400). Moreover, social media usually provides students with a summary of the most important information related to their friends and interests (I7, 170).

4.5.2 Familiarity

Since students have used social media before enrolling in university, they are more familiar with it than with traditional learning management systems (such as Live@Lund) and, therefore, they prefer social media when it comes to contacting their classmates (I4, 43-44; I8, 80). The reason for this is that they do not have to learn anything new when using social media (I6, 386-387). In general, students are very comfortable posting messages on Facebook (I4, 130), while they consider institutional platforms to be foreign or strange (I4, 134-135; I5, 236-237). To make it worse, such university platforms usually require people to log on each time before allowing them to perform any action, which evidently contrasts with the 24/7 log-in-free availability of social media applications (I4, 144-145). Indeed, students are so integrated with social media that it has been called a “habit” or something that people uses naturally (I5, 230-231; I5, 238; I7, 168), clearly leaving traditional learning management systems at a disadvantage. However, they acknowledge that some content is only available on such systems and hence they need to learn to alternatingly use both social media and the institutional platform throughout their studies (I8, 296-298).

4.5.3 Interactivity

Students highlight the increased interactivity among people who use social media (I1, 138-139). Such interactivity is perhaps fostered by the instantaneous characteristic of social media notifications, thanks to which students keep themselves up to date with what is happening (I2, 455-456; I6, 364-365). As previously mentioned, traditional learning management systems lack this interactivity due to their policy of always asking for login credentials before giving access to the information (I2, 456-457) and also their behaviour of always notifying people by using generic channels, such as email, which are appropriate in terms of formality, but not in relation to instantaneousness, since a typical user might receive a substantial amount of emails per day (I2, 464-466) and he or she might confuse academic notifications with spam (I2, 468-470). Indeed,
students report that they prefer to ignore all email traffic during the day and only check them in the evening when they may have the time to separate important emails from spam (I2, 476-478; I7, 26-27; I9, 76-79). Unlike email-based institutional notifications (such as Live@Lund or Moodle notifications) which make interaction slow (I4, 136-138; I7, 65-66), social media applications (such as virtual chats) provide their users with a high level of interactivity and instantaneousness (I4, 67-69; I4, 135-136). Such characteristics are welcome by students and eventually results in more frequent usage of social media (I5, 120; I7, 40; I7, 150-151; I7, 190-191; I8, 81-82; I10, 147). However, students also recognize that instant notifications can be annoying sometimes (I5, 274) and that they turn notifications off for certain types of social media applications (I5, 269-270). On the other hand, the lack of interactivity in learning management systems relegates them to the level of simplistic websites where course content can be downloaded (I5, 247-250). To make it worse, some systems such as Live@Lund neither generate email notifications at all by default nor provide applications for smartphones (I9, 96-97), thus killing interactivity and making students access every day to manually check if there is anything new (I5, 300-302).

4.5.4 Low cost or cost free

One student reported that it is an advantage that the cost of access to social media is very low (I8, 90). It is assumed that she was referring to data charges since many social media applications ask for no membership fees to join. Unfortunately, no further evidence about this factor was found in the collected data.

4.5.5 Openness

It was found that traditional learning management systems (such as Live@Lund) are closed and limited (I8, 254), because they only allow a student to interact with other students from the same academic programme or with his/her teachers (I2, 414-415), while social media websites are open to anybody and thus more information can be found in them (I2, 415-417). Indeed, Live@Lund has been called an “elitist system,” since only the highly educated people (i.e. students) or “elite” have access to it (I2, 422-423). Students report that in social media they can even communicate with students from other universities and exchange documents (I8, 252-253). However, they recognize that when it comes to handling sensitive information (i.e. grades), it is perhaps an advantage that institutional systems are less open than social media (I8, 322-325).

4.5.6 Ubiquity

Social media is everywhere and is easily accessible (I1, 135; I8, 80; I8, 133), while Live@Lund was not even mobile-friendly until recently (I2, 433). As a matter of fact, while the World Wide Web (in general) and social media (in particular) are migrating or have already migrated to native applications for mobile devices, Live@Lund is only accessible through the browser, thus discouraging students from using it and “going against the tide” (I2, 445-447; I6, 369-370; I8, 260-261; I9, 96-97). Social media having native applications can generate instant notifications regardless of the location of their users and, in that sense, they are more ubiquitous than browser-only institutional systems (I2, 460). Furthermore, native mobile notifications can be easily distinguished in-place, unlike email notifications which are preferred to be read later (I2, 470; I2,
476-477). In contrast, students believe that Live@Lund is simply not designed for ubiquitous interaction (I5, 247-250). On the other hand, students report that ubiquity is an attractive characteristic of social media and that, without it, they will probably not use it as often as they do (I6, 143-145; I8, 308-309; I9, 78; I9, 93-94). They just cannot imagine going out without social media on their phones (I7, 146-148).

4.5.7 User - friendliness

Students highlight the attractiveness of social media’s graphical user interface and how it outranks the user experience (UX) of traditional learning management systems (I1, 135-136; I5, 236-238; I6, 452-453; I7, 160). Moreover, social media is easier to use (I1, 155; I3, 231-232) and usually provide students with native applications for mobile devices (I2, 446-447). However, they welcomed the fact that, at least, Live@Lund now has a responsive website (i.e. the website adapts itself to the size of the device it is being visited from) (I2, 433-435) and they hope that a native application is on the way (I3, 238). On the other hand, social media allow students to find the content they were looking for in a small number of steps (I3, 194-195). In contrast, they reported that with institutional platforms (such as Live@Lund) they require from three to five times more steps than social media to find the same content (I3, 217-219). Furthermore, Live@Lund demand that students check course announcements every day because it lacks notifications or they are not enabled by default (I5, 312). In some cases, students have to frustratingly check announcements on a course-by-course basis, because they are unaware of the “Feed” section existence (I5, 313-314). In general, people recognize that Live@Lund has usability issues (I8, 341) and that social media take advantage of them (I10, 126-127).

4.6 University / teacher support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-factor</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with teachers/teachers sharing information</td>
<td>“I mean haven't find any teacher who has used his/her Facebook account for this kind of stuff” (I6, 109-110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Maybe it would help in a way... for example, we are going to be up to date for everything that is happening for example for a particular subject” (I3, 156-157)</td>
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<td>“I interact with my teachers on Gmail chat... something more official” (I8, 199)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“he writes the exercises and the homework for the students to it and put it online, so they can submit it to Dropbox file” (I1, 114-115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department sharing information</td>
<td>“in our department, we have like this page run by the IT coordinator of our department he do not publish was so called academic material but he publish if there is like someone doing a Ph.D. defense, master</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

4.6.1 Interaction with teachers/teachers sharing information

The interaction between students and teachers was mentioned five times in five interviews with contradictory findings. Part of the empirical evidence suggests that students avoid interacting with teachers through social media (I2, 274; I9, 73-74) and even that teachers do not use it (I6, 109-110). However, other students believe that this interaction might be helpful, especially when it comes to updating students on a particular subject of interest (I3, 156-157). Furthermore, another student reported interacting with teachers in social media when she said: “I interact with my teachers on Gmail chat” (I8, 199). On the other hand, a student-narrated a story about a teacher from his bachelor program who used to employ social media (such as Dropbox and Facebook) to upload assignments, homework and discuss academic matters with the students. The interviewee believes that the teacher-student interaction has a positive impact on their learning process (I1, 112-116). Interestingly, some teachers were found handing out educational material on Flipboard (I8, 242-244), which is a social media for news sharing. Finally, a student reported being engaged because his former teachers were sharing useful academic material on Facebook (I6, 296-300).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic formality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“by the law or by the University rules everyone should have like a university email address which they can get information about the class or homework” (I1, 119-120)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“from Live@Lund I get all the information, the official information for the courses, for exams, for the lectures for the homeworks” (I6, 401-402)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“it is official character as the official interactive platform for students teachers and... of course it is a managed way and see timetable and so on that may partly discourage students from talking so much using it” (I2, 341-343)</td>
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<td>“There was a policy where the teachers could not be friends students on social media at all” (I10, 106-107)</td>
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<tr>
<td>thesis defense or like it there like a public lecture” (I1, 125-127)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“we are always using some let’s say for example we are using Facebook and if the staff is sharing information to the social media for example through Facebook we are going to be more updated to the things that are going to happen in the university” (I3, 186-189)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“they have a Facebook page which people can like, and then they share news or like link to interest articles or for new thesis from master students and stuff like that but I do not think they upload any important information” (I5, 202-204)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“my department I do not know, but at least the university they do and sometimes it is interesting information” (I6, 315-316)</td>
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</table>
4.6.2 Department sharing information

The sub-factor of academic departments sharing information in social media was mentioned 14 times in 9 interviews. One of the interviewees stated that he relies on the department’s webpage to get information about Ph.D. and MSc defense sessions, public lectures or open job positions, which are considered precious for him as future an alumnus (I1, 125-132). Another student declared that his department publishes calendars on social media targeting students (I2, 363-364), while other students think that the sharing of department-generated information would be useful for them as a medium to get updates and some helpful data (I3, 186-189; I4, 117-118; I5, 202-204). However, there is a perception that the department is not fully exploiting the potential of social media (I5, 208-209). One student stated that the university’s Facebook page is more active than his/her department web page. However, the university is using the page to publish general information regarding courses merely and to inform logistics matters, such as scheduled building maintenance (I6, 315-316; I6,320-321; I6,332-335). In contrast, another student argued that Lund University’s page contains a lot of useful articles (I7, 180-182). Interestingly, one student believes that the department/university page can be used to engage students in activities (I9, 87-89).

4.6.3 Academic formality

The academic policies have been mentioned 12 times in 4 interviews. One of the interviewees pointed that academic usage of social media might have some legal issues, as the teachers are supposed to use the official learning portal so that they guarantee the all students have access (I1, 117-120). The interviewee further argues “the teacher can not measure how much the students can have access to this like material or online or like in the Facebook or in another like mean of social media” (I1, 123-126). This is confirmed by another interviewee “the official interactive platform for students and teachers” (I2, 341). The same student states that Live@Lund (Lund University official learning management system) is still important because he/she expects every new announcement to be posted there, not in the social media, and that all students have access to it, since it is a community reserved for students and institutions (I2,307-312; I2,316-318; I6,401-403). A student even argues it is possible that “also may be the policy of the school or university might not allow for that officially” (I10, 113), he/she draws this conclusion by mentioning that he/she had a policy in high school which prevented teachers from being friends with students in social media (I10, 107).

4.7 Utilitarian motivations

Table 4.6: Salient quotations regarding “Utilitarian motivations”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-factor</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>“for example in Facebook, there is a group called Sudanese researchers initiative which is really big one of the biggest groups Facebook like where like a lot of Sudanese would have interest in research or academia are together” (I1, 43-45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes</strong></td>
<td>“many of those have worked within groups find social media applications more convenient to working in groups” (I2, 51-52)</td>
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<td>“you can also post thoughts and ideas of what to bring up in the meetings” (I4, 25-26)</td>
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<td>“social media and also we use the Google Drive and Google those two like Google Docs to write our final thing before editing it” (I9, 27-28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td>“if you follow the right pages and you enter the right groups you can really engage you with social media academically” (I2, 94-96)</td>
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<td>“Important information sharing, connectivity, engaging people” (I8, 132)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“it kind of make it easier for me to engage in some studies and some group works” (I9, 46-47)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Overall I do think it helps that you can communicate and interact with the other students” (I5, 73-74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information consumption</strong></td>
<td>“I was searching this like looking for something on remote sensing, and I found someone have a link to a blog in developed by one or the student in Italy” (I1, 53-55)</td>
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<td>“you use a hashtag about say ‘energy’ then you see exactly you filter information to limit it to exactly ‘energy’ what kind of what kind of information is flowing on ‘energy’ what people write what people say” (I2, 115-117)</td>
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<td>“it can help you learn things that you do not understand so well because if you have an interaction with another student’s he or she can help you to understand” (I5, 257-258)</td>
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<td>“If all the information from that course is there, sure I will follow that” (I6, 247-248)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td>“I update the group about my progress via the chosen social media platform like messenger” (I2, 139-140)</td>
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<td>“It is a medium... a way to interact virtually with some other people” (I6, 45)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I would say online or Internet best means of people interacting and communicating” (I2, 31-32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“we use WhatsApp and Facebook to discuss what we are going to do, mainly 34 by creating WhatsApp groups” (I9, 33-34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

4.7.1 Collaboration

Collaboration factor has been mentioned 25 times in all ten interviews. Interviewees believe that using social media such as Facebook make it easy for them to collaborate since they use large scale Facebook group to solve problems (I1, 43-46). The empirical findings also report that social media is useful for group work such as homework and projects (I1, 79; I6, 165). Moreover, (I2, 52-56) mentioned that Facebook Messenger is a good tool if they work on a group assignment and that WhatsApp is used by many students too. The interviewees (I3, 49-50; I8, 47-53) also mentioned that Facebook Messenger, Viber, and WhatsApp are commonly used for collaboration. Students even use social media as a “brainstorming” and “idea generation” platform. (I4, 26) mentioned that “you can also post your thoughts and ideas of what to bring up in the meetings.” According to (I4, 32-33; I9, 26-28; I10, 29-31), Google Drive and Google Docs are more used in essay-based assignments where the group needs to collaborate to produce a single written work. This is because “it’s usually easier to reach out through Facebook than through emails or such when we use it it usually works really well” (I4, 60-61). Even students at the same class sometimes create a single Facebook group to collaborate (I4, 119-121). According to (I5, 51-54; I9, 20-22), students use Facebook groups to plan their work, discuss tasks and post general comments. “Slack” (which is a type of cloud-based collaboration tool) is used by students too, though it is still considered new for them (I6, 65-67). Also, Facebook is used by students to arrange meetings (I6, 428; I9, 20). Interestingly, students use Facebook groups also to communicate with their classmates for consultancy purposes (I8-153, 154).

4.7.2 Engagement

Engagement factor has been mentioned 14 times in 9 interviews. The findings regarding engagement were interesting; while (I2, 93-94) believes that social media cannot engage you academically in general, he/she believes it involves you only “if you follow the right pages and you enter the right groups you can really engage you with social media academically” (I2, 94-96).
On the other hand, (I8, 132; I9, 46) believes social media is engaging and (I3,73-75) thinks that Facebook live streaming feature could be used to engage students. For example, streaming lectures can help absent students to attend it if even they are not physically present. Finally, the student (I5, 70-74) believes that social media could be more engaging in the sense that one can study and chat with friends simultaneously.

4.7.3 Information consumption

Information consumption factor has been mentioned 26 times in all ten interviews. (I1, 49-54; I1, 160) Mentioned that, when he faced a problem in processing data manually for his master thesis, he resorted to a Facebook group, asked a question and obtained an answer with a method to automate his task. Additionally, Twitter is used to find related topics. The student describes how he uses Twitter hashtags to limit his search results to the topic of interest, e.g. “energy” (I2, 114-116). Social media can be used as a source of information, helps students to learn topics that they do not completely understand. Besides, they learn from each other ideas (I3,84-85; I5, 257; I6,97-98). This is also discussed in (I4, 149-151), where she/he describes that, by following some Facebook pages, they found some reviews, journals and interesting facts. Furthermore, (I6, 246-247) mentioned that, if there are useful notifications about exams and teacher announcements, he/she will be motivated to use social media. Interestingly, (I6, 298-302) prefers only to have Facebook friends who post useful science-related material in social media. (I6,430-434) Describes how fun and useful information can be obtained by restricting social media to appropriate information: “I was reading last time from this social media one discovery about a moon in Saturn that, well, I mean... of course they have discovered kind of a volcanic activity on their very deep eye layer around the planet”. A student mentioned that Facebook easily keeps her updated and helps her to get more knowledge, news, and updates from the university page. In (I7, 172; I7, 193; I7, 192-196) the student concluded by saying “it becomes like the main tool for me to get access to education material or articles” (I7, 196). Moreover, asking questions and getting answers is also mentioned by (I8, 306). Especially, asking casual questions which are better answered by the students themselves (I10, 145-148).

4.7.4 Interaction

Interaction has been mentioned 31 times in all ten interviews. Facebook group chats are used for talking, planning tasks and reporting progress updates (I1, 160; I1, 23-25; I2, 139-140; I6,45; I9, 20-22). Students believe that social media is designed, by nature, to support interaction and communication: “I think given its name "social" and "media" it's internet best means of people interacting and communicating” (I2, 29-30) and they consider it as a communication mean and a good way to keep students connected: “it's a connection for people through which they can communicate” (I3, 20-21; I4, 14-15; I4,43-45; I8,36) and a virtual interaction medium: “It's a medium... a way to interact virtually with some other people” (I6,45), while another student says: “social media now is my only way of communication with other people” (I9, 104). Facebook Messenger helps students to discuss, to come up with ideas and to plan meetings (I5, 29-31; I5,73-74). One of the students argued that he/she prefers social media interaction for assignments, because it is easier and more comfortable: “it's easier less time spent on conversation and also
getting responses and are easy” (I7, 154) and “if you’re using facebook or if you're chatting with the closed group then it might be easier for you to be more comfortable” (I7, 164-165). A student mentioned that they use WhatsApp groups for communication and interaction (I9, 33-34), while another one considers the ability to study together as a valuable trait of social media (I10, 165-167).

4.7.5 Sharing

The sharing factor has been mentioned 30 times in all ten interviews. Students use social media to promote scholarship opportunities, study programs and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (I1, 29-32). One of the students reports that he/she uses social media to share work in progress with his group, papers to whom may be interested and academic material in the news feed (I2, 52-58; I2, 74-77; I2, 514-515). Students use a secret (or private) social media groups among them to share academic material and course literature (I3, 65; I9, 24; I10, 35). Facebook is used by students to share articles and related academic websites (I4, 38-41). Some students mentioned that sharing academic material in Facebook groups makes it easy to find for other students and to post team work updates (I5, 63-66; I7, 28). Students also share Business Insider articles, scholarships pages, and University page updates (I7, 31-34; I7, 186-190). A student argued that with social media: “You can share notes, you can share knowledge and you can share all these information in much faster way than it used to be” (I8, 91-93). Finally, students even share Google calendar for courses (if the department does not set them), opinions and insights (I10, 130; I10, 165-167).
5 Discussion

In this chapter, we discuss the observed findings of this thesis and their relation to both our research question and our research framework. In the end, we compiled all the factors in one table.

5.1 Hedonic motivations

Our findings suggest that social media helps some students to reduce academic pressure by alternating study and leisure time and by taking study breaks. It can be argued, based on Salehan et al. (2017) research, that the enjoyment and pleasure the student feels contributes directly to the overall student wellness to engage with social media for his/her studies, therefore, it is likely that this factor has some relation with the student engagement. Moreover, another interviewee claimed that they used social media to plan trips and parties, this usage can be considered both as a social integration factor contributing both vertically and socially to the interviewee social relations, but also may be regarded as a hedonic usage because the mere purpose is “having fun.” However, some students believe that social media does not make their studies is pleasant and they think work is work, even more, they consider social usage with academic require “self-discipline,” in that sense, hedonic motivation can be deemed to have relation with “distraction” concern.

5.2 Personal concerns

One of the novel findings of this study is the one related to the aspects of social media that people consider as worrying or disturbing and, therefore, discouraging them from using social media for academic purposes. This finding does not refer to the underlying cause of the problem, but rather to the fact that students are worried about it and, as a consequence, it acts as a negative factor for social media adoption. For example, it is already well-known that the Internet and social media might cause addiction in certain individuals (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011), but there are fewer insights into the level of awareness that such addiction has among people. Specifically, our investigation provides evidence of students acknowledgment of social media as an addictive (though useful) group of tools and their aversion to devote a high amount of time to them.

Likewise, it had already been proposed that some individuals prefer to stay away from social media to avoid distraction and procrastination (Hughes, Rowe, Batey & Lee, 2012). However, the studies were inconclusive on how widespread this conscientiousness was and how it affected the person’s decision about using or not using social media. Our study found that not only are students acutely aware of the distraction that social media causes on themselves, but also they describe some of the underlying mechanisms by which such distraction works. In particular, in this thesis, we found that the “candy shop effect” (i.e. the issue of having too many options to choose from) explains why students access social media with one task in mind and end up performing an entirely different one.
The content in social media is mainly user-generated, and hence it is important to measure its reliability (or credibility). Particularly, it has been found in the literature that content consumers employ at least three dimensions to assess the credibility of information: expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill of the sender (Westerman, Spence & Van Der Heide, 2014). However, our investigation found that students base their judgment mostly on the trustworthiness of the sender and on the validity of the information. In other words, if the content comes from a reliable source and does not look “suspicious,” they consider it as credible. Additionally, the low quality of information in social media does not discourage students from using it as a source. Instead, they just try to avoid quoting or citing content from social media.

In the past, it has been found that, even though a considerable amount of students agree that social media can be a valuable tool for education (46.7%), only a few of them would be willing to use it to interact with teachers (22.6%) (Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman & Witty, 2010). In other words, social media is welcome in the classroom as long as teachers are not participants. This fact was confirmed by our empirical data with the main reason being that, due to the hierarchical nature of the teacher-student relationship, students prefer to separate personal and academic life. Furthermore, we found evidence that, when the hierarchy is removed from the equation (i.e. when teachers become ex-teachers), students were keen on adding some of their professors to their social network.

Since its beginnings, social media interaction (or online interaction, in general) has been considered of lower quality than its traditional in-person or telephone counterparts (Baym, Zhang & Lin, 2004). This reality was also verified in this study since students were emphatic about their belief that physical-world communication cannot be replaced with the social media one and that it is only with face-to-face interaction that human relationships mature. However, the collected data suggests that virtual interaction might help students with shy personality to start a conversation in a less intrusive way, thus supporting the idea of Sponcil, & Gitimu (2013) that social media provides a shyness-proof relaxed environment.

