

USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN MIDWIFERY EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVE FROM JORDANIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS FOLLOWING THE LATEST WAVES OF COVID-19

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Abstract

Objective: This study assessed social media usefulness in midwifery education.

Design: A cross-sectional design was used.

Settings: All faculties which offer midwifery programs were selected.

Subjects: A convenience sample of 257 students was recruited.

Outcome measures: A self-reported questionnaire consisted of 18 items was used.

Results: Telegram (50.6%) emerged as the primary platform for midwifery education and 39.3% of students spent > 5 hours daily using it. Most students followed vloggers or bloggers who addressed midwifery education (84%) and joined social media groups (82%). Younger students (< 25 years) perceived availability of educational content on social media more than others ($X^2=1.20$, $p < .01$) while single students perceived that the information is accessible on platforms more than married ($X^2=1.20$, $p < .01$).

Conclusion: Using social media in midwifery education provides promising opportunities to improve midwifery education. However, continual evaluation are required to guarantee that it benefits students' educational experiences and professional development.

Keywords: Education, Jordan, Midwifery, Social media, Usefulness

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a vital component of both personal and professional lives around the world.^[1] Its applications range from education to healthcare, business, and social networking, among others.^[2] Establishing and maintaining professional connections is crucial across various occupational domains, and Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have been integral since the inception of communities and commerce.^[3] Several SNSs, such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter, online conferencing, and LinkedIn, have become popular and established ways of communication.^[4] Social media has evolved into a powerful tool for modern education, widely used by students, teachers, and school administrators for personal and group projects.^[5]

Furthermore, the ability of students to communicate through various means enhances their active involvement and retention of information.^[6] A study performed by Bedir (2021) argues that social media provides a valuable platform for teachers and students to engage in fruitful discussions and share views related to their courses.^[7] The versatility of social media is believed to stimulate students to actively participate in collaborative tasks, facilitate discussions, and exchange information seamlessly through various chat platforms.^[8] According to Shah and Cheng (2019), it was reported that student involvement encompasses

mental and physical exertion in academic pursuits, requiring time, energy, materials, activities, participation, emotions, and sentiments to embrace student teaching.^[9] Additionally, it can serve as a gauge for continuously evaluating the success of graduating students and the caliber of nursing and midwifery schools.^[10]

Technological improvements and changing demographics among college students have made modern students used to fast information access via social media and the internet.^[11] As long as activities are planned to achieve intended learning objectives, SNSs can boost student involvement, since an effective undergraduate education relies heavily on students' ability to engage in their education.^[12] In previous study, prolonged using social media among school students was associated with internet addiction.^[13] However, social media-driven advancements in communication in medical and healthcare education have been shown to lower stress and anxiety levels while boosting participation, feedback, teamwork, and professional growth.^[14] Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter have been used as teaching aids in nursing and midwifery programs.^[15] For instance, a study performed by Asiri et al. (2017) found that such tools are useful for raising students' self-efficacy and confidence levels and boosting communication.^[16] These

resources can support cooperative learning settings where students of various skill levels work together to accomplish common goals and share information. [17, 18] Collaborative learning positively impacts the educational quality of students' learning processes. [19] Web-based social media can enhance meaningful collaborative learning in nursing education and social life. [18, 20] Social networking platforms offer contemporary students opportunities to engage with fellow students and institutional staff, receive peer assistance, and access collaborative workspaces. [21] Interactions and experiences on online SNSs resemble educational activities that have a meaningful impact on student's level of involvement, presenting a notable advantage as engagement plays a crucial role in students' growth and academic success. [22]

The literature on nursing and midwifery education is well-acquainted with faculty using social media for various formal teaching and learning purposes. [23, 24] Blogging, for instance, has been employed as a teaching approach for self-care, transitions to practice, cultural competency, empathy, and therapeutic relationships through reflection facilitation. [25] Students had the chance to enhance their reflective and problem-solving abilities through the blogging interface's feedback mechanism. [26, 27] Studies by Arrigoni et al. (2016) and Jefferies et al. (2022) explored the use of Facebook and YouTube as interactive, collaborative resources to assist nursing and midwifery students in preparing for exams like the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). [28, 29]

However, concerns about students' online activity and its potential effects on their reputations and licenses have been raised in the literature on nursing and midwifery education, questioning professionalism. [30] Education on digital professionalism concepts related to social media has an impact on students' online conduct. [31] Despite potential professional ramifications, social media seems to be a useful tool to supplement formal learning in nursing and midwifery school, as indicated by a systematic review study that investigated the efficacy of social media in teaching nurses and midwives. It was discovered that the collaborative, interactive, and semi-synchronous features of social media platforms might help nursing and midwifery students learn new information and skills. [32]

Research on undergraduate nursing and midwifery programs has primarily focused on incorporating social media into formal teaching, with faculty members' viewpoints being the primary subject. Platform selection and data analytics like hashtag analysis and view/share quantification are common in studies on undergraduates' social media usage. [31, 33] However, there is a lack of data on how pre-licensure nursing and midwifery students utilize social media for academic purposes. Hence, this study aims to examine the efficacy of social media in midwifery education.