Privacy has always been a controversial issue when it comes to social media, since sharing information in an open or semi-open environment is made worse by certain features of virtual social networks that might allow unintended audiences to have access to such information (Ellison, Vitak, Steinfield, Gray & Lampe, 2011; Kietzmann et al., 2011). Indeed, our empirical findings reflected that concern when students conveyed categorically that they did not want their teachers to have access to their profile or their personal data because they believe such access might have negative consequences. Instead, email is the preferred medium for teacher-student interaction. This contradicts Roblyer et al. (2010) findings when they reported that privacy did not seem to be an issue for students because only 15.0% were worried. On the contrary, we concluded (based on our observed data) that privacy concerns are still a strong factor in social media usage in the classroom.

Being self-discipline a better predictor of academic performance than the intelligence quotient (IQ) score (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005), it was interesting to find in our observations that some students were worried about the effect that social media might have on the level of self-control that
is required to complete an academic task. Resorting to literature, it was discovered that 36% of those who tried to give up social media for a fixed period failed (Schoenebeck, 2014), so it led us to believe that self-discipline is a well-grounded concern. Indeed, our empirical data shows that students have tried to limit either the size of their social network or the amount of time they spend on it to reduce the level of willpower necessary to avoid social media distractions.

5.3 Social motivations

It was found by Salehan et al. (2017) that, in general, users employ social networking services to get to know new people and to grow their social network. However, little had been said about whether this motivation influences the decision of students to use social media for academic purposes or not. In other words, does horizontal social motivations apply to the academic context? Our empirical findings confirm that students use social media to grow their academic network, especially at (but not limited to) the beginning of their respective academic programs. Furthermore, this motivation is magnified when the students are international (rather than local) or come from different backgrounds due to the need to establish their first connections in the guest country. In agreement with Boyd & Ellison (2007), we found that people prefer to connect with other students on social media when they have shared interests. On the other hand, it was interesting to discover that some students got to know each other through social media even before arriving in the guest country or meeting physically, thus showing the influence of horizontal social motivations in its purest form. Additionally, our empirical data further confirms the fact that students (perhaps unconsciously) aim at improving their social capital by increasing both the quality and the number of connections in social media (Shah et al., 2012), since some of them exposed their desire to only connect with “interesting” people, academically speaking (including former teachers). Perhaps less surprising, we discovered that there is a strong horizontal social motivation to use social media among shy or introvert students because it allows them to start new conversations in a more impersonal environment, which in turn probably mitigates social anxiety.

In accordance with Rosli et al. (2016), our empirical data confirms that social influence (also known as “peer pressure”) does have an effect on students desire to use social media. In particular, individuals feel attracted to social media, because they do not want to be isolated from their academic group and they have an urge to be up to date with their classmates. However, in contrast to Rosli et al. (2016), we found evidence that students do frequently use social media for educational purposes. For example, many of them reported the creation of private social media groups to coordinate group assignments and collaboration. This means that, in the case of education, social influence is not related with “self-status seeking” as happens in other contexts (Park, Kee & Valenzuela, 2009). Additionally, it also contradicts Han, Nelson & Wetter (2014) since most of our interviewees indeed conveyed that social media applications or websites do have value in the academic context and that such value is directly proportional to the number of people joining the social network. In other words, the sustainability of any social media relies on its ability to captivate its users and commit them to participate and promote the social network among their friends (Chang, Hung, Cheng & Wu, 2015). Our empirical findings indicate that an individual has no alternative, but to use the same social media application as his/her group and sometimes users
are aware of this obligation. Moreover, we found that, when one student, for one reason or another, does not comply with the “social media requirements” of the group, he or she will struggle to get along with the other team members and will find it difficult to be up to date.

It was found that vertical social motivation has a strong influence on students’ decision about using social media because it allows them to turn existing formal relations into friendships. Thus encouraging the emergence of academic camaraderie and further supporting the idea of Salehan et al. (2017) about social media strengthening the linkages of social connections. Taking into account that intimate relationships are more expensive to maintain in reference to the effort and time that they require (Stefanone, Lackaff & Rosen, 2011), our empirical findings suggest that students prefer to use social media as a cheap way to “keep alive” bondings with people they consider interesting and also as an “ice breaker” when they want to deepen their relationships with recent acquaintances. However, it was evident that students are unwilling to use social media to ameliorate their relationship with their teachers and that email is perceived as a considerably better option for teacher-student interaction due to its formality. In other words, the vertical social sub-factor is only a motivation when the target audience excludes teachers. The idea of interacting with social media with hierarchically superior people (teachers) generates rejection among students and probably does in other contexts such as the work-related one. On the other hand, it was found that students see this strengthening of the social connections as an opportunity for academic collaboration in the future, because, when they are allowed to select their teammates during group assignments, they usually choose to work with their closer friends or the people they feel more familiar with. In that sense, social media turns the classroom into a social game where students create groups, talk, coordinate meetings and share valuable information to achieve a common goal. Perhaps a similar behavior can be observed in the type of social game mentioned by (Salehan et al., 2017).

5.4 Technology characteristics

Our empirical data shows that certain technology characteristics encourage students to use social media. For example, as suggested by Mbodila et al. (2014), it was further confirmed in this study that familiarity with a technology results in higher participation from its users. Indeed, many of our interviewees reported to have used social media before starting their academic programs and, in that sense, we consider that there are significant opportunities to embed social media in the classroom. Moreover, taking into account natural familiarity of young students with social media, academic institutions should consider using it as their ally in the goal of reaching new pupils, thus complementing their traditional learning management systems, which, on the contrary, were found to be uncomfortable or foreign to many students.

Unsurprisingly, weak evidence was found regarding the low cost of social media as a factor stimulating students to use it for academic purposes. In fact, there is little room for differentiation, because many social media websites and applications are already free of charge. This perhaps reminds us of the Silius et al. (2010) experience at the Tampere University of Technology, where they learned that the cost-free status of an academic, social website does not generate enough motivation to guarantee its success. Instead, we have found in this investigation that it is precisely
the non-cost-related features of systems the ones that encourage a student to use it or not. This contradicts Al-Zedjali et al. (2014) conclusions about cost-free status being one of the main reasons for social media usage. We believe this contradiction is due to low internal validity in one of the constructs of Al-Zedjali et al. (2014) study and that what they were measuring is the adverse effect of the non-free status of social media on its academic usage (i.e. the opposite).

In particular, our empirical data suggests that ubiquity is an important characteristic when it comes to social media usage. Being readily available and accessible (Osatuyi & Passerini, 2016), social media creates the perfect environment for asking quick academic questions or for clarifying misleading concepts. Our participants confirmed that they significantly welcome the fact that social media provide native applications for their mobile devices because it allows them to get instant notifications independently of their location (unlike systems such as Live@Lund that, to date, only offer browser interaction). In fact, it has been suggested that this ubiquity and this high interactivity of social media foster the emergence of shared mental models among students and positively impact their performance (Osatuyi & Passerini, 2016). As a matter of fact, Kietzmann et al. (2011) argue that: “Should users prefer to engage in real-time, then the social media platform should offer a presence or status line indicator, along with a suitable mechanism through which these users can contact each other and interact.” Therefore, we argue that the ubiquity aspect of social media increases the presence which has been argued by Kietzmann et al. (2011) and hence, as argued by the authors “higher levels of social presence are likely to make conversations more influential.”

On the other hand, it was found that it is not only the ability to be accessed everywhere what attracts students to social media, but also its open philosophy towards their users since anyone with basic computer skills and an internet connection can create a profile on almost any social network. This gives students the opportunity to obtain more information and knowledge than they would in a controlled setting (Chen & Bryer, 2012). This contrasts with institutional systems (such as Live@Lund) which are limited to members from the same university and which prevent them from establishing connections “beyond borders.” Indeed, our empirical findings showed that students do use social media to connect with colleagues from other universities. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why one of our interviewees criticized Live@Lund as a system with elitist practices in the sense that only privileged people (i.e. students) can use it and that the average citizen is denied access to the educational material in such system.

Regarding user experience (UX), our results agree with Al-Zedjali et al. (2014) about ease of use (user friendliness) and attractiveness being factors that influence students on their decision to use social media. In particular, our participants stated how social media applications are easier to use than traditional learning management systems (such as Live@Lund). As previously mentioned, this is particularly the case in the event of mobile devices, since social media websites usually provide its users with enriched native applications. Furthermore, it was found that Live@Lund was considered by students as unattractive, weird, a system with usability issues, with a lack of instant notifications and which requires more steps from the user than necessary to complete a task (inefficient). This way of contrasting social media with dedicated institutional systems helped us
to recognize that students (and perhaps users in general) take usability very seriously and therefore it is an important factor for social media adoption in the classroom.

5.5 University/teacher support

Our findings have two folds, the first of them is strongly compatible with the literature while the second is considered novel. Firstly, department sharing and teachers interaction factors have been proved to be influential on the academic usage of social media. As introduced by Oppici et al. (2014) where they argue that social media is a news broadcasting platform, our findings reveal that the fact that Lund University is broadcasting news and updates on their web page make students follow the page and keep themselves updated. Even more, our findings disclose more aspects and show departments use social media to post jobs, Ph.D. positions, and thesis defense sessions. Moreover, our results confirm that some students experienced when social media was used as a medium for collaboration and communication with the teacher as argued by (Lovari & Giglietto, 2012). However, despite this, some students have the perception that their departments are not making full use of social media and believe they can exploit it better. This could be, for example, creating a special Facebook account where students can directly ask questions to the department coordinator and get interactive answers.

Secondly, our findings suggest that academic formality and institutional policies have an impact on the academic usage of the social media, one of the students argued that it is necessary for the teacher to be assured that all students will have access to the educational material and announcements if it is published only in social media. This is backed by the fact that the learning management systems are “the official literature source” and it is where students expect. Moreover, the fact a student pointed out that during his high school year there was a policy preventing students and teachers from being friends in social media (I10, 107), could open some door of research for us to investigate whether some institutions imposes some policies to restrict academic usage of social media.

Finally, our research findings suggest that interacting with teachers and privacy aspects are interrelated and that students prefer to keep their social media groups closed as it protects their privacy from teaching staff, in contrast to traditional learning management systems where discussions are open and easily accessible by students and professors. The empirical evidence in this aspect requires being investigated thoroughly in a separate research to get a clearer picture of the impact of academic policies of the social media adoption.

5.6 Utilitarian motivations

Unsurprisingly, utilitarian motivations are some of the most extensively supported aspects of our findings. Since social media websites are collaborative by nature (Nández & Borrego, 2013), they are appropriate for team-based tasks. Our results showed that students use Facebook groups to solve exams and therefore they are in line with the idea introduced by Nández & Borrego (2013) and (Guto, 2017) where they claimed that social media could be employed by students to solve or discuss exams. However, we found that the “brainstorming” and “idea generation” aspects were
novel to our research and had not been mentioned in the literature we reviewed. Moreover, the “communication” and “interaction” aspects that we encountered in the literature, involved only students from the same class (Nández & Borrego, 2013; Al-Zedjali et al., 2014). Nonetheless, our empirical data suggests that Facebook groups are not only used within one class of students. For example, some groups involve senior students as a mechanism to get advice and consultancy. This outcome further shapes our understanding of how the participation in social media (through collaboration) contributes to the academic experience of the students. Our gathered data also suggests that Facebook Messenger and Google Docs are some of the most commonly used social media applications when it comes to student collaboration. However, we did not find evidence supporting the self-marketing or brand building aspects introduced by (Nández & Borrego, 2013). We believe this is because their investigation was focused on social media usage by academic researchers, who evidently might be more interested in developing their personal brand or professional outlook.

The engagement of students in social media for academic purposes is debatable. On the one hand, future teachers believe that social media websites are a valuable tool to engage pupils due to their user-friendliness and usefulness (Sadaf, Newby, & Ertmer, 2012). On the other, some students believe that social media does engage them in their studies as long as they follow the right pages and they maintain self-discipline. Moreover, the suggestion made by a student about using social media live streaming feature as a method to broadcast lectures, opens new doors for employing social media in the e-learning domain. However, engagement should not be considered a separate entity, because it is related to the concept of addiction and self-discipline. What our informants believe is that engagement in social media might be simply a side-effect of an addiction issue which they do not perceive. Furthermore, it can be argued that the more self-disciplined a student be (avoiding being distracted by social media), the clearer it is the distinction between the concepts of addiction and engagement. We suggest that, if a follow-up quantitative study is to be carried out, then the operationalization of the concepts of “engagement” and “addiction” should be performed carefully to guarantee the internal validity of the constructs. Needless to say, the testing of the current theoretical framework is outside the scope of this thesis.

The utilization of social media as a direct or indirect source of information is well grounded in our empirical findings. Direct sourcing refers to the case when social media is used as a fountain of information by itself, whereas indirect sourcing alludes to social media being used as an intermediary tool which eventually leads to useful information sources. For instance, it has been mentioned how a student used social media to ask for information about a challenge he faced on a technical issue. This would an example of direct information consumption and supports the idea of Alhazmi & Rahman (2014) when he says that social media is used by students if it has valuable content. Another example of using social media as a direct source of information is when one of the students reported using the “energy” hashtag to find all energy-related news on Twitter. On the other hand, some students reported employing social media to obtain information about journals, reviews, articles and other useful resources. The latter would be a case of using social media as an indirect information source, which is also mentioned by (Ibid), although they do not explicitly call it “indirect.” To the best of our knowledge, we are the first authors to classify social media as an
information source that can be either direct or indirect. Finally, two additional aspects are worth mentioning: first, it is critical to understand social media as a source of information in the context of information reliability. An individual’s trust in social media depends on the truthfulness and verifiability of the source. This is supported by Alhazmi & Rahman (2014) where they argue: “The frequent dissemination of updates with relevant, organized, authentic and resourceful content is what the students suggested would help them invest more time in academic activities on Facebook.” Secondly, social media as an information source is always a side-effect in the activity of sharing. Evidently, it is not possible to consume private or hidden information. However, the reverse is not always true, since it is certainly feasible to have shared content without consumers (regardless of the reasons).

On the other hand, social media has created a virtual parallel world where students can easily interact and communicate with each other without changing their physical locations. The literature strongly supports our findings. For example, Nández & Borrego (2013) and Al-Zedjali et al. (2014) claimed that social media is suited for both scholarly communication and academic interaction. The empirical data reported that social media is used for meeting coordination and task delegation. Perhaps these aspects can be directly related to the technology characteristics factor, because it is precisely the features of social media the ones that allow communication in the first place (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Interestingly, it may be argued that there is a bidirectional causality relationship between engagement and interaction. In other words, student engagement can lead to student interaction and vice versa. Once again, a proper examination and testing of this relation would require quantitative research, and it is considered outside the scope of this thesis.

Finally, sharing in social media is an activity that is well documented in our findings. Students share a diverse gamut of types of content: from courses and educational material to progress updates and scholarship opportunities. It can be argued that social media characteristics and its connectivity make it a suitable platform to disseminate academic and research material, among other kinds of useful content. This is supported by (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013; Nández & Borrego, 2013; Han et al., 2016). For example, the ability to create secret Facebook groups by students (and without any professor taking part) make students feel private and less monitored, in contrast to traditional learning management systems, which are typically governed by the same academic institution the student belongs. Last but not least, it is worth to mention that the sharing concept is also closely related to the interaction one. Indeed, more often than not students interact and share simultaneously (e.g. taking advantage of Google Drive to collaborate on documents and, at the same time, using its chat to interact and communicate). Moreover, the sharing concept typically comes in pairs with the information consumption one, as previously discussed.

5.7 Consolidated factors

In Table 5.1, we show a unified list of the factors that influence students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes, and it is a compilation of the information presented in sections 5.1 to 5.6. By analyzing our qualitative data, we were able to classify each factor based on its type and strength of influence. A positive type of influence means that the factor fosters social media
usage for educational purposes. Conversely, a negative influence represents a factor that discourages students from using social media for the same purposes. On the other hand, a factor with a strong influence is considered to play a decisive role in the choice made by students. On the contrary, a weak factor only supports the decision and might be dispensable or redundant in certain cases. In general, utilitarian motivations, technology characteristics and personal concerns are deemed to be some of the most influential factors in the decision of students. Nonetheless, the fallibilist approach of this thesis leaves this consolidation open for future refinement (Seale, 1999). In other words, we recognize that both the type and strength of these factors might be found to be different in future studies or even that new factors might be discovered. From our side, we have made sure that the reader has all the necessary information to corroborate our findings and to apply them in other cases or settings, as suggested by (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Figure 5.1 presents a visual summary of factors influencing students decision to use social media; this is complemented by Table 5.1 where each sub-factor evidence strength is included. The evidence strength was decided in an interpretive and subjective manner.

![Figure 5.1: Final framework](image-url)
Table 5.1: Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Sub-factors</th>
<th>Strength of evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic motivations</td>
<td>Stress mitigation</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration planning</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternating leisure and study</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal concerns</td>
<td>Information reliability</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixing academic and personal life</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Addiction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distraction</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical contact</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social motivations</td>
<td>Social influence</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vertical social motivation</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horizontal social motivation</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology characteristics</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactivity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ubiquity</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td></td>
<td>User-friendliness</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low cost or cost free</td>
<td>Weak</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td>University/teacher support</td>
<td>Teachers sharing information</td>
<td>Weak</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Department sharing information</td>
<td>Weak</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic formality</td>
<td>Weak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilitarian motivations</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information consumption</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6 Conclusion

The following section summarizes the main findings of this thesis and culminates this investigation with an attempt to answer the research question by employing the empirical findings. Here we also describe the implications that this study might have for practitioners along with current limitations and proposals for further inquiry.

6.1 Research question

The purpose of this thesis was to delve into the factors that affect the decision of university students about using social media for academic purposes. We did so by introducing an initial research framework with concepts extracted from the literature and then organizing them into five main categories or themes. Subsequently, we were able to collect qualitative data that supported our research framework to a greater or lesser extent. Also, we were capable of extending our initial proposal by inductively detecting a sixth factor in the gathered empirical data, thus concluding the study with a more holistic view of the phenomenon.

6.2 Outline of empirical findings

Our empirical evidence suggests that there are six factors influencing students on their academic usage of social media: hedonic motivations, personal concerns, social motivations, technology characteristics, university/teacher support and utilitarian motivations. Unsurprisingly, utilitarian incentives are some of the dominant factors, as students seem to be using social media to collaborate, engage, interact, consume and share information. On the other hand, there is weak empirical evidence supporting hedonic factors and few interviewees mentioned stress mitigation, events planning or study-leisure mixture as their reasons for using social media. Likewise, universities and teachers were found to play an insignificant role in persuading students to use social media. In contrast, social motivations (and their three sub-factors) were strongly supported by both the literature and our empirical findings, which insinuates that, despite its formality and individualistic appearance, the university is still seen by students as a social system.

Interestingly, the facilities provided by social media technologies also constitute an important factor for its adoption in the classroom. Not only are social media more efficient than traditional learning management systems in the sense that they allow students to do more with less (e.g. working in groups without a physical meeting), but they are also closer to students when it comes to familiarity, interactivity, openness, ubiquity and usability (user-friendliness). In general, it was thought-provoking to find that social media websites are, in many ways, superior to the systems that were specifically designed to support education. However, it is also sensible to acknowledge that social media applications are, by no means, idyllic academic tools (and they were not intended to be so). This fact is reflected on the several issues that students expressed being worried about and that we deliberately categorized as “Personal concerns” in this thesis. Taking the latter into
account, we suggest that social media should be deemed as a complement (rather than a replacement) to institutional academic systems. Additionally, social media might serve as an inspiration for any system aiming at generating an engaging experience among students.

6.3 Implications for academic institutions and practitioners

Our first practical suggestion for institutions and academic departments is that they might take advantage of social media to establish a new channel of communication with students. Indeed, universities tend to use email due to its formal status, but given the high penetration of social media into the student population, we believe that some experimentation should be done with less traditional channels. For example, departments can engage in interactive conversations with students and candidates. As previously mentioned, social media websites are not mutually exclusive technology, but rather they are complementary for learning management systems. Therefore, academic institutions might still benefit from a complementary (but strategic) usage of it.

Our second practical implication is for teachers, because they are in a good position to interact with students in social media, thus enriching the learning process. It is true that privacy is still a concern for the students. However, we believe it is possible to experiment with less intrusive social tools, such as Slack channels or Facebook groups, where teachers and students can share a common academic ground without becoming “friends” and without disclosing their personal life. In other words, if the right measures are taken, we are confident that it is possible for students and teachers to overcome the barrier generated by privacy concerns regarding social media.

A third practical implication involves LMS vendors: it is evident that social media has started to progressively take over many duties which were in charge of traditional learning management systems in the past, so we think it is advisable for LMS vendors to diminish their rigidity and to look for integration mechanisms with social media websites or applications. Otherwise, social media providers will probably continue to permeate the LMS arena in the future and to relegate even more institutional systems (such as Live@Lund) to the low interactive and download-only tools they are today.

Last but not least, the practical implication for students is that social media can be both beneficial and detrimental for academic purposes (as previously discussed). However, with proper usage and with user awareness of the common issues (such as addiction and distraction), social media can become a valuable complement to learning management systems and an important instrument for students to strengthen their learning process.

6.4 Limitations and further research

The selected informants in this research were limited to students from Lund University, and therefore it is possible that generalizability has been affected. Also, this investigation did not interview students from all the University departments, and it never intended to do so (due to time
constraints). Instead, we are confident that the collected data was enough to propose a comprehensive initial framework explaining the phenomenon (theory building) and that there is an opportunity for a subsequent study to quantitatively validate our findings (theory testing) by determining the exact correlation between the constructs.