Social learning theories, such as social constructivism, are suitable for studying social media as they perceive learning as an engaged and cooperative activity. [33] Social constructivism operates on three fundamental assumptions, namely, (1) humans actively construct meanings as they interact with and interpret the world around them; (2) humans make sense of their world through the lens of their historical and social perspectives; (3) process of generating meaning is inherently social, emerging from interactions within a human community. [34] Social constructivism posits that knowledge is obtained through creating subjective meanings during interactions with others, utilizing prior experiences as a foundation for learning. [35]

Social constructivism provided the theoretical foundation for the current study and informed research objectives, data collection strategies, and analytic methodologies. This study aim to assessed social media integration in midwifery education as perceived by midwifery students.

Method

Design

A cross-sectional descriptive design was employed.

Settings

Based on the last report from the Jordan Ministry of Higher Education, there are currently 1,736 students enrolled in midwifery programs across all nursing colleges in Jordan. Therefore, all nursing faculties in Jordan which offer midwifery programs were selected.

Sample and Sampling

A convenience sampling technique was implemented to reach the target sample. A minimum sample size was determined to be 317 students according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) guideline. All midwifery students who were enrolled in any of Jordan's nursing colleges were included in this study.

Instrument

A self-reported questionnaire was adopted from previous study [36] that assessed the midwifery nursing students' usefulness of social media in their education. The survey consists of 19 multiple-choice questions distributed into three parts: part (1) include sociodemographic data (age, marital status, education level), part (2) asked about the common social media platform used and the time spent in using these platforms (2 questions), and part (3) asking about student's awareness of using social media in their studying (14 questions). The questions about students' awareness of using social media in their studies covered several aspects, such as daily usage, educational purposes, accessibility of educational resources, and exposure to midwifery-related content on social media platforms. The response options for each question were 1 "Yes" and 0 "No"; the higher score reflected the higher usefulness of social media in education concerning maternity topics. All questions were directed to video consumption, blog reading, participation in social media groups, and following influencers dedicated to midwifery education. Some questions also explored challenges faced in finding relevant content, the perceived reliability of information, the application of acquired knowledge, and the role of social media in introducing innovative tactics and promoting research in midwifery education. To check the face validity of the tool, a panel of eight midwifery specialists critically assessed the tool, providing their approval based on its visual appeal, comprehensive coverage, clarity of wording, length, and practical applicability. The content validity index was 0.83. The Cronbach alpha of the instrument was 0.91, reflecting good internal consistency.

Data collection procedure

The surveys were distributed utilizing online platforms (E-learning, Facebook). The invitations were sent to the head nurses colleges offering midwifery degrees. After explaining the purpose and the data collection procedure for the study, the administrators of the nursing college informed the teacher to share the survey with students via platforms. The survey was designed, and data were gathered from participants using Google Forms. The time to fill out the surveys was extended to several days to give them time to fill it. The teachers remind the students via the same platforms and ask them to complete the

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survey at their appropriate time. The data collection took place between November and December 2023.

Ethical considerations

The Institutional Review Board at Al-Balqa Applied University has approved this study (No. 2024/2023/1/2). The current study followed the Declaration of Helsinki provisions, and all participants provided informed consent. The consent form appeared on the survey's front page and declared that proceeding with the survey means an agreement to participate. Further details about their voluntary participation in this study and the process of maintaining the data confidentiality were confirmed. This study followed the EQUATOR research reporting checklist (STROBE checklist) for cross-sectional research.

Data Analysis

The IBM-SPSS version 25 was used for the descriptive and inferential analysis. The data was illustrated as numbers, percentages, and graphs. The Chi-square test was used to assess the difference between students' sociodemographics and the usefulness of social media in midwifery education. The significance level was predetermined at $P < 0.05$.

Results

Sample characteristics

The study recruited (n=257) students, in which mostly they are single (n=184, 71.6%) and aged less than 25 years (n=226, 87.9%). Noteworthy, (n=199, 77.4%) of respondents are currently enrolled in the midwifery diploma program. See Table 1

Table 1. The respondent's profile (N= 257)

Variables	F (%)
Age	
< 25 years	226 (87.9)
> 25 years	31 (12.1)
Marital status	
Single	184 (71.6)
Married	73 (28.4)
Program level	
Diploma	199 (77.4)
Higher than diploma	58 (22.6)

Notes: F=Frequency, %=Percentages

Social media for learning

As illustrated in Figure 1, the frequency of using social media for learning purposes. About 39.3% of the participants used social media more than five times daily. Additionally, 32% of students used social media less than 5 times, while the remaining (28.65%) used social media five times a day.