Having said that, it is our opinion that future qualitative research should focus on refining and increasing the generalizability of our research framework by strategically selecting informants from other universities and other countries. It is also our suggestion that innovative data collection methods (such as recorded workshops with students) are tried in an attempt to extract new interesting findings.
### Appendix 1 – Table of factors and generated interview questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Generated interview question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **University/teacher support** | Do you interact with your teachers in social media? If yes, how? If no, how do you think it can help?  
Do your teachers share educational material with you on social media? If yes, how? If no, do you think it can help?  
Does your department share news/necessary information on social media? If yes, how, you think it is useful? If no, do you think it can help? |
| **Technology characteristics**| Do you think some characteristics of social media websites makes them more attractive than other tools? Can you give some examples?  
Why?  
Do you prefer to use social media to support your studies instead of L@L? In what cases?  
Why? |
| **Utilitarian motivations**   | Do you use social media in your group work? If yes, how, what social media do you use? If no, why?  
Do you use any social media to share academic content? If yes, how, what social media do you use? If no, why?  
Do you think social media can engage you more into your studies? If yes, how? If no, Why?  
Do you think social media can be a useful source of information for your studies? If yes, how? If now, why? |
| **Hedonic motivations**       | Do you think it is possible to use social media to make your studies more pleasant? In what ways?                                                   |
- Verify if students can hedonically use social media to support their studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social motivations</th>
<th>Do you think it is “fun” to study with social media? Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Identify if students use social media to strengthen their existing social relationships in their academic environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify if students use social media to develop new social relationships in their academic environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify if students are influenced by their peers in their decision to use social media for academic purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think social media contributes to improve your social relationships in your class or in your academic programme?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think social media help you to develop new social relationships in your class or in your academic programme?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media impacts your desire to use it? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 – Interview consent form

Interview consent form

Research project title: Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Investigators: Pedro Bonilla
Mohammed Osman

The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. We do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken by Swedish institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
- You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- The transcript of the interview will be analyzed by Pedro Bonilla and Mohammed Osman as investigators
- The interview transcript might be published in Lund University Publications Student Papers (LUP-SP). However, the publication will never contain personal data that allow third-parties to identify you.
- Any summary of the interview content or direct quotations from the interview, which are made available through academic publications or other academic outlets, will be anonymized, so that you cannot be identified. Furthermore, care will be taken to ensure that other identifying information in the interview is not revealed.
- The actual recording will be kept
- Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval
By signing this form, I agree that:

- I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I do not have to take part and I can stop the interview at any time.
- The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above.
- I have read the Information Sheet.
- I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation.
- I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
- I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

____________________________________
Participant’s printed name

____________________________________
Participant’s signature

Date

____________________________________
Researcher’s signature

Date
Appendix 3 – Interview protocol

Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Semi-structured interview

Preliminary version: Day, Month, Year
Updated version: Day, Month, Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Interviewee name</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview place</th>
<th>Interviewee age</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Interviewee gender</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview</th>
<th>Interviewee study level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person/Skype</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start time</th>
<th>Interviewee field of study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End time</th>
<th>Interviewee email address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-Introduction: My name is _________________________ and I am an Information Systems master student doing research on the usage of social media usage in academy.

Note for the Interviewer: First of all, thank the interviewee for his/her time and collaboration, and ask permission to record the interview. Kindly explain that this is necessary to comply with the international standards of scientific research, and to let you listen carefully without the concern of taking notes. Reassure your interviewee that he/she has the possibility to get part of the recording canceled in case it is appropriate. The collected data will be treated as confidential, and the interviewee’s identity will not be recognizable in future publications including these data. We would be thankful if you elaborate as much as possible in your answers as your experience is valuable for our research.

When we use the term social media we mean: any website or application whose content is mainly generated by its users.

1. Are you a student? (warm-up question)
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

2. Where do you study? And what academic program do you belong to? (warm-up question)
3. What do you think is social media? Can you give me some examples of social media websites or applications? (warm-up question)
4. Do you use social media in your group work? If yes, how, what social media do you use? If no, why?
5. Do you use any social media to share academic content? If yes, how, what social media do you use? If no, why?
6. Do you think social media can engage you more into your studies? If yes, how? If no, Why?
7. Do you think social media can be a useful source of information for your studies? If yes, how? If now, why?

Probing keywords:
- Collaboration
- Sharing
- Engagement
- Information consumption

Examples:
- Solve exams together
- Discussion and reflection
- Collecting research data from the crowd
- Broadcasting and marketing academic research
- Keeping up with academic research state of art
- Self-marketing and brand building
- Looking for jobs
- Getting relevant and resourceful content
- Getting course material, syllabus and test scores
- Communicating and interacting with others

8. Do you think it is possible to use social media to make your studies more pleasant? In what ways?
9. Do you think it is “fun” to study with social media? Why?

Probing keywords:
- Combining study and leisure time
- Blending informal with formal learning

Examples:
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

- Converting formal teaching relation to informal

10. Do you think social media contributes to improving your social relationships in your class or in your academic program?
11. Do you think social media help you to develop new social relationships in your class or in your academic program?
12. Do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media impacts your desire to use it? Why?

**Probing keywords:**
- Social influence
- Vertical social motivations
- Horizontal social motivations

**Examples:**
- Maintaining relations with colleagues
- Expanding connections pool

13. Do you interact with your teachers in social media? If yes, how? If no, how do you think it can help?
14. Do your teachers share educational material with you on social media? If yes, how? If no, do you think it can help?
15. Does your department share news/necessary information on social media? If yes, how, you think it is useful? If no, do you think it can help?

**Probing keywords:**
- Faculty social media adoption
- Communication
- Broadcasting

**Examples:**
- Fostering Facebook discussions
- Polling course evaluations
- Answering students inquiries from Facebook accounts
- Twitter as news channel
- Interaction dialogs with students
16. Do you think some characteristics of social media websites makes them more attractive than other tools? Can you give some examples? Why?
17. Do you prefer to use social media to support your studies instead of L@L? In what cases? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probing keywords:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ease of use/familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexibility / customizability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convenience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to get feedback easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funny and friendly usage compared to traditional LMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexibility compared to rigid LMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ease of use and familiarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personalized and interactive learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free-of-charge feature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. In what other ways do you think social media contribute to your studies?

**Note for the interviewer:** ask the interviewee’s help to identify and contact further possible informants and prospect interviewees.

At what time was this interview concluded? ..........

Final notes, comments or further details by the interviewer:

.................................................................
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes  
Bonilla & Osman

Appendix 4 – Transcriptions

Interview 1 (I1)

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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<td>Interview duration:</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribed by:</td>
<td>Mohammed Osman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription date:</td>
<td>2017-04-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. M: okay first of all I would like to thank you for your time for accepting this interview invitation my name

2. is Mohammad Osman and master student from Lund University doing research in the academic usage of

3. social media

4. Missing…

5. M: so i would like to start by asking you are a student?

6. Missing…

7. M: okay where do you study or which academic program did you study?

8. Missing…

9. M: okay ah ah what do you think about social media when I say social media what do you think of?

10. X: the first word that comes my mind now they'd be like wasting time or like an addictive all the all the

11. ideas we can be seen as a negative way in the beginning but when you go deep like did you really think

12. about it and you need to weigh the negative and positive impact of social media so the discussion can

13. go like more more deeper and more I think clear but like when the first word the first like they come to

14. my mind when you say social media it is like a negative impact of my life wasting time, addiction

15. spending a lot of time on it and something like that

16. M: okay interesting can you give me some examples of social media applications or websites that you

17. know or use?

18. X: yeah I I use like Facebook on a daily basis I use Instagram I use WhatsApp and I'm not sure what is

19. called LinkedIn is like professional job hunting network with the same time the majority of the content
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

is made by the users so if you can count goes like social media or not

M: awesome ok interesting yeah it's generally counted as a professional social media, so okay if we drift

into social media in academics did you use social media in your group work?

X: yeah yeah we use a lot of original master lately we like whenever we have like a group work the first thing we do we let me make like a chat group in Facebook and we use this chat group for like planning where we are going to meet what we are going to do and if someone have like data to we can pool the data using the social media group or messenger group

M: okay okay that's interesting do you use it to share academic content?

X: like some time like I use I use my social media account for promoting like soft like sort of like programs which I think you're like my fellow people from my back to my home country so for instant like whenever I know they will be like a scholarship chance or a new opening in a program I share it with other friends and sometimes I would sure like sound like articles which are of my interest like for remote sensing and GIS and also another time is shares us like the MOOC the online course, the free

everyone with access to Internet can make use of it

M: okay interesting do you think social media engage you to your studies or it distracts you or it could be a combination of both?

X: This is really a tough question because it depends like on which certain time for instance so sometimes it helps me when I have like a lot of academic work to do I use social media like a breeze like just like take like a couple minutes with social media and to reduce the stress when I have like academic pressure and sometimes you lose yourself with social media but I don't know if you count also YouTube as a social media because YouTube is full of materials is really good for about like for academic purpose and also for the like cat videos with also for wasting a lot of time

M: okay that's interesting so do you think it could be a useful source of information by it myself?

X: Yeah indeed indeed like for example in Facebook there is a group called Sudanese researchers
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

M: okay okay that's really interesting so do you think it makes your studies pleasant?

X: oh i don't know like how how can you elaborate more in the question I don't get it?

M: oh yeah i mean do you find it like funny studying with social media like studying and chatting at the same time thinks like this?

X: oh yeah it could be but sometimes we get distracted like when you're trying to do the whole thing it is not easy and you need to have strong control yourself so you screw it down like searching for something interesting and then you end up watching something like something irrelevant or like really coming irrelevant at all so if you can keep yourself on track and try to find mine for do like for specific things that would be help of what try to is like easy to get lost in the detail or like in the social context so

initiative which is really big one of the biggest groups Facebook like we're like a lot of Sudanese would have interest research or academia are together and if we watch the group like they have a problem with something like this is a problem and can while I can more than handle answer for the same problem of someone like knows like a good opportunity go and promote it there so in that in that context social media a very helpful for the academia I've not only got that group the other groups also like for me like there is some groups more specialized like some disciplinary for me this there is like that group called GIS professional or like a surveyor professional or remote sensing students so whenever you go there and it's helps me I actually had me last last last year when i was doing my thesis i was i was looking for like i need to do a lot of data processing and i have to be like in a manual way i will select with time consuming and competition consuming also so like i was searching this like looking for something on remote sensing and I found someone have a link to a blog in developed by one or the student in Italy is like a semi-automatic usually review the blogging we save a lot of time and effort and i get there from the social media so i think was it helpful and it could be more helpful if we in the right way
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>67</th>
<th>M: okay interesting so would you say it's fun to study social media?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>X: yeah it could be fun, even even like we use social media to plan the parties and trips after after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>finishing the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>M: okay that's interesting okay so if we come to the relations with your classmates do you think social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>media improves your social relationships in the class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>X: indeed indeed it is quite helpful imagine if you your only contact with your friend you're like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>classmates with these they like their emails so they're going to be super tough but through the social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>media like Facebook and Instagram if you get more is that more social social and personal aspects on it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>so it turns from classmates to friendship so if loose s a bit of the formality of being a class only and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>especially if you if you talk about people doing like a master level of courses where when we will already</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>have big struggle to follow their life people with the mentality I am here to study without and it just having</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>fun or anything else so social media to just bridge the gap between people and make them more closer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>and it is quite helpful when when you work in a team like so the collaboration and when you have like</td>
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<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>we should be like no boundaries with some boundaries at the same time so they'll be like respect but</td>
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<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>more easygoing working environment could be like created using with the help of the social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>M: okay that's really interesting so what about developing new relationships with your classmates do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>you think social media contribute students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>X: I think social medias could be like to ease the way for me like personally I'm like face to face person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>I'm nothing like a lot of doing I can chat with you to organize a sort of event so I remember like the first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>semester where we were here in Sweden there something called Samladag where the Swedish celebrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>like one day over a year eating expected kind of bakeries and pastries and one of our friends he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>created a small group and added seven or six people from our class we just know each other but not like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
90 very much and all the class tested Samla after the class and through a Facebook invitation all of us went
91 and had like cookie and pastries and it was nice and helped us to know each other more or some time
92 outside of the classroom which was really a pleasant and quite quite nice work with and of course of like
93 using social media from the beginning
94 M: okay that's interesting so if I ask you do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using
95 social media is this why you are using social media it is a peer pressure?
96 X: no i mean I am in social media almost like for almost 8
97 when I was doing my bachelor's degree like I think two of us on your three of us had Facebook accounts
98 and they were making fun of us why using Facebook no one is using Facebook it could be like this when
99 wind way like the social media becoming trendy other people feel the pressure to keep up with it like for
100 instance now I'm feeling the pressure to have in Snapchat because we have a lot of line is my classmate
101 or like my friend how many snapshots on this land they talking about you all the time so I'm thinking or
102 should i get is because my friend or my classmate have it or not but it exists the fact it's the other people
103 using the that mean of social media it puts all the pressure of you to do it also so that you don't feel left
104 out or isolated or not up to date with what is going on
105 M: not okay okay that's really interesting so if we drift a bit and ask about your teachers and professors
106 do they use social media to contact you or communicate you or something?
107 X: no no no like I have like one of my teacher here I'm a friend with him a Facebook he is using even for
108 contacting me using for other things like promoting so sometimes I can academic work so whenever he
109 publish something new can write and let me Facebook after publishing and put a link or about it all
110 about that thing but that is only one for my school here in Sweden who I sort of social media
111 M: okay do you think it would be useful if teacher follow this or do ?
112 X: this oh I think it could be good i don't like an example back from Sudan like one of one of people i
113 know who was working as a tutor so he was really active on social media so I would say every daily basis
he writes the exercises and the homework for the students to it and put it online so they can submit it
to Dropbox file and you go down and see the post and the comment a final the interaction between him
and his students so it could be like quite helpful but i think the academic with like with the academic formality to go to to the diversity portal for like is informing students about that is could have a sort of like a legal consequence because you are not sure that all the students will have it in a social media account so that can present in social media but by the law or by the university rules everyone should have like a university email address which they can get information about the class or homework

| 114 | M: okay okay that’s very interesting point so what what do you think if your teachers do this like share academic material do you think it would be useful? |
| 115 | X: maybe it could be useful but you should be like, if the teacher can not measure how much the students can have access to this like material or online or like in the Facebook or in another like mean of social media or not unless for example in our department we have like this page run by the IT coordinator of our department he don’t publish was so called academic material but he publish if there is like someone doing a PhD defense, master thesis defense or like it there like a public lecture like an opening position or there is a job you get like a notice from the Department web page and I find that thing and I find that very interesting because specially as a alumni after school I don’t usually one check my university website on a daily basis as I check my social media on a daily basis so if there is a chance here I should follow it or a professor coming from the states or a public lecture here in Lund University so I can go and attend it
| 116 |  |
| 117 | M: okay okay that’s really interesting so if I ask you what are the characteristics of social media that that make them attractive for you to use in your academic studies? |
| 118 | X: the easy access and it is attractive a graphical way if you think about the University portal isn’t that
more like graphically attractive as Instagram or Facebook or Snapchat or like being in whatever and they

are up to date all time to be up to it and it also could be sort of user based content like to the content

could be developed by users can be other student or like other like scholars or think of it is it doing more

of interactivity between between the both side of like me and other people sharing information

M: okay okay that's interesting if we convert compare to your University portal which is Live@Lund so

what do you think like the pros and cons of both?

X: be honest I never use Live@Lund so I everything you can find in these social media I never tried to use

source like this Live@Lund so I can't compare between them?

M: even like to download the course literature or articles or something like?

X: we don't use Live@Lund, for every course we have a website from our department so we don't go

through Live@Lund or something

M: okay so if you compare it with the website of your department what do you think?

X: I would go on the website in this case because I want to be sure like everything is there I don't wanna

M: okay but for example I think it in the website of your department you are having some features like
discussion features, portal features where students can discuss right?

X: yeah I think it but I am not that active actually for me my whole group was discussing our chat group

more than the academic portal or university website

M: yeah so why do you do it like in the chat group rather than the department website?

X: maybe because of for sake of simplicity or maybe because when you are not in a chat group you
disclose like be like only three or four of us only, while when you do it in a portal it will be seen for

everyone and even professors and it is less formal

M: okay okay interesting the final question is is there any other ways do you think that social media

contribute to your studies?

X: I think beside getting information contacting with people, relieving stress when you are working hard

on anything at the school a maybe could be good for for sharing content taking the news during and like

if you're coordinating any in any sort of program or even promoting things
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>M: okay okay that's interesting okay then this concludes our interview thank you very much for your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>time and thank you yeah work out good luck with your project okay thank you very much</td>
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## Interview 2 (I2)

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<td>Pedro Bonilla</td>
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1. Pedro: hello I'm Pedro Bonilla I'm a researcher from Lund University and I'm going to ask you some questions about how you use social media and what are the factors that motivate you to use social media. First of all I would... I will tell you some conditions like this interview will be recorded but it would be anonymous, so just try to not mention your name and we will analyze the content of this interview but it will remain anonymous even on the publication and this interview is totally voluntarily so if you want to stop at any time we can do it if you feel uncomfortable with this.

2. Student: ok

3. Pedro: first tell me what is your age

4. Student: 29

5. Pedro: 29. Are you a student?

6. Student: Yes

7. Pedro: what do you study?

8. Student: the Masters in development studies

9. Pedro: what university do you study?

10. Student: Lund... Lund University

11. Pedro: Please tell me what do you think is social media?
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<tr>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td>Student: Well, I think given its name &quot;social&quot; and &quot;media&quot; it’s Internet best means of people interacting and communicating, it can mean a lot but yeah in many ways the word social constraints what really people do on this Internet-based applications yeah I would say online or Internet best means of people interacting and communicating</td>
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<td><strong>30</strong></td>
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<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td>Pedro: okay it's a very good definition... and can you give me some examples of social media</td>
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<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td>Student: And the most prominent not from prominent really but the most widely known is Facebook then you have twitter, you have photo best applications like Instagram and yeah</td>
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<td><strong>33</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td>Pedro: what about WhatsApp?</td>
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<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td>Student: WhatsApp</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td>Pedro: do you use it?</td>
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<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td>Student: I use it. Viber, messenger</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td>Pedro: That's good. So please tell me and do you use social media when you have group assignments or group work?</td>
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<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td>Student: yes, I many times because many students many of those have worked within groups find social media applications more convenient to working in groups. For example, messenger Facebook messenger where you can come together in a group and start sharing if you're working on their on their own a topic an assignment you can work with without having to meet you can only share your progress same but also others WhatsApp so yeah it's quite convenient for students</td>
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<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td>Pedro: okay so you use it the more or less like to coordinate</td>
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<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td>Student: coordinate coordinate</td>
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<td><strong>43</strong></td>
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<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td>Pedro: okay and do you use a social media to share academic content?</td>
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</table>
Students: well in a sense of student work in a sense of students related work but not... because

sharing social media language means also having a public aspect like for example when you

got Facebook and ask you what's in your mind when you share you know lightly not invest that

sense about sharing with within a working group you know that I'd be the most prominent use of

social media to share this kind of academic content like work in progress

Pedro: okay what kind of content?

Student: in this case I'm talking about like student assignments this kind of content but not sharing like that sharing like for example if you were you're my classmate and I'm working on

say my paper and I want you to comment to do this back and forth communications it's kind of

restricted you know that's the most you at least for me as well as they know most do i use it

share but sharing academic content as this means like sharing finished work to the public like

the way you share feeds on Facebook that's not so common

Pedro: okay and do you think social media can engage you more in your study like yeah making

you study more let's say?

Student: i think yes but also them twist that question the other way around because you know if

you think of social media now apart from of applications like WhatsApp where you only have to

you know there is no platform where other you can see what other people doing but applications

like Facebook like twitter these ones are like community where you need to know exactly what

you want and because in a community people are doing lots of different things you may not

know what they're doing if you don't know how to look forward they're going so this application

like Facebook and Twitter you need to know exactly with kind of groups which kinds of like for

example keywords this language they call them hashtags you know if you are looking for
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something to do it they for example social media and academics what kind of platforms you
need to look for what kind of pages you need to follow and this define how you engage with
social media academically and all social media cannot engage you academically so in other words this so called "gravity get it out” but if you know exactly what you’re looking for you follow
the right pages you know you don't follow Kardashian Kim Kardashian oh yeah why well if you follow the right pages and you enter the right groups you can really engage you with social media academically but it's so tough because there's a lot of junk social media and some of it is sponsored so it keeps on showing your feed and yeah
Pedro: I think there are a lot of problems with a fake news
Student: Junk news
Pedro: junk information
Student: yes absolutely
Pedro: okay in do you think I mean related with that do you think social media can be a useful source of information for your for your studies?
Student: yeah I think I think but again linking back cause we've just been talking about that badly I'm also responsible for this I need to know exactly what I want and how to get it, because this is all some tough in this junk environment will really get to know the kind of information you want yes like I said you need to know what kind of tools I learned about this thing of hashtag for example in Twitter if I'm looking for some like me who is concerned who discusses on different things when you use a hashtag about say energy then you see exactly you filter information to limit it to exactly energy what kind of what kind of information is flowing on energy what people write what people say
Pedro: okay any how do you know or how do you choose say like went to trust or not to trust the information?

Student: that's another huge problem today because they of this which is what is you said "fake news" partly you have to like now on student we are quick with tool of verification somehow because of studies you come to know how to verify information also know that this is the red source and it's the wrong source because you have to you know flip flop back and forth you can say okay maybe this is all so it's not it's not an issue of right or wrong, but the level of the process that information goes through to the publishers you know public consumption you can always juggle through this as a student at least

Pedro: okay and changing a little bit have you ever used for example any social media Facebook or Twitter to solve exams together with your group because sometimes you have home assignments yeah right, so have you used social media to like to... do it on a collaboratively way.

Student: Yeah, I get it yes quite often as a complementary you know as additional way of further doing the assignment even without having to be there physically so how we have done it how we do it is basically that you for example meet once in a week the rest of the days coordinate well say messenger where when you meet your sign it's obvious office responsibilities for example if they give me that okay go under such of this and then during the process I update the group about my progress via the chosen social media platform like messenger.

Pedro: okay like what's well this is like more efficient right

Student: yeah

Pedro: like you only meet when it's really necessary

Student: exactly exactly but also want to say that bites off this chosen platform with a messenger or WhatsApp isn't it soft enough so it is that should be time to meet physically
Pedro: so you're saying you cannot replace totally...

Student: not so to speak it is physical meetings in this case are irreplaceable for this the chosen platform of social media is complementary

Pedro: and do you think is possible to use social media to make your studies more pleasant like...

Student: yeah

Pedro: you understand to get let's say pleasure from studying

Student: I think it is tempting to say that it's hard, but again that is attendant upon the individual yourself social media, because I think... as for me... it really feel that social media is contributing to what I'm doing and cause you pleasure, i need to have some degree of discipline, you know because there's a lot of the distractions on social media and some of them can be even they're addictive so it need to have some people of discipline and again but what we said you need to know exactly how to get what you want so you can appreciate how much social media and an app view to the studies you need also to know how to get what you want and we're also because platforms like Facebook quite... quite... congested with a lot of junk and with a lot of people what when you go to Twitter for example there is fake news that is junk of course but quite not so much I'm not favoring Twitter over Facebook myself but knowing what you want and where to get it this can be the fact this can be the factor that may make you appreciate social media as a part of your studies

Pedro: yes so it's like you're you know you cannot find a way you don't even know what you want

Student: exactly, so to speak
Pedro: okay now that you mentioned a social media can be a distraction do you think it might be good for your studies because some people say that they they need like some distraction while they are studying, so they can like focus more or study longer for example whenever they are studying they also have social media open

Student: yeah

Pedro: and they kind of alternate between studying and social media so it can be like let's say more fun for some people to study in this way

Student: well I think for some people but I for one completely completely reject the idea that social media can help me go through for example in a lecture when I'm in lecture I almost want to turn off my phone you know and the kind of destructions that I may accept for example if we are seated together in a lecture and then some in some interval we can say a word or two that kind of but opening on up I'm trying to see the news feed the kind of cat videos and learning stuff for me that's another thing so we're... partly I may say this very condition this very condition where people become so dependent on social media if it's of one of the you may say in enslaving tendency of some of these applications where by they somehow they are playing on Alice psychological

Pedro: okay highly dependent on the person

Student: you you come to appreciate it as a normal for you to alternate between whatever you're doing not only studies but even when you're reading here when you interviewing me you may want to get a break open to accepting me you know if it's off is a result of this growing dependency... this product not absolutely bad but there should be some restraint on the individual user... the individual user
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

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Pedro: okay and then moving move along a little bit in... do you think social media contributes to improve your social relationships in your class or in your academic program?

Student: you're using the word "improving" yes somehow, but of course not new ones because as you know before you asked what is your Facebook page this Facebook name you have already become somehow connected with a fellow student so you may find it convenient to continue talking and interacting and knowing more about each other and all the kind of things but that in the student environment that is initiated outside outside the virtual reality social media so... like i said before i ask you for your Facebook name suddenly we have already become connected friends non friends are such, but yeah from the real world from the feasible if we continue to talk knowing more about what we are interested in... backgrounds academic backgrounds we can attribute that social media because we may not be physically present or we may not meet this all the time, but this mediated platform you know messenger... WhatsApp. we can use it to further know more about each other maybe in the future we make collaboration on such project and so on... so we may say that in that sense whatever platform we have been using has helped us improve improve our relationship as students

Pedro: ok, so the first contact according to what you said it's a physical

Student: yes, outside the virtual reality

Pedro: and then you move to the virtual world

Student: yeah

Pedro: okay... and do you think that the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media impacts your desire to use it or makes you use it more?

Student: not me but I know that this is a common reality I know of one girl who was completely
outside all social media as you know it she had an older phone for calling and receiving and she
was completely unplugged as she had completely unplanned ass off from this social media outlets, but you know it became completely difficult I worked with her in one of the courses and
it was really hard for her to get along, because all of us were using Messenger and so it was hard for her to be part of any group because it's a fancy way of working that's how people work
they don't meet all the time they meet once in a while and the rest of the time they coordinate their social media platform they choose... and just one person cannot yeah you know stop them from doing that, so she had to change and by phone where you can join in groups and out
what's up contribute so it can't be not the other way around that you joined because of "bandwagon" on it can be partly that, but also that you have no alternative but really to join you
know what I mean, that for if you really really see us about your studies and you want to is your life and be a participating member of any group then you need to somehow plug yourself onto one of these
Pedro: okay and let's say that in your group in your master they create one group on the social media could be Facebook or Twitter anything... and they start sharing important content about the courses or like assignments or notifications like all the teacher changed the date or something do you think that will motivate you to use the social media to use the same social media?
Student: yeah I think so but maybe not motivate, but we may use another word "force me" you know what I mean because it may not inspire me to join social media that it may leave me with no alternative but to join in social media... you get what I mean and and in that case if I'm really I only restrict its usage exactly that, so some people who are really not into this you know I've been using social media before during graduate studies myself, but not so much yeah, you know, but some people who are really doing this because they are communicating with fellow
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264 student and so on... they are not so motivated at such, but they have to, you know when you do

265 something because you really have to

266

267 Pedro: because it's so necessary that...

268

269 Student: it's necessary... that one... it's necessary, it's necessary for you to do so

270

271 Pedro: okay let's talk a little bit about the teachers, do you interact with your teachers or have

272 you interacted with your teachers in social media?

273

274 Student: no, no

275

276 Pedro: why do you think that is?

277

278 Student: because I imagine myself a teacher having students following me on Instagram...

279 haha... and the work somehow ethical aid the teacher-student the relationship is quite complex

280 because first of all and you know it's a bit hierarchical as well, the very idea that one is the teacher and one in the student there is a hierarchy, so teachers find it not so easy to have students following them on Facebook and Twitter quite near I see teachers using Twitter and students all over them that's another thing but teachers being followed by the students on Instagram that's another thing you know so i can see the two teachers are really hesitant even when they have social media they rarely rarely shared this with students

285

286 Pedro: and let's say in front of your part as a student yeah will you be worried about this connection in social media with the teachers?

287

288 Student: I won't go for it, I would not go for it... as a student I also think that social media is a bit private space, you get what I mean, that somehow my relationship with teachers needed to be

289 in the physical world

290

291 Pedro: it's like you need to separate the academical and the personal

292

293 Student: I feel like that somehow

294

295 Pedro: and your main concern would be kind of privacy, right?
Student: yeah, I think, partly yes

Pedro: okay and but have your teachers shared any educational material on social media?

Student: not that I can remember but you know you talked about Live@Lund that's that's the teacher must that's the platform where they share most of the stuff that they want to share with students because it's also designed in that way, but of course not incorporating lots of things, but the updates I'm not coming to them, I sick here, I need to take care of my daughter and so on so we meet let's agree to meet next time... they share that on Live@Lund

Pedro: okay so it's like the main medium

Student: because it's the official platform

Pedro: okay

Student: and also all students have access to this is no need for example and sharing any document may be a new PDF document students have to read all of us and download it from Live@Lund so they prefer that way

Pedro: okay now that you mentioned Live@Lund... do you only use it because you need or I mean you say that teachers put content there, right? so you enter Live@Lund, download, that's like the main way you use it or have you use it on another way

Student: well I it depends I think now because in my department... the graduate school as students come like new master students the graduate school organizes some events some course not course it's a platform for Live@Lund where students can meet and talk you know, like social media

Pedro: Like a discussion board

Student: A discussion... and getting to know each other so but of course that is organized
between before you come before Autumn but students don't normally use it to talk to each other

you know they prefer the outside social media applications

Pedro: why do you think that is? that people are not using...

Student: partly i may say because of its official character you know what I mean the university

best university managed interactive platform like the university make and control... the university

the managed... which some are also may mean to some people that they whatever i do on that

is the university see what's going on and so on and so forth but that really is not a big thing i

think it's partly may explain it's official character as the official interactive platform for students

teachers and... of course it's a managed way and see timetable and so on that may partly discourage students from talking so much using it

Pedro: so you think is like students are kind of afraid of talking there in Live@Lund?

Student: I may say that they want to restrict it to its official status, that they go there to get updates and they know what course administrator are saying, when submit papers, what kind of lectures are being canceled and so on and so forth, but to interact it has at least not that i know i

don't i don't know other faculties, but in my department, we don't use it not many student use it
to talk to each other use, but it has application you can talk to each other, yeah, you can talk using Live@Lund you can adopt

Pedro: they kind of prefer other social media...

Student: there is this illusion that in the outside apps you have privacy actually when you also have no guarantee of it. Get what I mean... there's that thinking that in my own Facebook app is my top private space and so you know so

Pedro: okay and then you mentioned that your department share some information about events at the beginning of the master?
Student: yet it is a complete planned platform within the next two months where students can know about prior they're coming to Lund to the University they can know about a few things.

Pedro: Do you think that was useful?

Student: extremely useful extremely useful because they are mentors students ooh who volunteer with the graduate school who are continuing students so they are it's not teachers that run into the same continuing students who are selected by the graduate school to volunteer to interactively with the prospective students.

Pedro: okay and all of that was on Live@Lund?

Student: Live@Lund, so students can ask questions about for example about life in Lund, academic writing, lots of program-related questions and the main types they interact with them they also have a few assignments for example like a of course like my course what is development what do you think of development and then mentors interact with the students on this kind of topics knowns that it's not official you don't have to join you don't have to doing that platform but it's encouraged that if you have time guess login and interacting with your friends so like in my year when we came we already knew each other by name at least and by photo because those who uploaded photos at Live@Lund you would say oh this is Pedro and so it was useful I would say.

Pedro: Do you think some characteristics of social media makes them more attractive than other tools like yeah?

Student: I get it I think I think but also I think depends on the individual tests you know...tests as in the idea what it preferences individual preferences like for example i prefer i may prefer twitter if I'm looking for something academical other people know how to find that exactly what i find on.
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<tr>
<td>391</td>
<td>twitter on Facebook so yes some applications are more attractive to different preferences to</td>
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<td>different things like our students you may need with academic content you know and the kind of</td>
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<td>393</td>
<td>people who share such academic content and so not so forth so an application like Twitter</td>
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<td>394</td>
<td>where hashtags define you know the keywords you know even Facebook that works but it's</td>
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<td>395</td>
<td>much more and also the descriptions in terms of how much you can share in writing 140</td>
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<td>396</td>
<td>characters for example whereby most of the things you have to cock it in a link and then some</td>
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<td>people think that this is attractive why because it's only when I choose to follow that then boom</td>
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<td>got bombarded with a lot of one but before that if I am just selecting what is it that I'm interested</td>
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<td>in is limited the information is limited you get it for you I don't waste time going into what I don't</td>
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<td>want I only dip in I mean dig in into the links provided when I say that exactly this is what I want</td>
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<td>so that might be attractive for some people like me for example others may also have other</td>
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<td>features that they appeal so to different audiences maybe that may work better that each of</td>
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<td>them have design tools that appeal to different audiences</td>
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<td>Pedro: for example okay for example using the fact that a people are more familiar to Twitter</td>
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<td>Facebook to WhatsApp yeah are kind of encouraging them to use those tools instead of</td>
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<td>Live@Lund because Live@Lund is the official right? the institutional, but the phenomenon is</td>
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<td>that people are not using it very much... do you think familiarity might be a reason for that?</td>
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<td>Student: yeah exactly partly but also now you're making me remember one other aspect may be</td>
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<td>that may contribute to why is it that master students because you know this is official and under</td>
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<td>student best and and therefore the community is limited to the institution to the students for</td>
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<td>example if I want something really you may not get when it comes to sharing for example if we</td>
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<td>all just use Live@Lund and share these are sharing you know we are in a closed space of</td>
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<td>Live@Lund as students and teachers but now when you go to Twitter it's the whole world has</td>
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<td>opened up, so you can see lots more even so what I mean what I mean is that even when</td>
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<td>students choose to use the Live@Lund for sharing whatever you want to share they may also</td>
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<td>think that it's limited</td>
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Pedro: it's like a very closed... controlled...

Student: yeah right it's an elite closed-space well of only you know members members only yeah members only

Pedro: only people that belong to the course

Student: that exactly

Pedro: that's very interesting in them and for example Live@Lund does not have like an application... have you used Live@Lund from your phone for example...

Student: before it was not so easy but now you can now it now i use it you can't really fun because it was not mobile friendly for somewhat of a long time it wasn't so mobile friendly but they're doing some technical changes i think but now you can access you can the page can fit on the phone

Pedro: okay it's better adapted now... do you think?

Student: yeah yeah at least as far as I'm concerned because i can serve a smartphone but the page now before it was not possible now the page is mobile friendly, so you can juggle through the page

Pedro: but they still don't have like an application that you can download, right?

Student: now they don't have an app they don't have an app that's the simple thing if they really think about it because that's where things are going and... an app makes it easier for for students because it's say it's exactly designed to be used by in that way phones

Pedro: and I think with an application you can also get like instant notifications you know

Student: yeah we're gonna get exactly

Pedro: when you get a message you receive it instantly
| 455 | Student: yeah you can choose to have be notified when there's anything new shared so you don't miss anything but here before you login you have to log in to see what's happening before you log in I don't know maybe I just don't know but if I login I don't get notified I have login into another way maybe they are doing it that you get notified by email which is another second way notification process but this is instant like you say the other one is mediated by your email but this is instant when you have an app it is instant |
| 462 | Pedro: ok so that's kind of an advantage, right? of using social media |
| 466 | Student: yeah but do you get those notifications if you use Live@Lund for example you know like I say you get notified in a second medium they notify they send a notification to your email so you must have the email and that email me you must we must be allowing notifications which is also not so easy because you you may think that is another new email you know what I mean you may think it's just you know then you may be junk email because you are if you choose to be notified you will always be notified about new emails that means you have to check all the time but if it is an app it is specific when you see a notification on it and notification from Live@Lund |
| 473 | Pedro: yeah, that's a very good point... yeah, you can tell the difference... when to know... what is the source... |
| 476 | Student: exactly but some of us ignore I always ignore my emails the whole day for example and then I check in the evening because i know I cannot check all the time... that lots of junk comes in the email you can't all the time to checking it |
| 480 | Pedro: I think I have that problem too I check like at the end yeah all the junk together... Ok, so I have maybe a final question for you... it's very open... like in what other ways do you think social media contribute to your studies? |
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Student: in any other ways

Pedro: yeah

Student: well again I go back to my the way i conceive of these social media applications all of them there may not that many of them I don't know but I me know now that there are many social media applications that are available for use I conceived this whatever the platform one chooses to use as a community as a community a lively community and in a community you expect everything anything anything is possible within a community, because behave differently and you have different interests different talents, different aspirations have different ones, so you have that kind of mixture of what people are interested in what you are looking for what people aspire for what people want to share, so exactly as an individual member of this community I have to be as specific as possible if I'm looking for something and that that is the path that is very difficult you know because then more people cannot tell what they're looking for current know in this community what is that me I want to get from other members and to know others members in that community what you willing to share also like it can be useful so I need to know what I want and how to get it because not all of them can provide it the few who can provide what i want so i need to get on this process of knowing how to get those people who are what I want then social media can be extremely useful you know but if the if there is this kind of disorder I don't know really ho who can provide what i want and sometimes digest day it becomes messy so then i take the table i turn the table back to the individual user of social media but there should be some awareness and that our students because a student communities as an elite community students have the social status in society has informed members so in a student environment this is ok because students can can notice... effective usage also determine how how useful this tools can be

Pedro: ok it's about creating communities... looking at what people want, right? and connecting
what you want with the provider of what you want... it's about connections

Student: yeah, exactly, in the language of social media they may call them "groups" but also individual people like you you may be working on a paper then you share it somehow for those who interest if I'm interested how do i get to know you if you're not my friend if you don't we are not in any sako how do i get even when you share it publicly how do i get access to your paper I need to know keywords that if really you're working on something like now you're working on social media and academics if you share your results if you wish to share your thesis and maybe you published it in open access and share it on Facebook, how I get to know that work of yours is that I need to know how to look for it that means maybe I should use keywords and when you put in keywords somehow you get lots of things but they don't deviate so much on what you're looking for by accident maybe I can get your paper so yeah yeah knowing how to get what I want and knowing what kind of people within this community what kind of groups and all this kind of things

Pedro: okay that's very good... it's an interesting point... so I think we are done by now thank you very much for participating in this study, we are going to transcribe this interview and we will send you the transcription just for you maybe you want to add or check something or if you want to remove some part you can do it like... it's part of your rights.

Student: that's democratic

Pedro: it's very democratic. so thanks again for participating

Student: and good luck with your writing... with your thesis

Interview 3 (I3)

Date: 2017-04-15
Pedro: Ok, hello, good morning I'm Pedro from the University of Lund and I'm going to ask you some questions about how you use social media in your academic context. So first of all I would like to ask you: are you a student?

Student: Yes of course I'm student

Pedro: Okay, can you tell me where do you study? And what academic program do you belong to?

Student: At the moment… Information systems program

Pedro: Okay okay sorry I think there was a problem with the connection... can you repeat?

Student: Yeah I study in Lund University in Sweden and the academic program is called Information Systems

Pedro: Okay, perfect, and then please tell me what do you think is social media for you? and please give me some examples of social media that you have used

Student: Okay social media for me it's a connection for people through which they can communicate and do a lot of things like Facebook and Twitter are the most used social media websites so yeah

Pedro: Okay yeah that's a good definition and is close... I just want to mention that in the context of our research, social media is a any website or application whose content is mainly generated by its users

Student: Of course I agree with that
Pedro: Okay so just to point out that and also for example applications like WhatsApp or Google Docs are considered social media under this definition… just to make it clear like in this research.

Student: Okay I understand.

Pedro: Okay so please tell me do you use social media in your group work for example when you have group assignments.

Student: Ah yes sometimes I'm using it but it depends on the situation.

Pedro: Ok can you tell me like some cases where you have used the social media… some specific examples?

Student: Yeah for example when we have a group assignment for the university we're using the social media for collaboration like group chatting and something like that.

Pedro: For the chatting what applications do you use. What is the name?

Student: Most we're using Facebook Messenger but also sometimes we're using Viber or WhatsApp.

Pedro: Okay okay that's good and I guess you use that to coordinate group work, right?

Student: Yeah.

Pedro: When you meet when you get together a do you use something else? another social media?

Student: No.

Pedro: Okay and please tell me also do you use any social media to share academic content?

Student: Of course I'm using Facebook also we have a group... a secret group created in Facebook on which we are sharing like... I don't know... articles and things that are that we are using for the University and for the learning process.
Pedro: Okay is it like like a private group, right?

Student: Yeah

Pedro: Okay and do you think a social media can engage you more into your studies?

Student: Yeah nice let me say yes because for example now that Facebook is offering some live streaming so maybe we can use it somehow to engage the students and also me in some in some ways I don't know

Pedro: Okay so you think it kind of motivates you to study?

Student: Yeah of course

Pedro: Okay nice and do you think social media can be a useful source of information for your studies?

Student: It depends yeah it depends on what size here or which friends or whatever you're connected with on the social media but yeah

Pedro: And do you trust that information that you get from social media?

Student: Sometimes if I think that it is a trusted source maybe yeah

Pedro: Okay good and do you think it's possible to use social media to make your studies more pleasant? And what ways?

Student: For example in which you which way?

Pedro: Yeah like for example some people say that they use social media while they are studying so they can get sort of a distraction they alternate between studying and checking social media

Student: Yeah my opinion yeah in my opinion social media does not make my study more pleasant right now

Pedro: Okay so I guess... so you think it doesn't make it more fun to study?
Student: With social media, right?

Pedro: Yeah

Student: Hmm in my opinion maybe... I have... I don't have the right answer about this, but I think yes

Pedro: Okay and let's move on then eh do you think a social media contributes to improve your social relationships in your class, I'm talking about like a the existing social relationship that you have... your friends do you think it improves your relationship with them?

Student: You mean with my colleagues?

Pedro: Yes, exactly

Student: Yeah of course because we're connected all the time so we can chat with them... speak about anything connected to the University, to the academic program... so I think yes, it improves

Pedro: Good and do you think social media it can help you to develop like new relationships I mean like getting to know new people in your master program for example when you started your master program it did you use social media to get to know more people?

Student: Yeah of course when we started for example we were a lot of people from around around the world so we didn't know each other and I was using the social media to recognize the people and my colleagues so that we can develop new social relationships

Pedro: Okay that's very nice and do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media like impacts your your desire to use it? for example...

Student: Yeah of course because as I said we're connected through this social media and we found if I'm using it then maybe my colleagues will use it to reach me to find me somehow
Pedro: Okay so if for example if everybody is using let's say Facebook… that this fact motivate you to use Facebook

Student: No no

Pedro: Okay so it's not... so it's not like an important factor like if everybody is using it?

Student: No no no I mean yeah it's important factor because if everyone and everybody is using it then I should use it too, because otherwise I cannot I mean... I can reach them I can find them, but this is more easier way

Pedro: Okay perfect yeah and do you interact with your teachers in social media?

Student: No, not at all

Pedro: Okay do you think it would help if you can use social media to connect with your teachers?

Student: Yeah of course maybe it would help in a way... for example we are going to be up to date for everything that is happening for example for a particular subject and stuff like that

Pedro: Do your teachers share educational material with you on social media?

Student: Until now we don't have any education educational materials shared through social media with the teachers but we're using it as students... you know... with my colleagues

Pedro: Okay nice and… where do the teachers share the educational material?

Student: The teachers are sharing their educational material mostly on Live@Lund, which is a portal for the university

Pedro: Ok nice… and does your department for example share news or information on social media?

Student: Sorry I didn’t hear… can you repeat, please?
Pedro: Yeah, what is the department you're studying in?

Student: The department is Information Technology which is located in the Lund University, the School of Economics.

Pedro: Ok does your department share any information on social media?

Student: Eh... I guess no... it I haven't seen something like that.

Pedro: Ok do you think it might help if they share things on social media, the department like for example I don't know events or important Information

Student: Yeah it would be easier for the students I guess because we're always using some let's say for example we're using Facebook and if the staff is sharing information to the social media for example through Facebook we're going to be more updated to the things that are going to happen in the university. I can guess.

Pedro: Yeah I agree and do you... do you think some characteristics of social media makes them more attractive than other tools... in

Student: For example they are user-friendly so you don't have to click a lot of things to find something

Pedro: Nice… and… can you give some examples?

Student: Some examples about?

Pedro: Yeah like of some social media that the you think have a characteristic that makes it more attractive to be used

Student: Aha, for example...

Pedro: Hello… Hello sorry I cannot hear you… hello...

Student: Can you hear me now?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>Pedro: Yes I think the call was down</td>
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<tr>
<td>212</td>
<td>Student: Yeah, the connection was dropped</td>
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<td>214</td>
<td>Pedro: Okay so yeah we were talking about the some examples of characteristics if you can provide me</td>
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<td>217</td>
<td>Student: Yes for example if i use Facebook maybe I need to only two clicks school to find the group in which I am I a member there... so I can find some... let’s say literature shared from my colleagues... but if I use Live@Lund I need... let's say... five to ten clicks to find something</td>
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<td>221</td>
<td>Pedro: Ah, ok, ok... and that takes me to the next question then… like... do you prefer to use social media to support your studies instead of Live@Lund… Like in what cases to do you prefer social media?</td>
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<td>225</td>
<td>Student: Yeah… I can say that previous example that I already mentioned and... of course I would prefer social media to support my studies instead of Live@Lund</td>
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<td>228</td>
<td>Pedro: Ok, why do you think people prefer to use social media in some cases instead of Live@Lund?</td>
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<td>231</td>
<td>Student: You know, because they say it's more easy to use for example and everybody is using it so you can find more information than in Live@Lund and... you don't need a lot of searches or lot of clicks to find something</td>
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<td>Pedro: Okay and... do you think the fact that Live@Lund does not have a like an application for your smartphone affects this decision of the students?</td>
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<td>238</td>
<td>Student: Oh yeah I'm sure yes, because it will be much more easier to use it</td>
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<td>Pedro: Okay Hmm… now we have the final question in what other ways do you think social media might contribute to your studies?</td>
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<td>243</td>
<td>Student: Hmm… I have no...</td>
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Pedro: This is more like an open question like if you might think of other ways...

Student: So yeah for example I said previously maybe we can use the live streaming for example I think the live streaming for example when some student is absent maybe he can or she can attend to the lectures using this live streaming so he or she won't miss any lecture or seminar or something like that

Pedro: Ok so it's kind of like social media provides some functionality that is not available like on Live@Lund or others systems, right?

Student: Yeah, I want to say that… exactly

Pedro: Okay, okay that's nice... I think we are done by now so thank you very much for participating in this study

Student: Thank you too

Pedro: I will send you the transcript of the interview, so you can check if you... if… you can check the information and if you want to remove or add something

Student: Okay

Pedro: We will keep in touch

Student: Ok thank you very much

Pedro: Thank you very much
Interview 4 (I4)

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<td>Transcribed by:</td>
<td>Mohammed Osman</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2017-04-21</td>
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1. M: hello my name is Mohammed Osman and I am a student in information systems doing master research in academic usage of social media first of all I would like to thank you for your time and your collaboration and I would like for ask your permission to record this interview

2. X: yes, of course

3. M: thank you your identity will not be recognized in the publications and research

4. X: so i would like to start by asking you, are you student?

5. M: yes

6. X: okay, where do you study?

7. M: I study at the medical faculty in biomedicine AT Lund university

8. X: okay interesting so what do you think about social media when you hear the phrase social media?

9. M: I think it’s a very good tool that some people use in a very inefficient manner

10. X: How?

11. M: because like they use it to pick fights occasionally or to voice strange messages online that maybe they would not voice they were talking to someone in person but I think it’s a great way to keep people connected and to relay information in an easy way

12. X: interesting and can you give me examples of social media applications that you use?

13. M: I use mostly Facebook

14. X: okay what about other like Twitter, Instagram?

15. M: none of those really I should have a like a Tumblr but it's not so much social was just showing images and such

16. X: okay interesting so if we drift into academics do use social media in your group work?

17. M: yes in the group a lot yes

18. X: can you elaborate?

19. M: we have like case studies medical cases and it's very easy if you can post images of things you have written or of whiteboard conversations that you had during group meetings and you can also post
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

| Thought and ideas of what to bring up in the meetings for such and it's way easier than like collecting |
| People and going into a meeting person so it's very efficient than ever |
| M: okay interesting, do you use anything other than use it with the Facebook messenger or? |
| X: No we use it as a group like we create a Facebook group and we post images and such |
| M: interesting do you use any other applications Google Docs Google Drive? |
| X: occasionally Google drive if there are like essay writing applications but for coursework i would say |
| currently that Facebook is used more, Google Drive is used more in our previous courses where had |
| more like group writing essays |
| M: okay interesting so do you use it to share academic content? |
| X: yes between the students but not from the teacher to the student sub speak |
| M: okay what sort of academic stuff only related to the school or maybe an article that you like that you decided to share? |
| X: I'd say both but we use it like I would publish like write the link to an article to everyone i know but i might do it within a group like centered around the current case or around the current question or something like that like with my classmate more or less and we have like a class group where we sometimes write things as such |
| M: okay interesting so using social media engages you to your studies? |
| X: yes in certain ways i would say it's easier to keep contact with your classmates through a social platform than through saying like an academic platform like Moodle because everyone uses Facebook okay pretty much |
| M: so like you come you more focused with your studies if you use social media? |
| X: in some cases yes if you're going to discuss how to like layout a project or if you have some ideas that you want to share between your group members I'd say messenger and Facebook is very efficient |
| M: okay interesting so can social media via like a useful source of information? |
| X: yes it can but people need to really like to take into into consideration what they're publishing and what they are asking about they're saying or such an people seem to be quite bad that's actually really looking into what they are sharing and not just academic but other kind of publications like newspapers |
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

| 53 | and such and people seem to share a lot of things without really looking into it so to speak that's not |
| 54 | really an issue when you doing schoolwork so much but more just general public I think |
| 55 | M: okay okay have you ever use it as a source of information? |
| 56 | X: yes I would have used it as a source of discovery like if you see something you might look it up and so |
| 57 | on but I wouldn't quote something from Facebook and say that it's true without looking it out first |
| 58 | M: okay okay interesting so do you think it makes your studies more pleasant? |
| 59 | X: yes when in a group collaboration it certainly does and it's usually easier to reach out through Facebook than through emails or such when we use it it usually works really well but it's not usable for everything |
| 60 | M: okay like what? |
| 61 | X: like if you're writing like a personal essay or something like that it might be good to write to your classmates and such that you're probably not creating a group just to talk about something that you're doing on your own |
| 62 | M: yeah okay interesting so it could be more fun to study Facebook or social media in general? |
| 63 | X: it's probably again makes group work or collaborations very easy if you have a chat where everyone can interact with each other instantly without having to set up a meeting or something like that I think it can be efficient if you use it right |
| 64 | M: okay interesting so what about your social relationships do you think social media contributes to improve your social relationships in the academic context? |
| 65 | X: Hmm with my classmates occasionally yes but i probably wouldn't look at my professors or something like that i would like to have a more professional relationship with supervisors and such so that you should do through email |
| 66 | M: okay okay can you elaborate more how to improve your relationship with your classmates you organize events with you social media or something? |
| 67 | X: yeah i mean i would say not so much and i participate but i see that people use it that way and I |
| 68 | certainly like chat with my classmates over Facebook whether it's school related or not so I would say |
that the relationships improve regardless simply because you keep in contact with each other and then

if you have a question about something school related you might go to them for opinions or reviewing

or whatever so yeah it contributes

M: okay interesting what about developing new social relations?

X: it's certainly an easy way to keep in contact with someone you just met but I'm I would imagine that

the relationship is better built if you speak to them in person but if you don't have a possibility to do

that maybe you have like a long-distance relationship or something Facebook is a very easy way to keep

in touch whether it's professional or not

M: okay look don't you use other social media like WhatsApp?

X: no I don't know there's just messenger and Facebook and like some sites for image

M: okay interesting so do you think that the fact some of your colleagues are using social media that's

why you are using it?

X: probably because if no one use Facebook there will be no point in keeping contact with anyone like if

you have a platform where more or less everyone has an account and everyone is available it's a very

easy way to keep in touch with them

M: okay okay interesting so coming to a point that you mentioned do you interact with your teachers or

professors of the social media?

X: no I don't

M: so do you think it would be useful if they do?

X: possibly but I think using a student email is equally as efficient in our case because usually people

want to separate their professional and personal lives and I think professors usually want to do that they

might not want students to contact them on Facebook and such but rather by email

M: okay but don't you think it could be more efficient to contact professor instantly?

X: it will probably be efficient it's just I don't think that many professors would be willing to do so

because if you have some sort of clash with the student or maybe if I just imagine the professors want to

separate the professional and personal lives and if they have interactions or social media they want

might want to do that mostly with their personal friends and they might not want to make up a separate
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

| 106 | account just for their students or such so it would be efficient but I think I don't think many people |
| 107 | would be like willing to do with students or teachers to be honest |
| 108 | M: okay okay interesting so what if they for example share my educational material via social media or |
| 109 | something? |
| 110 | X: yeah yeah like I think it might be efficient that we usually have educational platforms for that where |
| 111 | they share power points and review notes and instructions for essays and such so you know where to |
| 112 | find it regardless and they usually let us know at least in our course beforehand like I'm going to put this |
| 113 | up on Moodle you can find it this in this folder and so on so it's available just through a different |
| 114 | platform there isn't like social in the same sense |
| 115 | M: okay interesting okay what about your department does the department share any information social media? |
| 116 | X: it does i would say like the medical faculty and Lund university as a whole does but like my course |
| 117 | doesn't have an account for example because it's a small course that's set up by the students themselves like my classmates and have a group for the class themselves and one for the biomedicine |
| 118 | students at Lund university but it's not by the faculty it's like why the students who want to keep in touch with each other |
| 119 | M: okay and you think that would be useful if this year for example like job posts or news or maybe PhD positions? |
| 120 | X: yes it would I think they do it using their own website rather than Facebook and I'm sure there are certain like Facebook groups and such that share that material but yeah I think it would be efficient if they do but I have not seen it |
| 121 | M: okay interesting ,so what do you think are some characteristics of social media that make them more attractive than other websites? |
| 122 | X: the fact that people want to be known typically that they want to be recognized and they want to be heard and it's easy to type out a message that whoever can be rather than like telling it to someone who tells it to someone else and so forth |
| 123 | |
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M: okay and if you think about it in academic context why do you prefer for example to discuss in a Facebook group rather than the discussion portal in Moodle?

X: mostly because people are so used to Facebook and they are just discovering Moodle as a new like a platform and I also I don't know if Moodle has a chat function it might, but other than that they usually is emails which is not instant messaging simply and you cannot see when someone is typing and you can't interact as quickly so i think that's again they use Facebook for everything else why wouldn't they use it to interact with their classmates

M: okay okay that's really interesting so if you compare both Moodle and the social media in this case Facebook what you do you say the pros and cons?

X: i would say that again it's a nice way to separate school work from your free time which Facebook you should include and while Moodle is great in many ways you know exactly where to find things to keep speaking it doesn't have this instant chat functions and also things people are so used to Facebook i think they would prefer to use something that they're like have become accustomed to rather than using an entirely new platform for which you have to log on to answer

M: okay okay that's interesting finally is there any other ways that you think social media contributes to your education?

X: i think it does simply because perhaps not so much the faculty of its own but you can follow pages that you find interesting and I follow couple of pages that are relevant to my academic interests so sometimes they post like reviews or journals or interesting facts and so on but foremost I would say that it's an easy way to keep in contact with your classmates and you are approached partners as well

M: okay okay that's interesting well that concludes our interview thanks for your time

Interview 5 (I5)

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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Present:</td>
<td>Pedro Bonilla and the interviewee</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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1. Pedro: Hello Pedro Bonilla and my researcher from loan University and I'm going to ask you some questions about how you use social media and what are the factors that influence you to use social media in your academic environment so first of all I just want to mention some conditions this interview will be recorded and it there will be it will be produced a transcription but all the interview will be anonymous so we just try to not mention your name in order to keep it that way and also this interview is voluntary so you can stop it at any time if you feel uncomfortable weekend you can cancel it and yeah we'll be ready anonymous in any way so please tell me are you a student?

2. Student: Yes from Lund University

3. Pedro: You study in Lund University and what program do you belong to?

4. Student: Bachelor in International Development

5. Pedro: Okay perfect and what is your age?

6. Student: I'm 22

7. Pedro: Perfect... now please tell me what what do you think the social media?

8. Student: um social media I would say for instance I guess the most common examples are Facebook and Twitter Instagram... places where people can interact on the Internet for instance when there is an interaction between a number people and which is not in the physical world but on the Internet... I would say

9. Pedro: Okay, perfect, and they tell me do you use social media in your group work?
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

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29 Student: Yeah we usually do obviously connect with each other through for instance Facebook

30 and come up with the ideas when we should meet and what we should have done by that

31 date like for instance everybody should have read until chapter 5

32 up and we decide location and we I guess you can say that we arranged like everything through

33 social media

34

35 Pedro: It's like... to coordinate

36

37 Student: Yeah I've got you to coordinate the group work in that sense

38

39 Pedro: And you can tell me some examples of a social media that you use for the group work?

40

41 Student: Yeah Facebook for like or like Facebook Messenger for communicating we have like a

42 group chat with everybody at the group and then also yeah Facebook groups wherever I can

43 post everybody in the group can post and upload the documents for instance that we need yeah

44

45 Pedro: So you have a group... like a Facebook group or something for your master?

46

47 Student: Bachelor

48

49 Pedro: Ah, sorry for your bachelor...

50

51 Student: So we have a first up we have like a complete group with all the students where

52 everybody can post like a general comments and stuff like that and that we also have like for

53 specific tasks while we are divided into groups we create like new groups where we discussed

54 the specification

55

56 Pedro: like mini groups or subgroups?

57

58 Student: Yeah exactly subgroups in that sense

59

60 Pedro: Perfect and then okay maybe yes you already answered it back do you use any social
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

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61 media to share your academic content?

62

63 Student: Ah, yeah so for instance if the if the lecturer tells us to read this and this article and it

64 can sometimes be like hard to find in the library web research thing so often one of us finds it

65 and then just post a link or upload documents to purchase a Facebook group so we share the

66 documents through that group

67

68 Pedro: Perfect and they do you think social media can engage you more in your studies?

69

70 Student: I think so because it can make you talk more and interact more with other students...

71 Hmm... I guess there is also always a risk that you'd like drift off when you're on Facebook is you're supposed to study and go on to your group on Facebook but you end up scrolling down there to see other events going on but overall the I do you think it helps that you can communicate and interact with the other students

72

73 Pedro: Ok yeah it might be like a distraction, right?

74

75 Student: Yeah yeah it can be... can be

76

77 Pedro: And do you think social media can be a useful source of information for your studies for example?

78

79 Student: Um I'm not really sure because like in social media that there is so much so much information on social media and none of it is really like checked or reviewed or anything people cannot upload just whatever they want to but I guess it also depends on what you're what you're researching if you if you want to discover what people are sharing on Facebook for instance come with there will be greats like tons of information available that if you want to look into like a specific topic topic development in rural Bangladesh or whatever it can be that I'm not sure that Facebook is the best source for that for that topic... then you have to rely more on like academic journals and articles
Pedro: Okay and then if you find something in the social media how can you trust the information? how can you select what to trust and what to dismiss?

Student: Yeah that's always hard I guess you have to do some work yourself and double check basically if someone posts something some information that you that you feel like oh this sounds a little bit weird so perhaps this isn't true I guess most often the case is that it isn't true like if you have like... Hmm... like a bad feeling about it... then often it isn't true but I guess the best thing is to double check and do some research yourself if you come across difficult information or something like that

Pedro: Okay and do you think it is possible to use social media to make your studies more pleasant?

Student: Yeah yeah definitely what do you mean pleasantly like with other students?

Pedro: Yeah like for example some people report that they use social media like a distraction while while they are studying so they can alternate between the studying and at the same time reading something interesting in social media in that way they can kind of study longer for more time without getting bored those

Student: Yeah that's true... like if you're yeah... I have done that a lot of times I think everyone else here you're sitting down reading and then then you don't feel like reading anymore so you go into some sort of social media and scroll down for a bit then as you get the energy again to store something so yeah I would say that's true

Pedro: And in do you think it is fun to study with the social media?

Student: Yeah it is fun... it is a new way of and it's also very efficient way to coordinate things because everybody checks it time and time again like and it's also it's also easier that's us because you doesn't always have to you don't always have to get together meet at the library
for example you can actually discuss things online through social media so that's awesome very
convenient if you those have a lot of time then you can just coordinate everything through
through the Internet... Hmm... in that sense it's it's more fun to use it leaves time for other stuff

Pedro: Nice... and do you think a social media it can contribute to improve your social
relationships in your class or in your academic program?

Student: Yeah I think so because the more you I guess social media allows you to interact
more
with other students and if you interact more and talk much on students and I guess you can edit
connection to them it can also be harmful in the sense that it's like it allows everyone to just sit
on for instance Facebook and don't actually meet each other in like in the real real life's so to
say... so then I guess it's a good way to actually get to know people if you're a little bit shy and
you don't dare to talk to anyone now you can perhaps... it's easier to message them and then
start up a conversation in that way so yeah it could absolutely help build those connections

Pedro: Okay this is a very similar question... do you think social media help you to develop new
social relationships in your class like for example at the beginning of your of your program
your bachelor?

Student: Yeah

Pedro: Was it helpful... social media to to meet some people to get to know new people?

Student: Yeah yeah it was absolutely... because we had like all the introductory weeks like all
the introduction weeks we had or everything basically was coordinated through a social media
like okay so when you when you want to meet up should we do something today everything was
basically coordinated with social media so it helps like when I was a new student here in Lund it
helped a lot to... to get to know people and to actually decide which places to go and yeah just
posting and as I said that we have like a general bigger class group with over class and then
in
the beginning of our program someone can post like "yeah we were planning and doing some
BBQ in some park somewhere" and then everybody who wanted to come to just like here
yeah... like that poster... or just show up so yeah in that sense it's easier to make new
connections

Pedro: Okay and do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media
impacts your your desire to use it?

Student: Yeah yeah I think sorry i don't think i would use it as much if not everybody else's it like
you are in some way or not a dependent on it in order to like because everybody else uses it to
it communicates with each other and you don't want to be left out so i guess you want to be a
part of the discussion and then you have to have a Facebook in order to yeah communicate
through the rest of the class... so...

Pedro: Yeah for example with this a Facebook group that you mentioned and like are you
couraged to use Facebook more now that before?

Student: Ah no no I don't have any of my teachers so I'm on social media

Pedro: Okay and changing a little bit the topic... you do you interact with your teachers in social
media?

Student: Ah no no I don't have any of my teachers so I'm on social media

Pedro: Okay um do you think it might help to interact with them in social media? or would you
prefer not to?
Student: I don't know it might help if you have questions perhaps about certain issues but I mean as we do now when we have questions about a certain assignment or stuff like that we usually email our teachers and that works fine... I'm not sure if you want to if you want to have your teachers to be able to see everything that you do or uploaded or right after this on social media... no... yeah

Pedro: It's kind of better to keep it... separated?

Student: Yeah yeah it's I guess it also has to do a little bit with privacy but you don't want your teachers to know everything about you

Pedro: Okay and but... do your teachers share educational material on on social media? On Twitter or something?

Student: No no and I am never I have never found any teacher on social media... they never mention it at all actually... so know they don't

Pedro: And what about your department do they share news or important information on social media?

Student: Oh yeah I think they have a Facebook page which people can like and then they share news or like link to interest articles or for new thesis from master students and stuff like that but I don't I don't think they upload any important information I just think they share interesting...

Pedro: But for example you you don't use it that much...

Student: No no whenever I come across it I might look at whatever they sharing but I wouldn't say I go in there and check every day like what they share or upload... no

Pedro: Okay and do you think that some characteristics of social media make them more attractive than other tools like a for example you said you mentioned that you use email right to
contact your teachers, but it is the only way that you have or you have like a platform or website

where teachers put the content?

Student: Yeah Live@Lund if you are familiar with that... like the educational platform but i think

the social media is goods in that regards that it's more personal than email like email is very this

right blah blah blah blah you send it but social media then you have to what you send is also dependent on what profile you have on your profile picture and whatever information about yourselves out there so email is better i would say when communicating with the teacher because it's slightly more like anonymous in that sense and perhaps you don't want your teachers to know everything about you and you and your background so...

Pedro: And regarding the communication between students for example it do you think that some characteristics of social media are better than Live@Lund or email?

Student: Yeah yeah I think there are some communication tools through Live@Lund but I've never used them myself I think you can like message people on Live@Lund that have never used it because we we instantly go to Facebook like... communicating between students for instance and... perhaps that's just like an old habit that you don't think about it to just do it you just go directly to Facebook but i will say it's better for communicating through the students...

Pedro: And do you think it has something to do with a familiarity and the fact that people are more familiar with Facebook than Live@Lund, for example?

Student: Yeah definitely... yeah Live@Lund is a... I mean first of all it's already a confusing website I'm still having a hard time finding every document and which site everything is uploaded oh yeah yeah I has a lot to do with familiarity

Pedro: Ok and what about with the fact that Live@Lund... I think they don't have an app, right? like an application?

Student: Oh yeah yeah
Pedro: For example have you tried to use Live@Lund from your phone?

Student: I think I have to I have tried it sometimes but that's just like build further the point that Live@Lund it is not really good to for interaction it might be good for... Hmm... getting a document that teachers uploaded on the schedule but in terms of interaction... Hmm... no I never use it... I don't think it built for it that way

Pedro: Ok and then... ok and I just have one final question for you may be is very open saying what other ways do you think social media can contribute to your studies? Can you think of any in any other way?

Student: Yeah it can contribute to getting to know people that you didn't know before it can it can also it can help you learn things that you don't understand so well because if you have an interaction with another student's he or she can help you to understand if you are messaging between each other for instance like students helping out each other more that can contribute... it can also contribute to like easier access as i said before like instead of everyone searching to find a very hard document on the library web page then... instead someone can find it and then upload it through the social media so everyone has easier access to it

Pedro: Okay and for example you think it is very useful that social media have like instant notifications like someone shared something you get a message instantly?

Student: Yeah that could be... that's good in some sense, but can also be pretty annoying like... Hmm... I don't want to get a notification about everything so i think i will... on my phone for instance i think I'm like turned off several applications like twitter or Instagram which I don't want any notification from them I just... I just want to check them when i want to but it feels like I have left I have to leave Facebook notifications on because there is a lot of important information very
for example now when we have a group project someone could write something important that 
we all have to be concerned about look at and that we do have to react to that immediately 
so yeah instant notifications are good in some sense but they can also be annoying 

Pedro: So when it's related to... to your studies say you prefer to leave their notifications on, 
right?

Student: Yeah yeah I do... 

Pedro: And yeah... it's... because it's important information like let's say that they publish some 
grades that you were waiting for... 

Student: Yeah exactly 

Pedro: So people notify others like "oh we now we have the grades" 

Student: Yeah exactly and that actually happened today as well like they uploaded some grades 
and someone wrote a post like the teacher wrote a post on Live@Lund and then some students 
found found out about it and I'm posted instantly in the Facebook group like all the grades are up 
and then like in that way everybody else could go and check.. so yeah... 

Pedro: And do you get notifications with Live@Lund? 

Student: No i don't think so no I don't I'm not sure if there is a... if there is a function for that at all 

Pedro: So you will always have to I go to Live@Lund and check if there's anything new... like 
every day or... 

Student: Yeah, exactly which is that's a downside I would say of Live@Lund, because after they 
do post important information and you don't and you have to call in and check everyday 
manually yourself in order to see if they uploaded anything... so in that sense... it's good that
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

| 303 | other students perhaps find out and then share it with all the other students through social media |
| 304 | |
| 305 | |
| 306 | Pedro: And when you check Live@Lund is there there is a place where you can check all the subjects of all the courses on the same place or you have to check every every course to see if there's anything new? |
| 307 | |
| 308 | |
| 309 | |
| 310 | Student: Yeah I recently found out about it that is something called "a feed" or something like that on Live@Lund... I didn't know about that earlier previously I just have to go into every course and check for new announcements and scroll down and set for updates and blah blah but you someone showed me a few days ago that there was a button called "Feed" and they can see all the events so i think i would use that at the future |
| 311 | |
| 312 | |
| 313 | |
| 314 | |
| 315 | |
| 316 | Pedro: Yeah, it's useful after you realize I guess that that function exists... |
| 317 | |
| 318 | Student: Hehe...yeah yeah I'm gonna use that... for now... |
| 319 | |
| 320 | Pedro: And okay i think we are done by now... so we are going to transcribe this interview and we will send it to you just for you to check if you want to add or remove something... like if you consider that you can remove something and... yeah I will just write to you if maybe I forgot some small detail and i will write if I need something some information so thank you very much for participating this study and good luck with your studies |
| 321 | |
| 322 | |
| 323 | |
| 324 | |
| 325 | |
| 326 | Student: Yeah, thanks |
| 327 | |
| 328 | |
## Interview 6 (I6)

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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Present:</td>
<td>Pedro Bonilla and the interviewee</td>
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<td>Pedro Bonilla</td>
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1. Pedro: okay hello I'm Pedro Bonilla and I'm a researcher from Lund University and I'm going to ask you some questions about how you use social media and what are the factors that influence you to use it on the for academic purposes

2. Student: okay

3. Pedro: so first of all and I'm going to tell you some conditions like the interview will be recorded

4. and will be analyzed but it would be anonymous so you try to not mention your name

5. Student: yeah do it and

6. Pedro: if you feel in any moment that the interview is no right or you are not comfortable you can stop it at any moment

7. Student: yeah

8. Pedro: like you are here a voluntary and him yeah your name will would not be discussed so first of all him are you a student?

9. Student: yeah, I'm a student

10. Pedro: what is your age?

11. Student: I'm 24

12. Pedro: And what is your current level of study?
Student: master

Pedro: okay your study...

Student: in a 2-year master yeah

Pedro: okay and before your master why what did you study?

Student: Before my master I studied Mechatronics engineering and physics

Pedro: okay and right now what academic program do you belong to?

Student: The complete name ok the complete name is biological physics and computational biology

Pedro: okay why do you think a is social media for you?

Student: It's a medium... a way to interact virtually with some other people... yeah I guess

Pedro: okay can you give me like some examples of social media?

Student: Facebook, what else... Twitter... I have discovered... if you use it wisely is very interesting... what is the name... Instagram.. you know... I mean if you don't follow people for only posts and pictures of their cats, for example, following like NASA, researchers and scientists, they publish very interesting information there. Those kind of social media.

Pedro: ok nice and do you use social media when you have group work?

Student: Yes, unfortunately yes

Pedro: okay what social media do you use?

Student: Mostly Facebook or WhatsApp it depends on what they decide... it's up to... it's up to what people feel more comfortable with.

Pedro: Okay
Student: Recently, I'm also using a new one named "Slack" which is more for "team work" and that kind. It's different. I mean yes kind of related with the school that's also another one that I'm just discovering.

Pedro: what can you do in this network?

Student: Slack?, it’s... let’s say... like any other network I mean you can also have a chat, group chats, and depending if you are that project with a partner or we took another few people and then you can make a group specific for that but you also have your general group so it's very useful in that way and the good thing about that is not as annoying as Facebook you know because at some point you can establish the time when you are available you know so then you won't get notifications away from this hours and if you say that you are available from nine to from nine in the morning to six in the afternoon you will only get notifications during that period of time and apart from that you won't get anything until the next day when you log in again

Pedro: that's very... convenient

Student: Yeah well I mean yeah because sometimes when it's work and work you have your Facebook chat and it's 24 convenient

Pedro: And do you use social media to share academic?... like I know people uses more pictures but...

Student: yeah, well, I mean for pictures... yes but... what do you mean by academic content?

Pedro: let' say for example you find an interesting article and you want to share with your colleagues

Student: yeah I actually that’s something I would like to have like you know like a Facebook
without pictures of the people's cat or without the dinner they had last time, because you know

when you are following or if you have like your group of friends and you know that these people

have like interesting ideas and then you would like to know only their ideas not their life
then

that will be very interesting but just sometimes I shared that on Facebook because you know it's

the main social Facebook yeah

Pedro: and also if for example the teacher published the grades, you can notify other people there or?

Student: what do you mean? in Facebook? Or Where?

Pedro: Yeah

Student: well, yeah it depends... I mean haven't find any teacher who has used his/her Facebook account for this kind of stuff. I mean that here they are very respectful in that way that

Facebook at least for them means like a amusement or not work-related social media at least...

at least... from the side of the professors on the side the of the students well we yes of course

we use that social network to interact but I really appreciate because otherwise I wouldn't like to

have like my professors in my Facebook account.

Pedro: yeah, you're right, like for privacy

Student: Yeah, exactly like ‘oh I see why you didn't deliver the last report because you were

partying yesterday now you don't have any permission to hand in later’. No, definitely I wouldn't

like to have my teachers or my professors in my personal social media

Pedro: That's interesting I will come back to that topic a little bit later... and do you think social

media can engage you more in your studies?

Student: Yeah, well, to be honest, I before that... yes... before what can I say? 2000-
something... 2013... maybe I didn't like to use my social media too often. I actually still don't like to use it very much, but the thing at some point some professors started to create groups you know in Facebook and they started to put there for example the homeworks... or even some last minute advertisement they used to make it on Facebook so that's why I started to use more Facebook because all the information of the homeworks were there, but in general that was the reason why I started to do so I yes then... it was related with academic stuff.. and yes...

Pedro: Okay so so before you didn't use too much Facebook, but now you use it because a lot of content or?

Student: Yes, a lot of content at least in this moment not from part of the professor but just from my schoolmates from my classmates... yes... so that's I why... otherwise I think wouldn't use it that much sometimes I would like to just turn off all my social media, but the problem is that "oh yes we have to meet for example I have my group for my class" what was the name of this class? "Chaos science and technology"... and yes we arrange the meeting like "oh we have tomorrow to meet to solve the problem from biophysics" "yes we have to go to the lab to do this experiment" something like that, so we arrange everything by Facebook, but then that's why I have to be like... that's why I need actually to have it installed on my mobile because otherwise I think I would only use it maybe once a day and that's all, but... when it's something school-related then I have to be like more attentive to... put more... have more attention on it...

know.

Pedro: okay that's interesting and do you think social media can be a useful source I was a useful source of information for your studies?

Student: Yes I think so but... the problem is there's not like a social network for that.. well maybe there is and still I haven't found it.. or maybe you can... how can I say?... to restrict your
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

153  personal social media... well... your account... whatever you use maybe Facebook or Twitter to
154  only have this kind of academic connections but otherwise... well... then you will receive
155  notifications from the others people's likes
156
157  Pedro: okay and then have you tried to use social media for example to solve exams together...
158  like if you have... sometimes you have a assignments or exams?
159
160  Student: You mean legally, isn't it? not cheating... solving exams together
161
162  Pedro: yeah, like in a legal way
163
164  Student: In a legal way... but anyway I think in both cases my response would be no... but let
165  me think.. not exams, but maybe to... you know... for homeworks or projects or that kind of stuff
166
167  Pedro: okay... Hmm... do you think it is possible to use social media to make your studies more
168  pleasant... like... more enjoyable in any way?
169
170  Student: Yes, I think there must be a way to do that, I mean... right now for example...
171  Live@Lund... social media or social network, platform whatever... that almost nobody use it... at
172  least I don't use it and my classmates I think they also don't use it because most of the stuff we
173  solve it by Facebook or WhatsApp... but social media would be a very good way... I mean if
174  there would be like an specialized media for that I think that would be useful I guess.
175
176  Pedro: okay and do you think it is fun to study with social media?
177
178  Student: What do you mean by fun or what exactly...?
179
180  Pedro: like for example some people use social media as a distraction like they study and at the
181  same they are reading something in the social media... so they alternate?
182
183  Student: Well, yes, I mean It would be funny, but on the other hand, you would also get
184  distracted... for example that was what I was telling you as well... that I started to use this...
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<td>185</td>
<td>what's the name of this thing? Instagram... and for example I have in here some for example</td>
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<td>National Geographic or Discovery Channel or the European Space Agency or the NASA... I</td>
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<td>mean the good thing is that in this case I restrict my media to only have like information that I</td>
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<td>really wanted to have so they publish pictures and news and that kind of stuff... science-related... then I get very interesting stuff here... but if I would be starting to follow like for example... well... my friends yes my friends that post everything there maybe it wouldn't be that interesting... or maybe it would be like the rest of the other social media you know like Facebook</td>
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<td>that they post everything of their lives or everything that came to their minds... and sometimes is not very interesting, but I think yes to have something like that... look at this...</td>
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<td>190</td>
<td>Student: No, I don't mean I'm not subscribed... yes I'm a subscriber, but I mean they share what they are doing or what it's being developed... whatever so that's interesting... well... yeah</td>
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<td>191</td>
<td>Pedro: Ok nice... so you are more interested in the social media where you subscribe to content?</td>
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<td>192</td>
<td>Student: I have never think about it... well, at least... no... maybe if you have like his number, her number or you have his Facebook her Facebook then if you have some questions in a class that you are sharing but in other way I don't see how this could be improved you know yeah you are always in the classroom and if you don't hang out with them I don't think the social media will change something... at least that's what I think... Hehe</td>
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<td>193</td>
<td>Pedro: Sure and do you think social media help you to develop new relationships in the in your class or in your academic program?</td>
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Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

| Page 214 | Student: I think it's the same... related as the previous question... I mean it depends on how you use your social media I mean if you only use this virtual social network only to interact with people that you already know in the real life (not in the virtual one) but in the real life then there would be no difference because then you would be only interacting with the people that you already interact but if you are using your social network your virtual social network to find connections or to find people with shared interests and yes by sure you will find some other people but that depends on how you do it |
| Page 222 | Pedro: For example at the beginning of your master yeah what is helpful to use social media like... to get to know? |
| Page 225 | Student: Yes I think it was very useful in the sense but not in the academic way you know it was more in the social way to know what was happening around like what was going to be the events of this week and the you can join and meet people there and whatever... when you are new in a city then you need to find activities and in that case yes having this kind of social media helps a lot... it makes things much more easier |
| Page 231 | Pedro: Yes... and... do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media impacts your you're the type to use it here more motivated to use it because everyone is using? |
| Page 234 | Student: No, not really... to be honest... in my case... I'm not that addicted to that kind of networks, so... in my last discovery of social media I'm restricting the people who I'm following or the content that I'm following... even there are some friends that I have there but I don't want to know anything about their lives and I'm just following things or topics that interests me so... I don't so that if a lot of people is in there I would follow them... only if it has something like yes it has something different to the all other social media that exist now maybe... otherwise I think I...
Pedro: Okay and let's say that in someone created a group in Facebook for your master or yeah come on is sharing important information about the master... I don't know your grades, your exams or notifications from teachers. I don't know... do you think that will motivate you?

Student: Yeah, of course, it will motivate me because it's a course and I'm taking it so it's something that I choose to do. If all the information from that course is there, sure I will follow that.

Pedro: Perfect

Student: But it's because I'm enrolled in that course not because I want to follow them... you know... it's because of the content but not because of the person.

Pedro: Ah, okay, it's about the... yeah... the information...

Student: Exactly if they are sharing information about my class in that group of course I would join that group, but I mean... otherwise I think that wouldn't follow them. I mean if my friends from the university are joining a new social network and I don't know what's going on there... or what exactly they are doing there and I find that is not interesting then maybe I won't follow them. That's the thing that I won't join that network just because they are there. Only if the information that they are sharing there is interesting, then I would follow them, but just because they are present, no.

Pedro: Okay it's all about if the information is relevant to you...

Student: Yeah, maybe they are sharing their pictures from the last holidays or the pictures from the last party and that's the only thing they are doing. That new social network maybe I won't, so that's what I'm telling you it depends on the content.
Pedro: Ok and now coming back to the question of the teachers in do you interact with your teachers in social media in any way?

Student: No, hopefully no. I think for that kind of interaction the email is enough. At least for me.

If I really need to meet with them go to their office and talk to them, but maybe in a not very personal social network like Facebook, because nobody would like to have their boss or your professors there. Only if you really came along with them in a really good way, otherwise I think no. I mean you would really need to be the friend of your professor in order to you wanting to have him in your personal social media. And I think they also wouldn't like to have their social life showed to their students. I really like that there is this you know kind of separation that the email is not very personal it is impersonal you know share the information that you want in the words in the email and that's all nothing else and cannot also see who or what else you are doing. Only the exact amount of information that you need, so the email is cool for me.

Pedro: It's kind of good to have it separated...

Student: Exactly, yes, it's good to have it separated...

Pedro: Your academic life and...

Student: Your social life... into different strands...

Pedro: And in your program, have your teachers sometime shared educational material on social media?

Student: No, I don't follow them. Well, I don't follow or I don't have my actual professors right now, but for example some professors some teachers from my bachelor I actually have them on my social media, but that's because they... I really come along with them... you know... so I actually they some time they share very interesting information I actually I think that is the kind
of people that I would like to have only in my social media, because when they post something
or they publish something it's interesting information it's related with science it's related with
what interests me and it's interesting for them, so then in that case, I think that yes it's nice, but
ty they are not anymore professors so I don't have any problem with them, because they don't...
you know... we are separate. They can be part of my social life because they are not anymore
my superiors they don't give me grades anymore, so that's why. I like that.

Pedro: Right now they are like on the same level, let's say...
Student: Yeah, right now I'm not his student and they are not my professors. Right now they are... they could be... they were my professors. It could be said that we are more like friend than student-professors, but I mean... that's now... in that moment, I wouldn't say the same thing.

Pedro: And does your department or your school's share news or information on social media?
Student: Yes, they do... my department I don't know, but at least the university they do and sometimes it's interesting information

Pedro: Do you think it's useful what they share?
Student: Yeah, I think so. They are the ones who or the kind of pages that publish useful information.

Pedro: Have they tried to do polls or survey through social media?
Student: No, you mean my department? I don't think so, no, the poll are mostly used by my classmates or by friends in the groups of a class or a project, but for some kind of like a bigger authority like the official websites from my department, no, they haven't
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

Pedro: And do they have they tried to like foster discussions on Facebook or any other media...

Student: No, not really... it's mostly like news or information that student are needed to know,

you know, "the next week is the last week to sign up for the new courses" or something like that

or "this building will be closed for this week because we are making some preparations" so that

type of information. It's easier to reach them by the social networks than...

Pedro: Ok, and where do your teachers share the educational material about the course like the

slides?

Student: Well, depends... most of them they do it on Live@Lund or the official site of the course

Pedro: okay so you have two places?

Student: Yeah, exactly, sometimes it's even in both. You know they post it in Live@Lund and in

the official website. So it's the same thing I guess because I think Live@Lund is also like the not

the official or the unofficial... it's kind of a website for that course. Yes, now I remember another

one another social network "Piazza" that's another one that one of my teachers uses to share all

the content of the course.

Pedro: Ok that's more for academic...?

Student: Yeah, that's also for academic... actually I haven't use it too much... maybe it has the

thing that I'm looking for... but I don't think so

Pedro: Okay and do you think that some characteristics of social media make them like more

attractive than other tools? like...

Student: What you mean?
Pedro: Yeah for example you mentioned that you have Live@Lund which is the institutional system and also the web page of the course, but why why students kind of prefer to use social media sometimes?

Student: Facebook... because you have the app I guess and then you can have all the notifications in your mobile, but I don't know if Live@Lund has this kind of application or mobile application. Maybe that's the reason, otherwise I have no idea... in my case is because nobody shares anything there, so... I mean there's only some information so I only go there and go out when I need and if I need to discuss something with my classmates or my teammates I do it by the social media they prefer, but yeah that's one of the reasons why they don't use it because there's no like an official app or something that you can download into your mobile.

Pedro: so it's kind of uncomfortable to use Live@Lund in your phone for example, right?

Student: Yeah, I think so

Pedro: instead, social media have like applications

Student: For everything, I mean... most of the social media is from apps... I'm trying to think about one social media that has no app, but I think that doesn't exist, because otherwise it would have extinct so long ago.

Pedro: and do you think the fact that people are more familiar with Facebook or other social media like motivates them to use social media instead of Live@Lund for example?

Student: Yeah, I guess I mean you spend more time in Facebook than in any other social network most of the people do that so that's why they rather to use social network that they already know, they don't have to learn anything new maybe that's the reason. And they are not forced to, you know, because I mean if you already have all this facilities in one social network
then why would you change to another one. I mean, the professors are not forcing you to use these, the facilities that has Facebook I mean it's good enough for its purposes. There's no... I mean... so maybe that's the reason why nobody goes through another social network, because this one has already what people need. In case that, in some point, there will be like a new requirement or something new that the people requires and it's not in Facebook they maybe they will start to change to another social network where they can have this thing or where this new social network can offer this, otherwise I don't that they will change, you know. If they are not forced, of course, you can force them. If you force them, they will change too.

Pedro: Okay and so to finish with that topic, in your opinion, do you prefer to use social media to support your studies instead of Live@Lund?

Student: Well, as I have already told you, from Live@Lund I get all the information, the official information for the courses, for exams, for the lectures for the homeworks or whatever, but I mean it's also not that I'm using the other social media like very frequently to solve my academic duties. It's more like a way to arrange meetings with my teammates and then do all the work that we have to do but it's not exactly the place where we are solving these issues. It's the way that we find to meet up and then do what we have to do but not the place where solve all the things.

Pedro: Okay because in Live@Lund you know that there is a discussion board you know so you can post things there but...

Student: Well, maybe it's because I haven't used that much but I don't know well. Maybe you know this network better than me. You also have like the possibility to create personal groups I mean for example if your are doing teamwork and it's only three of you, then you want to
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

415 discuss only with these three people then you don't want to discuss... or to have a public
discussion about it, so I don't know if Live@Lund has this facility.

418 Pedro: I think you can post like public topics...

420 Student: Yeah, that's a reason, because you can only post public discussion or public
questions, but sometimes you want to say ‘hey, do you have time tomorrow at three or
tomorrow

422 after lunch to meet up and solve this thing’ yes sometimes that's what you want, so maybe
that's

423 something that is "lack of" in Live@Lund

425 Pedro: Okay i have a final question for you... in what other ways do you think social media
contribute to your studies? this is more like a very open question...

428 Student: On one hand, it's this tool for arranging meetings. Maybe mostly the main issue
for the

429 social media related to our studies, but on the other hand, it's that depends on how you use
social media you can very useful information. For example, it's very funny when you
restrict your

431 social network to interesting information I was reading last time from this social media
one

432 discovery about a moon in Saturn that, well, I mean... of course they have discovered kind
of a

433 volcanic activity on their very deep eye layer around the planet, but I mean... that's
something

434 that "oh that's very interesting" and if I would also have that kind of information related
more

435 specific to my studies that would be nice, but the problem is that you have... you have the
social

436 media that exists right now if you want to use in that kind of way you have to restrict it in
that

437 way, so you don't have to follow people who posts information that is in this case not
interesting

438 for you. You have to restrict yourself only to what it's interesting.

440 Pedro: So it's kind of flexible...

442 Student: Yeah, I mean that's the thing that is flexible. You can use it only for academic
purposes

443 or for how can I say? science not exactly related to what you are studying, but some kind
of of
Pedro: Do you think social media it's friendly?

Student: Yeah, it depends on which one, but most of them are friendly

Pedro: At least more friendly than for example Live@Lund or?

Student: Yeah, at least more friendly than Live@Lund or for example if you take the last number.

Pedro: Okay yeah I think we are done by now

Student: Ok, cool

Pedro: So thank you very much for your participation in this study hey I will send you the transcription of this interview you just for you if you want to add or remove some part

Student: Ok

Pedro: You can do it but the transcription will be anonymous, so I think you don't have to worry,

Student: You're welcome
Interview 7 (I7)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>2017-04-17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present:</td>
<td>Mohammed Osman and the interviewee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview format:</td>
<td>In-person</td>
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<td>Interview duration:</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcribed by:</td>
<td>Mohammed Osman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcription date:</td>
<td>2017-04-18</td>
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1. M: okay my name is Mohammed Osman i am a student at information system masters doing research in

2. academic usage of social media first of all I would like to thank you for your time and collaboration and I

3. would like to ask you for your permission to record this interview

4. X: ok

5. M: just to comply with the scientific research standards the collected data during the interview will be

6. treated as confidential data and your identity will not be recognized

7. X: ok

8. M: so let's just start can you tell me about yourself, are you a student?

9. X: yes my name is XX 26

10. change

11. M: ok so for you what is social media when I say social media what do you think of?

12. X: I think social media is a platform where you can talk with your friends your family it's kind of like a

13. getaway or like on a tool to be connected with people from all around the world whether your friends or

14. whether people that we would like to know I mean right kind of broad like it depends how you use

15. M: it okay you know certain of applications or do you think of this certain applications when I say social media?

16. X: yeah of course when you say social media I think of Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp all the, you

17. know application within our that we use on our daily basis within our phone and and somehow became

18. actually it kind of became the alternative for you know usual texting we don't even think about texting

19. anymore

20. 
M: ok yeah I see okay if we drift into academics do you use social media for an academic work if yes can you elaborate and give me some examples?

X: yeah I mean for me here during my experience here I found a lot of people prefer contacting through Facebook for assignment for example I usually like a usual when I'm doing an assignment I said just to connect through email but I found a lot of people prefer to do it through a messenger Facebook or WhatsApp and for them they said it might be easier to do that because they don't check their email regularly so it might be easier to just connect and talk on Facebook or WhatsApp and it makes makes it easier to say hey I'm done with this part even send documents within the Facebook ah

M: ok so I see ok and yes what about sharing academic content?

X: um yeah I mean I'm not sure like sharing academic like I would say there's a lot of articles and there's a lot of material and I'm Facebook and I can see that definitely for example there are a lot of people who share scholarship web pages or articles about Business Insider's and so forth so there's definitely a trend to share everything like it's not just educational but everything you find and you find interesting people

M: ok that's good regarding engagement in your studies do you think social media makes you more engaged to your studies?

X: not really or it's distracting?

X: it's distracting for sure I mean I mean it's nice that you can get hold of people easily through social media usually require more fast maybe then an email but I think when you get when you get into that platform and you use for example Facebook for you know discussing an assignment you end up somehow distracted by the homepage and you read what your friend said or so it becomes like you're not really focusing on your you're doing the communication with your mat with your friend at the same time you're doing your assignment of the other people so it's kind of distracting I would have preferred
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

> to have it on a mail email kind of form to do or like a Google Drive or where we can write and do stuff

> instead of because I feel like it's more professional if you know what I mean

> M: yeah I got you I got you yeah that's cool okay do you think social media could be a useful source of

> information?

> X: definitely I think there's a lot of people who do not like who do not like look at other sources of

> information so i think everyone now or at least there's a lot of people using Facebook and there's a lot of

> people depend on Facebook on the news and what's happening in the world what's happening in

> academic field or whatever so i think definitely it's bringing more people to read more and more than

> the other types of newspapers or like I don't know magazines

> M: ok or maybe job posts?

> X: exactly

> M: ok ok um coming to the point that the social media may distract you during your studies isn't making

> your studies more pleasant that way?

> X: using it?

> M: yeah

> X: no i mean because i don't see a different like if I'm contacting if we're using let's say Facebook to

> communicate about or discuss something I mean it's discussion I mean either you hate your work or like

> it I don't think being it on on a messenger on Facebook would make it more pleasant its work

> M: ok ok so you don't think it's really funny?

> X: I mean for me I want to be honest I don't um I think it's easier to connect through messenger because

> it's kind of like in terms of times you kind of save time because then like you read you reply you read

> reply whether whereas if you're using an email then it takes a longer time to just coordinate the work so

> in a way it's much easier to use social media to coordinate with each other because most people from

> our generation use it but at the same time like for me it's just it's kind of sometimes distracting to be

> honest especially if you have 10

> aspects does not really concern you but then you find that you're getting notifications about it so it's
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes  

Bonilla & Osman

kind of waste your time thank you you're reading stuff that might not concern you as well

M: okay okay yeah so coming to your relationships with your classmates do you think social media

contributes to improving your relationships?

X: I don't know I mean to be honest I think it's more about showing who you are or show it like or it it

depends i mean would it say to contribute to my own but in what way what do you mean like contribute

to my relation?

M: I mean does it make you to getting to know more your friends?

X: I guess so I mean if I'm allowed to say I guess the way they talk about their life or the way they post

what's happening in our lives it kind of gives you a glimpse of who they are as a person and I guess if you

for example if you only know me just ah like talk to me once and then you see me post something about

my life or about my what I kind of think that I like and then you say hey this is a new part of X didn't

know so i guess in some way it shows it shows you a little bit of what's happening in people's life and

you could have it could be someone that you don't like and all of a sudden you find something that's

really interesting about him or her and then you say hey this is person is really interesting so i think in a

way it's kind of gives you more about the person than the first impression that you have of them or if

you don't know them so in a way i would say yes and in a way of saying no because it could be negative

as well

M: okay interesting okay ah ok that's regarding your current relationships what do you think about expanding the relationships does it help you to expand your relationships to get to know new people?

X: i guess for sure i mean i don't add people i don't know that's one thing because at this point i think

you only you only have energy for the people you know but the same time I feel like you I find someone

interesting once and I find that I really would like to communicate or to get to know them more I was at

just hey i would add you on Facebook in that way i will make sure that i can access them otherwise i will
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

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just meet someone for once and say hey I'm just really interesting person but i but i don't know how can

i get connected with him because I don't have the email or I don't have anything it's nothing is the easier

way to just keep the people that you find interesting and you want to get to know more so I think
definitely yes for that

M: okay okay interesting okay do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media
that's why you are using it?

X: not at all I mean for me uh I usually only use like social media to share videos or to share maybe
articles and I'm not like that's what I say like very active on that aspect now I'm not like I haven't been
even using Facebook since I came here to Sweden but since I'm living here I find myself using it more and
more because I have nothing else to do but i wouldn't say I'm using it because everyone is using I'm
using it for my own enjoyment I'm using it to kill time I'm using it to know what's happening with
everyone

M: okay interesting fair enough okay if we come to academics do you interact with your teachers with
social media?

X: oh no you ok but I had a couple of my clients added me on Facebook and I found that very weird feels
like in essentially because usually you use it on a social platform and all of a sudden all my work is
coming off a okay so yeah it was weird so I would say it was not like educational but at least it's on a
professional level if you can connect them

M: ok ok interesting do you think that would be useful if you can contact your teachers in social media?

X: ah it depends on how they see it because some people might find it I am intruding to their personal
life i would definitely wouldn't want them to think that way it depends on how much I know them like if
I'm not crossing the line and just involving myself up because the thing is people use sometimes people
use Facebook on a very personal level and they use it only to connect with their family or friends so if I'm
if I'm if I have 100
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

space or if you know what I mean

M: yeah

X: so for me I would never like add any of my teachers because that would mean it's like I don't know I feel like in a sense it's kind of unprofessional for me to just intrude in their personal life okay so i would add them on a professional network such as LinkedIn or any kind of network that we would have something that in common but i wouldn't just add them on Facebook

M: okay interesting very interesting so what do you think if we assume that your teachers use social media if they share educational material for you would it be useful in that case?

X: I guess so yeah sure I mean like I said it depends on the boundaries that they do like they put she's like I wouldn't mind like for me I don't mind having them as friends on Facebook but then again it's also about respecting their boundaries if that's ok with them if they like having their if I'm like his favorite student and he wants to have me on or she wants to have me on her Facebook for it I don't mind we depend on them ok or me I wouldn't be comfortable just like connecting on a social media with them ok it's realize yeah they might share something interesting but

M: ok if we come to the department level does your development share some information in Facebook?

X: well I haven't been following up with their page actually?

M: interesting and do you think it would be useful they do?

X: you um maybe it would be but to be honest I think there's a lot of stuff shared Facebook that I would I wouldn't say exactly it would make it would be significant I would you know it for me it wouldn't be significant because every because every now going to help like 10 me I wouldn't be just like say oh they publish something really interesting I might as well write it because there's a lot of pages that are people come following and there I might find them more interesting so for me I would say it might be distracting maybe if they have if we have an email when we get to is connected to the University email and if they have a page with the news that might be more focused and less distracting maybe but I would not say would be helpful if I see it in social media
<p>| 143 | M: yeah okay interesting that's very interesting okay what do you think the characteristics that make |
| 144 | social media i would say attractive for your academic you that you said that you are using Google drive |
| 145 | you are using WhatsApp up why? |
| 146 | X: um i guess when it comes to how we connect with our phones that becomes more like people are now |
| 147 | more close to their phone and that's the first thing that you think of when you go out is to take your |
| 148 | phone so if i have a phone and if it's Internet connected then for me if i use like Facebook and i have all |
| 149 | the people in my class have Facebook accounts then it makes sense for me for the inland if i have them |
| 150 | in urgent or if we're working on something and I need their feedback immediately then the easiest way |
| 151 | if I know they're all connected and I can see them online like for example you can check that chat and |
| 152 | you can see 25 email and hope for them to read it and then come back to you ok so i think in a way it's easier less time |
| 153 | spent on conversation and also getting responses and are easy to share as long as you have them friends |
| 154 | on Facebook yeah educational what other? |
| 155 | M: okay ah if you compare it to live at length learning platform okay why don't you do the things you do |
| 156 | in Live@Lund you have discussion portals in Live@Lund? |
| 157 | X: we don't use it at all yeah |
| 158 | M: yeah why do you use social media instead |
| 159 | X: I guess because it's more I don't know I mean it's more cozy I mean Live@Lund I feel that we use it |
| 160 | mainly to just see the schedule and see the articles and so forth but I think um I guess people are more |
| 161 | comfortable in their own space if you know what I mean because if you have the discussion if you see |
| 162 | the discussion at Live@Lund i everyone can see it everyone you can say something and everyone can |
| 163 | see it but I guess if you're using Facebook or if you're chatting with the closed group then it might be |
| 164 | easier for you to be more comfortable |
| 165 | M: ok ok interesting ok what about aspects like maybe the mobility of the Facebook compared to usual |
| 166 | learning platforms? |</p>
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<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>X: yeah I mean I guess unfortunately people would have become so dependent on Facebook on getting</td>
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<td>169</td>
<td>information like I said like the reading articles as some of them might not be true but we keep on</td>
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<td>170</td>
<td>reading them because it's easier now with the new feeds like the most popular topics whether education</td>
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<td>or whatever they come up so people read them and then you kind of share them and everyone reads</td>
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<td>them so for from me I think Facebook is easier especially if you want to know what is up today then</td>
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<td>173</td>
<td>Facebook becomes a tool to get that access</td>
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<td>174</td>
<td>M: ok ok interesting and maybe also be the familiarity?</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>X: exactly exactly it is kind of pleasure and work has become kind of a mix like it's not really social it's</td>
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<td>176</td>
<td>everything</td>
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<td>177</td>
<td>M: ok ok interesting finally I would like to conclude what do you think other aspects that</td>
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<td>178</td>
<td>social media are contributing to your learning experience?</td>
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<td>179</td>
<td>X: from a like educational level exactly I mean for me like if I'm just looking at my experience with Lund</td>
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<td>University I think um like social media definitely contributing a lot like for example with the Lund</td>
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<td>University page there's a lot of interesting articles that day they publish for example they publish the</td>
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<td>ranking of all universities and then I get to share that and everyone even my sister she called she was</td>
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<td>like you know I I looked at what you share then I was interesting to see the kind of university I've never</td>
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<td>heard of so I think in a way there's a lot of a lot of good stuff that people might not know about it and</td>
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<td>185</td>
<td>then when you see it on Facebook and then you share it with other people people then we didn't know</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>more about it so I think in terms of just knowledge it's quite beneficial because a lot of people are on</td>
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<td>Facebook and if you're reading an article when you share it and they might read it and they might know</td>
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<td>about it they might know about Lund University and they didn't know about it before if I'm using it to</td>
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<td>189</td>
<td>connect with my life my colleague from from university from the school I might be and then I see them</td>
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<td>190</td>
<td>Oh seen so then you make sure that they seen it because you get a message that it has been seen by</td>
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<td>191</td>
<td>your friend so in a way it kind of give you less stress about if people are reading your stuff or if they're</td>
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<td>192</td>
<td>going to reply or whatever and also um there are a lot of ways yeah but mainly I guess information and</td>
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<td>193</td>
<td>knowledge mainly you get more information you get more knowledge like I don't have any kind of</td>
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<td>194</td>
<td>subscription on our educational like journal or something like that you so I guess see becomes kind of</td>
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<td>195</td>
<td>the tool like if I'm following up with the University of web page if I'm following up with any kind of like</td>
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<td>196</td>
<td>news then it becomes like the main tool for me to get access to education material or articles</td>
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<td>197</td>
<td>M: oh okay okay interesting ah this concludes our interview thank you very much for your time very</td>
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<tr>
<td>198</td>
<td>welcome</td>
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### Interview 8 (I8)

**Date:** 2017-04-18  
**Present:** Pedro Bonilla and the interviewee  
**Interview format:** Skype  
**Interview duration:** 25 minutes  
**Transcribed by:** Pedro Bonilla  
**Transcription date:** 2017-04-19

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pedro: Hello I'm a researcher from Lund University I'm Pedro Bonilla and I'm going to ask you some questions about how you use social media and what influences you to use social media for your studies</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Student: Yeah</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Pedro: So first of all I want to mention some conditions this interview will be recorded and it will be transcribed but it will be anonymous so try to know them mention your name may be in order to keep it anonymous</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Student: Okay maybe while transcribing you can erase my name</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Pedro: Yeah we can we can fix that just in case. Another thing is that this interview is voluntary going sorry so you can stop it at any time if you feel uncomfortable</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Student: Okay</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Pedro: And so first of all please tell me are you a student</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Student: Yes</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Pedro: Okay can you tell me a what is your age</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Student: I am 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pedro: Perfect and where do you study?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student: At Lund university school of economics and management

Pedro: Okay and what a what academic program do you belong to

Student: I study information systems right from our program of one year

Pedro: Okay and please tell me what do you think is social media for you?

Student: Social media is a strong tool for connecting people saying finding solutions of easiest like is the fastest way of connecting to people and gaining as much knowledge as possible

Pedro: Okay perfect and can you give me some examples of social media websites or applications?

Student: Examples? yeah, we are surrounded with everything that social media is... okay like WhatsApp, Facebook... Hmm…. Twitter and then a lot of things yeah

Pedro: Okay thank you and do you use social media when you have group work?

Student: Yeah extensively yeah

Pedro: What social media do you use for your... to work in groups?

Student: It depends some... Facebook too... sometimes Five and then sometimes to internal chat... WhatsApp... yeah any other tools that is comfortable and accepted within the team members

Pedro: Okay for example let's say Facebook... what do you use Facebook for in order to do group work?

Student: If we have some assignments or some group works during this thesis as well extensively using it to connect at any time of the day and that is... to connect with informations and people at any time yeah so...

Pedro: Okay it's kind of to arrange or to coordinate meetings, right?

Student: Yeah
Pedro: Ok and then do you use any social media to share academic content?

Student: Yes sometimes they are definitely a we do it through Skype or through Facebook... extensively we do it... all of that

Pedro: Okay... eh... what social media do you use when you want to share academic things?

Student: Oh, like me and my partner, we are extensively using a lot of Facebook, Messenger and the Skype chat options and yeah we are doing that and sometimes we use OneDrive or Evernote... yeah anything

Pedro: And why do you use? for example you mentioned Facebook... why do you use Facebook to share?

Student: And see it's accessible and we’re also acquainted with it we’re also familiar with it and yeah it is very easily like we decided that we kind of have a presence on Facebook and we are extensively is looking at it checking on messages so it makes life very easy if you use Facebook

Pedro: Okay so you are very familiar with this social network?

Student: Yeah

Pedro: Okay and do you think social media can engage you more into your studies?

Student: Oh yeah I feel so it's very cheap it's very fast and it has high presence, so I feel that the social media has really made my life easier when it comes to studies... You can share notes, you can share knowledge and you can share all these information in much faster way than it used to be, so I definitely think that social media it has really helped me again

Pedro: Perfect... and do you think social media can be a useful source of information for your studies?
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student: I definitely feel so yeah I definitely feel so considering the case of my studies I have extensively use social media and I will be using it later on as well, so I feel so</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedro: And for example you know that sometimes there are fake information or fake news in social media, right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro: How how can you trust the information how can you know if it's...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: I mean it's a lot information and it its... people and technology is evolving very fast so there is high high chances that we kind of get misled with some information but yeah I mean it's up to your conscience and you know discussion with the people and can help you it's all this kind of thing let's say I see something that is not relevant or I feel it suspicious so I can Internet is vast i mean i can i can Google it on my own or I can discuss with my friends about this, so I feel I mean everything is a pro and a con it we just... the more aware you are the more safe you are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro: Okay perfect and have you... Hmm... have you ever used social media to solve an assignment together?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Yeah yeah every time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro: Yeah it's very common for you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student: It's very common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro: Okay and do you think is possible to your social media to make your studies more pleasant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: I feel so I feel so it is absolutely possible accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro: In what ways... can you give me an example?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

Bonilla & Osman

131 Student: Important information sharing, connectivity, engaging people, no time limits and yeah

132 that way and you can work simultaneously being anywhere anytime

135 Pedro: Okay and do you think is possible to have fun with social media and... at the same time

136 study, like a some people report that they use social media as a distraction in... while they are

137 studying they also use social media to like to alternate between studying and getting some distraction from social media?

140 Student: Social media is a distraction to me but when I'm studying alone... doing something serious... I definitely do it alone and of course that's how are they how... I focus and concentrate, it has nothing to do with only social media i mean it if i have to be if i am doing something serious probably I will never see my phone or we just focus so I mean distraction is possible everywhere and anytime I can’t blame social media for the stuff

146 Pedro: Okay and do you think... I mean changing a little bit the topic do you think social media can contribute to improve your social relationships in your class or in your academic program?

149 Student: Oh, definitely, definitely, like it really does it really does it enhances the interaction... during my master program we have a social media group... all my classmates are part of it and we shared all important information sometimes lecture notes, before the lectures and stuff like that... so that is really helpful to that place is very easy if we have any problem of regarding our research... our fellows will post it on the blog and somebody among the classmates they have previous examples they definitely come forward and help so it's definitely a constructive way

156 Pedro: Okay nice and maybe a similar question but do you think social media help you to develop new new social relationships in the course?

159 Student: Of course of course like I said previously definitely does
Pedro: For example a day at the beginning of your master was it helpful to use social media to meet new people?

Student: Yeah it was definitely very nice because once we had the... like... in case of my master program once we had the list of all the 40 together we kind of made a social media groups before that before joining the class so our sessions started in August and we had a social media group from May and June so everybody kind of get familiar to each other on that group everybody knew who is coming from where they are coming in the if they had some questions regarding their let's say their... let's say their travel to Sweden or anything they kind of posted it it there and it was very nice and interactive.

Pedro: Okay

Student: It's good a relationship

Pedro: Ok so this Facebook good kind of helped your group to like to know each other even before coming here, right?

Student: Yes

Pedro: Ok and do you think the fact that some of your colleagues are using social media impacts your your desire or your decision to use it?

Student: Definitely it does definitely the more people are going to get on social media the more... is it is easier for you to be acquainted with the platform and get full use of it

Pedro: Ok so if someone like like you say they someone created a Facebook group in your master is... so this motivates you to like to use Facebook more... to... for academic purposes?

Student: Definitely it does definitely now if I have any issue I definitely post it in my master group regarding any course or anything so and I'm hopeful that I will receive a response like ten on ten times I have posted anything I got a response.
Pedro: Okay perfect mean do you interact with your teachers in social media... have you ever done that?

Student: Not very much on social media some because yeah I don't want them to add in my social media for nothing because... it could be helpful... it’s just that my personal choice although I interact with my teachers on Gmail chat... something more official

Pedro: Okay like through Live@Lund for example or email?

Student: Yeah or Gmail chat I just wanted to keep it official that's the only reason that I interact them by a chat and means oh who...

Pedro: Can I ask you why you wouldn't like to add your teachers to your social media?

Student: I it's nothing that i don't like them because that maybe I'm a little hesitant or shy to send an friend request or something but yeah when I'm out of this master program I think I'd like them on social media so to make sure that i am connected to them throughout the life so I'll definitely add them once I'm out of... I'm done with my master's program I see that when I'm doing my master program the more authentic way of connecting to the required official chats and means of it it is my personal

Pedro: Okay so you wouldn't do it while you are on your master, right?

Student: Yeah I just wanted to be more professional but there is there is no desire denying the part that later on I would love to do that

Pedro: Okay and do your teachers share educational materials on on any social media like...?

Student: I see all we have our own internal portal at Lund University so our teacher shares all our information on that portal so it is kind of an alternative social media with us with all the
classes and our teachers to be our teacher extensively uses those platforms to just keep
a

track of all the documents shared and information shared with students... that is kind of...
and I

think that is nice as well, because that is totally separated and orderly you know one-to-one
kind

of thing, so that is also an alternative good way of sharing and that is kind of all social
media for

school purposes

Pedro: Nice and can you tell me the name of the portal that you mentioned?

Student: It's called Live@Lund it is supported on the Lund University it is also that it has
all the

same features as let's say of Facebook, so it that is our Facebook when it comes to sharing
and

informations and sets or submitting assignments with our teachers and everyone had their
individual accounts let's say likes exactly like Facebook where you can see all your
academic

records

Pedro: ok I probably will come back to that topic of Live@Lund maybe a little bit later and
by

there for now and we like to ask you that your department share news or necessary
information

on social media? now you willing to the Department of informatics, right?

Student: I'd like our like some of our teachers are in some courses use Flipboard to share
information and encourage you to use Flipboard. Flipboard is kind of a social media with
your

references and sources of news, informations anything you want so yes it is... it is used

Pedro: ok and do you think that the some characteristics of social media websites and makes
them more attractive than other tools?

Student: Characteristics... I think the vast presence of people who make it more extensive
and

when you talk about tools you cannot restrict people... when I'd say talk about tools like
Live@Lund so I'm only connected to my classmates on that and then... in social media I can
interact with my friends who are studying into other universities and share and exchange
Pedro: Okay and for example in most of the social media applications have yeah they have like an application for smartphones, right? do you think this is an important characteristics that you can install an app in your smartphone and use it everywhere?

Student: I feel so it a tool or a platform has to engage more people then it has to be app for telephones or mobile phones or stuff like that... mobile apps are definitely very important.

Pedro: Perfect in coming back to you to Live@Lund you mentioned that Live@Lund is similar to social media, right? it's like a platform of your of your department so...

Student: Yeah

Pedro: Do you prefer to use social media instead of of Live@Lund in some cases?

Student: when I'm interacting with my classmates I can go with what you say to social media like Facebook and other things but then my teachers are putting assignments and things or any information you know Live@Lund it's the option that I'd go for.

Pedro: okay it's like the official option, right?

Student: Yeah, yeah

Pedro: But do you think people are using Live@Lund a lot?

Student: Not I wouldn't say that a lot but all of us are using Live@Lund to interact and get the information news going on in the department regarding courses, grades, assignments so we definitely use or check Live@Lund once a day, so we can't simply ignore it because that's related to a master program.

Pedro: Okay so let's say that is some of your colleagues want to say share something related with the master, who would he be likely to do it on Live@Lund or on the Facebook group that
you mentioned?

Student: That's what I said... if it has to be my classmates I guess we all go with a Facebook group, but if it involves teachers and teachers sharing it or we should be sending our assignment or something we do it with Live@Lund.

Pedro: Okay and you think that has to do with the fact that people are more familiar with Facebook?

Student: Yeah because we kind of have a Facebook presence as well... and sometimes the if you don't go to Live@Lund you might miss it, so Facebook is a safe twice but teachers don't follow those social network and I think that is also right.

Pedro: Ok and... ok I have a like a final question for you is a very open question you say... in what in what other ways do you think social media contribute to your studies?

Student: What other way? ...Hmm... it helps me connect to people from the other universities... connect to professors... like not exactly connecting but get it... get to know them in a better way or maybe more students from other universities and find them on Facebook and send them requests asking some questions or not requests actually message requests maybe... asking certain questions and maybe yeah it's useful it is for this in with open network you know so accessibility is a really plus point but it could upset some people as well there's always so and cons... it's a way of the user of a social media that really decides its usage... I think

Pedro: Okay so you mentioned accessibility, openness, so you think that I like a strong characteristic of social media that they that everyone can have access to it, right?

Student: Yeah

Pedro: Like you said that you can connect with people from other universities?

Student: Yeah, yeah

Pedro: And you couldn't do that with Live@Lund for example, right?
Student: Of course, no, Live@Lund is pretty close that is specifically for my master program. I get that is right as well for Live@Lund to be closed, because that is only our teachers and students changing information on a closed network with grades and stuff like that, so I feel yeah it is fine

Pedro: Okay, so you agree that Live@Lund to be closed closed kind of closed?

Student: Fine yeah that is all nice... maybe we can add some extra features where we can see the same courses are taught in both all other universities but then that requires other university to convince people who share their information and stuff so... that way is fine maybe we can improve some features later on discussing about it

Pedro: Okay because also we have to consider that they Live@Lund is not easy to use like for example from your phone, right?

Student: Yeah, yeah, of course, that is a big problem with that of course no denying that fact

Pedro: Okay so it's like a usability problem for now?

Student: Yeah it has a usability problem now

Pedro: Okay so I think we are done by now so this interview will be transcribed as i told you and we will send you the transcription just for you to check if you want to add or remove something in the interview you know so thank you very much for participating in this study

Student: You're welcome

Pedro: Yeah, well keep in touch if I need to ask a small detail or something

Student: Yeah
353 | Pedro: Thank you
354 |
355 |
Interview 9 (I9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Present:</td>
<td>Mohammed Osman and the interviewee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview format:</td>
<td>In-person</td>
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<td>Interview duration:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transcribed by:</td>
<td>Mohammed Osman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription date:</td>
<td>2017-04-16</td>
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</table>

M: okay my name is Mohammed Osman i am a student at information system doing master research

in the factors of academic usage of social media first of all I would like to thank you for your time and collaboration and I would like to ask your permission to record this interview the collected data will be treated as confidential data and your identity will not be recognized. okay?

M: I would start by asking you if you are a student?

X: Yes, I am student

M: where do you study?

X: I'm studying in the Faculty of Engineering in Lund University

M: what program?

X: water resource engineering, a master degree

M: okay I can you tell me what do you think is social media for you how do you define social media when I say social media what do you think?

X: okay it's kind of a new way to connect to the world especially in our abroad it's kind of a way that I connect with my people from my country and kind of a way to see different people different cultures kind of

M: if we drift into academics, do use the social media for your academic work for your group work?

X: yes yes yes i do i do use social media in my sometimes in my group work and academic work

M: how can you elaborate and give me some examples?

X: okay first of all like we contact each other in order to schedule our meetings on everything and to ask about something that was not here in the topic or whatsoever so I would say recently the main contact way that we are used.
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes  

Bonilla & Osman

M: okay do you need to show any academic content?

X: yes if yes yes I do sent some document through social media

M: like what, what application do you use?

X: okay so basically or Microsoft Word Excel and some PDFs and some I send and some links to

the to the social media and also we use the Google Drive and Google those two like Google Docs to write our final thing before editing it

M: okay and what social media application do you use for sharing?

X: for sure okay for sharing documents special i used Google drive where we initiate a

folder and

we upload all our documents there and now even our final document we upload it there

M: and how our collaboration?

X: Okay and mainly we use WhatsApp and Facebook to discuss what we are going to do,

mainly

by creating WhatsApp groups

M: okay do you think this usage of social media engages you more into your studies

X: Yes it is useful and help since it is kind of the only way I am using now because

sometimes it

is very difficult to meet your group people all the time so you just like we just want to, but you at

the sometimes you want to meet them you want to ask them about something you want to

ask

them about something that's the only way you can meet them

M: okay and when it comes to academic content do you think social media could be a useful

source of information?

X: in it is self i would not say yes because the social media you can trust it 100% e but no

I don't

rely on social media as the main source for something in my academic work okay

M: okay okay do you think studying with social media makes your academic experience

more pleasant is it more fun?

X: I don't know how to answer this question either yes or no one if it kind of make it easier

for

me to engage in some studies and some group works so I would say yes

M: In the sense that maybe merging your leisure and study time

X: I you could be could be could be also something like that yeah it's really helpful in that

thing

okay what about your relationship with your colleagues do you think social media contributes to

this?

X: You mean the academic relationship?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>M: Yes the academic relationship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>X: I mean we just use it we'll just use it in order to communicate but it doesn't help like to really connect to people.</td>
</tr>
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<td>56</td>
<td>M: okay okay okay this is regarding improving your current relationships do you think it increases your pool of relationship like you know maybe I would say getting to know more new students or something?</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>X: yeah definitely helps yeah yeah in normal view people and getting to know a little bit about them out say yes and the beginning but only at the beginning because in order to really meet those people after know them the first time you have to you have to have a natural communication like physical communication physical like you need to meet them face to face in order to really get another but if the beginning yes is a way for introducing in order to be or making you meeting new people.</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>X: could be yes yes just because I actually sometimes I had to have some accounts and some sort of like social media like websites or something like that I had to do that just because my some of my friends were using it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>M: okay do you think the fact that maybe because some of your colleagues are using social media that's why you are using it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>X: sometimes yes just because I actually sometimes I had to have some accounts and some sort of like social media like websites or something like that I had to do that just because my some of my friends were using it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>M: okay if we come to the faculty and teachers do interact to these some of your teachers via a social media?</td>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>X: no no more enjoying only the first formal email okay that count as a social media I don't know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>M: okay do you think it would be helpful if your teachers would engage into this?</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>X: sometimes yes because like you don't want to be formal all the time and you don't check your email all the time so but you of course check your Facebook or WhatsApp all the time because a you are having to your phone with you all the time so it would be preferred sometimes yes, it helps.</td>
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</table>
| 67   | M: okay and when it comes to sharing educational material definitely your teachers are not
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<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>sharing with the educational material via social media as you said, but do you think if they share</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>it via social media that would be more effective?</td>
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<td>83</td>
<td>X: no I don't think, because I believe the current efficient way to do it okay</td>
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<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>M: what about your department does it share some information via social media?</td>
</tr>
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<td>85</td>
<td>X: no my department no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>M: okay and do you think that your department can do something via social media?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>X: yeah they can use it in a way to help more students to engage in activities together and to kind</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>of get to know what are the real activities for our department because they are not publishing</td>
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<td>89</td>
<td>anything I think of that</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>M: okay well as you discussed that you are using social media for some of your group work what</td>
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<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>do you think is attractive in social media that you are using it why don't you use maybe</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>traditional learning management system like Live@Lund?</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>X: yeah I mean for me because it's accessible all the time since I'm having my phone with me all</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>the time that's the most important reason why I'm using social media all the time that I'm</td>
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<td>95</td>
<td>using WhatsApp because whenever someone sent me a message that just get the tree I get like I</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>really know that at one time immediately I send him back on something like that but I don't have</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>my Live@Lund in my mobile</td>
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<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>M: okay others all the time so it could be if like for example the familiarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>X: yeah of course of course could be a familiarity with that but I'm really familiar with those apps</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>that I am using them all the time</td>
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<td>101</td>
<td>M: okay um if I ask you is there any way that you think its social media is contributing to your</td>
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<td>102</td>
<td>study yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>X: yes that's of course it it kind of make it easier for me so I mean especially because it's almost</td>
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<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>you can say social media now is my only way for communication with other people yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>M: okay okay then thank you this concludes our interview and thank you for your time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>X: you are welcome</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Interview 10 (I10)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Present:</td>
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<td>Mohammed Osman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription date:</td>
<td>2017-04-19</td>
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1. **M:** okay hi my name is Mohammad Osman and I am a student information systems doing research in the usage of social media in academics, first of all I would like to thank you for your time and collaboration I would like to ask you kindly to record the interview and your identity will not be revealed.

2. **X:** okay

3. **M:** okay so to start with the are you student?

4. **X:** yes I am a student here at Lund University and I'm studying in development field.

5. **M:** okay interesting what are you studying?

6. **X:** so its development studies comprises of economics political science human geography it's a multi-faceted course.

7. **M:** okay interesting what do you think of social media once you hear the phrase social media what comes to your mind?

8. **X:** this is a difficult question because I think social media is what it sounds I mean it's an integration of people and connecting different people and then groups online but I do think there's some positive and negative aspects of social media I mean I think sometimes it can unify people and grant experiences and connections they wouldn't otherwise have yeah but on the other hand sometimes social media divides people it becomes kind of polarizing and maybe not all social contact can be positive.

9. **M:** yeah I would agree, can you give me some examples of social media that you use social media?

10. **X:** I mostly use Facebook but this is kind of funny because I noticed that my cousin she's...
Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Transcribed Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>have a little bit younger than us are using a lot of Snapchat, Instagram I think Twitter is used by all age</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>groups but I never got into that so mostly Facebook</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>M: ok ok yes, me too okay if we just drift into academics do use social media in your group work?</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>X: um yeah actually we're getting together with groups when we're working with people we might not know very well I think it's really easy just to create a social group on Facebook particularly with messenger because it serves as a good platform to communicate obviously this is not really fully integrated into our course but rather we do it on our own usually</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>M: okay okay interesting hey there any other social media application to use maybe Google Drive</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Google Docs?</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>X: yeah I think I've used a lot of Google services I remember a few years ago Google was trying to launch a kind of a competition to Facebook and that never really happened but in the same time I've used a lot of Google services like you said drive I think academically that's it very useful</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>M: okay okay that's interesting and do use social media to share academic content?</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>X: yeah yeah like documents sometimes I really like Live@Lund sometimes because you can download the presentations or powerpoints other useful information but a lot of the time maybe we don't have that material so I've even seen students sharing literature and stuff through social media PDFs and such</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>M: interesting what about engagement to your studies do you feel that social media makes you more engaged to your studies or it distracts you?</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>X: I think both social media can be extremely distracting and I wouldn't I wouldn't be telling the truth if I said it would make me focus because I think social media can often detract your attention to whatever you're doing and it becomes a bit of an addiction for some people so I try and avoid it taking up my time on a devoted to study but unfortunately sometimes you do get distracted M: okay maybe by notifications or something or this stuff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>X: yeah or like we were discussing on the way here you know there can be some news or some...</td>
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Factors influencing students on their decision to use social media for academic purposes

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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>information that pops up and people are talking about you get in you get involved</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>M: exactly yeah I feel the same, okay would you rely on social media as a source for your academic information?</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>X: only if it's being distributed by reputable sources I think this is a problem with any information on social media is I want to get stuff from verifiable a source if it's directly from the University or from someone officials something official that would be great but if you're talking about research I don't know</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>M: okay okay yeah I would agree does it make your studies more pleasant when you use for example social media during the study?</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>X: it serves a good study break to do personal stuff on social media and sometimes like I think the positive side of that is you can maybe meet people you wouldn't otherwise meet set up you know let's go study at this place I think from time to time social media can have a positive effect because it unifies people within a group or create study opportunity</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>M: okay interesting so would that be more fun for you?</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>X: I would it be more fun I suppose so because otherwise I might be alone studying by myself but sometimes social media creates an environment where you can connect with other students I have been able to create a group study session just out of thin air</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>M: maybe blending formal and informal learning absolutely okay so if we come to your relationships with your colleagues do you think social music media improves your relationships?</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>X: that's difficult for me because personally I think especially in the university environment it can be difficult if you have a opinion that differs from your colleagues and the problem of social media is that everything's out there so if I were to create a position that was a little different than someone else's it could affect negatively within my my group but by the same token I think social media can have unifying effects but it's very dangerous because if something were to come out personal it could affect your social relationships in the real world as in social media can be dangerous if not used carefully I think</td>
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163
M: okay okay interesting do you have a story to share or something?

X: um yeah actually I can share one there was a post a few weeks ago that I wrote it was pretty neutral

ting just about the attack that happened in Stockholm and granted I think this is kind of common now there's attacks all the time there's bad news and it circulates in the echo chambers

of social media yeah but what happened was there was some one on one side of an argument condemning Muslims and I do not agree with that opinion at all and there was another person on there who was getting upset with his arguments naturally because she shares the Muslim faith so there was an argument and I did not get involved mainly because I was asleep but a few hours later and I got a post from a colleague in class who I don't know very well and interestingly enough she blamed me from being involved at all in the conversation even though I hadn't written anything so I think social media has the potential to damage reputation even if you didn't intend it to be so, so when I say you have to use it carefully I mean maybe not writing as much political or personal beliefs may be sharing happy things or rather things that are not sensitive maybe could be better

M: yeah I can result may mean some misunderstanding.

X: correct yes I think there's huge potential for misunderstandings or conflicts.

M: interesting what about developing new relationships?

X: this is a great point I think it's amazing nowadays where you can meet someone and sometimes for a very brief moment and you can instead of writing down contact information that can be lost or whatever you can connect immediately and I think Facebook's a great platform because you can already kind of see their established information and profile where a Snapchat isn't it became be personal but it doesn't tell the story about that person so you can get to know a lot of people better and interestingly people you already do know maybe you're visiting a city and I've been surprised sometimes to find out one of my friends is there so friends I already know so you can meet new people and you can catch up with all people or all friends that you didn't know we're even nearby
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<td>94</td>
<td>M: okay it could be the reason that you are using social media because other people are using it or some</td>
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<td>95</td>
<td>of your friends are using it?</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>X: yeah that's exactly the man nowadays like a lot of my friends they've canceled their Facebook account</td>
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<td>97</td>
<td>probably because they got tired of some of the the opinions and some of the media that's so involved</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>on Facebook and there's a lot of drama sometimes among some people get constant arguments and so forth and they canceled their Facebook but at the end of the day they came back and I think there's this drive to come back because Facebook in a way has become kind of your social atmosphere</td>
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<td>99</td>
<td>outside of real life I mean the people you know in real life but I think there's a natural human drive to be social and social media takes that online I really think a lot of people can't live without it I'm not at that point yet but I think ultimately social media is very powerful it's very attractive</td>
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<td>M: I agree okay if we come to the teachers do you interact with your teacher through social media?</td>
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<td>X: I honestly know there are some teachers are at a high school where I connected with later University- wise I hadn't really connected with many teachers on Facebook but I remember in my high school there was a policy where the teachers could not be friends students on social media at all , however after graduating and leaving some did and I noticed some other teachers I may have added did it add add me back that could just be a personal thing or it could be that they don't want to get any connection with the student so I think it it depends but in Sweden it's very likely there's a more casual relationship between teachers and students</td>
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<td>112</td>
<td>M: okay so it's more like a cultural thing?</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>X: I think so , also may be the policy of the school or university might not allow for that officially</td>
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<td>114</td>
<td>M: okay that's very interesting so do you think it would be useful if your teachers share educational material via social media or interact with you via social media?</td>
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<td>116</td>
<td>X: Hmm personally I wouldn't mind but I do think there's some people who don't use social media -there</td>
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you heard a notification! - no I think there's some people who don't use it or not involved in it so I like it

think offering more platforms as good but just not taking away the old ones for example I would be a little upset if they got rid of Live@Lund and replaced it with a Facebook group I think offering people

offering students offering everyone more choices is good but taking away choices is always a compromise that might be tough to fill

M: okay okay very interesting point what about your department does it share many information in

social media gives you news updates or something?

X: I wish they did one of the most frustrating things I think is when we first went in the course they're still presenting the calendar now on a document like a PDF and I think most people use Google calendar I know for the first semester I would add all the events individually on to my Google calendar because it's much easier for me to see in that format they exhibit and I notice that the department doesn't do that they're actually not very proactive at all my specific department regarding social media however I noticed some students that were filling the gap there was another student in my class who decided to create a Google calendar and share it with anyone who wanted to use it so sometimes when the department isn't offering a certain service other people will jump in to fill the gaps

M: okay that's really true think so if I asked you what characteristics do you think attracts you to social media?

X: Hmm definitely connecting with friends and family who were far away yeah I think nowadays it's becoming something that would prerequisite to get to know people think I don't necessarily like that aspect because I don't think digital contact replaces real human contact but sometimes to connect with people you know that you got to send them a message they won't answer their phone if you call them anything so the first option is you know get on their Facebook see what they're up to send them a message and hey you want to go for lunch want to go out to this place at the end of the day social media
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<td>140</td>
<td>becomes like a tool to connect with people in real life</td>
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<td>141</td>
<td>M: exactly exactly and if you think of this in academic context how does it reflect I mean these</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>characteristics?</td>
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<td>143</td>
<td>X: at least in my case I think it's proven very useful because I've been able to we have a group for a</td>
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<td>144</td>
<td>program and I've been able to connect with other students and classmates and ask a question that</td>
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<td>maybe sometimes I don't want to ask the professor because it's a very casual question you or</td>
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<td>146</td>
<td>sometimes it's a group concern maybe were concerned about a certain assignment don't understand</td>
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<td>147</td>
<td>the context and you can get very instant answers because there's always someone in the group who is</td>
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<td>148</td>
<td>there to respond which is very nice</td>
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<td>149</td>
<td>M: okay interesting so if you compare it to Live@Lund like the usual the casual learning management</td>
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<td>150</td>
<td>system how can we what advantages do you think social media has?</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>X: Hmm well I think Live@Lund to being the official site offers some some functionality that social</td>
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<td>media would maybe distract you with for example I've noticed sometimes you go into an official page</td>
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<td>or you're looking at the group but then something else pops up I mean it's like going into a candy shop</td>
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<td>154</td>
<td>you can't pick what you want and you end up getting really distracted and maybe I don't think that's just</td>
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<td>155</td>
<td>me i think that's everybody it's become that way so when you're going to Live@Lund it's very good</td>
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<td>156</td>
<td>because you're there just for Live@Lund but at the same time i think traditional websites are</td>
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<td>disappearing in favor of social media i don't really know if i can say that's a good or a bad thing time will</td>
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<td>158</td>
<td>tell but yeah putting everything on one platform like i said before it might not be a good compromise</td>
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<td>159</td>
<td>M: yeah i would agree . and finally is there any other ways do you think social media could you please</td>
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<td>160</td>
<td>your studies?</td>
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<td>161</td>
<td>X: Hmm I think overall it contributes in the way of what I mentioned before mostly I'm connecting with</td>
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<td>162</td>
<td>the other students sometimes you share material even like a calendar and of course you are putting</td>
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<td>163</td>
<td>some trust in two other people that person were to right the wrong information on the calendar maybe</td>
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<td>164</td>
<td>I'd go to the wrong place or go to the wrong time so there is a level of trust and you you do have to</td>
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<td>165</td>
<td>verify certain things but i think the ability to share material and share opinions and insights you know</td>
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<td>166</td>
<td>even get together and study with people you probably wouldn't otherwise connect with are very valuable</td>
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<td>168</td>
<td>M: interesting this concludes our interview thank you very much for your time</td>
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Bonilla & Osman

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