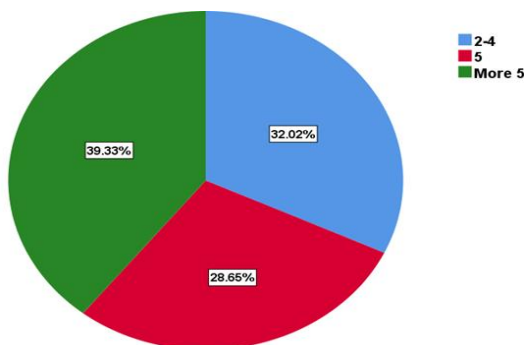


Figure 1. Spend time using social media to learn

The common social media platforms employed by midwifery students are illustrated in Figure 2. Telegram was the most commonly used platform to share knowledge about midwifery (50.56%). About 31.2% of students utilized YouTube for educational purposes. Furthermore, the least reported platforms the students utilized for midwifery education were Facebook (9.27%) and internet web pages (8.99%) to seek information on midwifery.

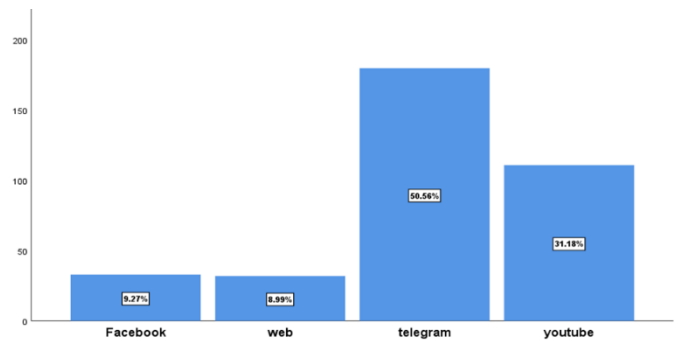


Figure 2. Social media platforms to find the most information about midwifery education

Awareness about using social media for midwifery education

Most students reported that they followed vloggers or bloggers who addressed the topic of midwifery education (84.0%) and joined any social media groups exclusively focused on exchanging educational content for midwives (82.0%). About three-quarters of students approved that social media platforms enhance their accessibility to educational resources (77.8%) and are valuable for educational pursuits in midwifery (75.8%). Also, (71.9%) of students stated that using social media platforms enhances their knowledge and skills in midwifery. Social media could promote creative innovation and enable research in midwifery education, as reported by (53.9%). However, few students face challenges finding midwifery education-related content on social media (37.1%). See Table 2

Table 2. The use of social media for midwifery education

No.	Questions	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Do you employ social media for educational purposes?	75.8	24.2
2	Do social media platforms enhance the accessibility of educational resources?	77.8	22.2
3	Do social media platforms facilitate the acquisition of information and skills in the field of midwifery?	71.9	28.1
4	Are you exposed to videos on social media about midwifery education??	62.4	37.6
5	Do you come across blogs or articles related to midwifery education on social media?	74.7	25.3
6	Have you enrolled in any pages/profiles that offer information about midwifery education?	73.6	26.4
7	Have you joined any social media groups that are exclusively focused on exchanging educational content for midwives?	82.0	18.0

8	Are you a follower of any vlogger or blogger who specifically addresses the topic of midwifery education	84.0	16.0
9	Does the educational content on social media related to midwifery offer you valuable information?	75.0	25.0
10	Do you face challenges in finding midwifery education-related content on social media?	37.1	62.9
11	Do you consider the information available on social media about midwifery education to be reliable?	67.1	32.9
12	Do you apply the knowledge obtained from social media in the context of midwifery education?	63.2	36.8

13	Is social media involved in the introduction of novel tactics in midwifery education?	68.0	32.0
14	Do social media platforms promote creative innovation and enable research in the field of midwifery education?	53.9	46.1

Notes: %=Percentages

Regarding the students' opinions related to the availability of midwifery content on social media, there was a significant difference between age groups ($\chi^2= 1.63, P< 0.01$); as the younger students aged 18-20 years ($M= 1.30, SD=0.41$) were found midwifery content on social media more beneficial than those younger than 20 years ($M=1.22, SD=0.46$). However, the marital status has no difference in reporting the benefits with content availability. See Table 3

Table 3. Opinions and accessibility of midwifery content on social media platforms

Variable	Category	Group	N	M	SD	χ^2	p
Availability of Content on social media	Age	< 25 years	161	1.30	0.41	1.626	0.001*
		> 25 years	143	1.22	0.46		
	Marital Status	Single	238	1.25	0.43	0.641	0.641
		Married	57	1.26	0.44		
Accessibility of information on social media	Age	18-20 years	161	1.35	0.48	0.094	0.850
		> 20 years	143	1.34	0.48		
	Marital Status	Single	238	1.33	0.47	1.201	0.007*
		Married	57	1.25	0.43		
Implemented knowledge acquired from social media	Age	18-20 years	161	1.38	0.49	0.527	0.292
		> 20 years	143	1.35	0.48		
	Marital Status	Single	238	1.33	0.47	0.633	0.228
		Married	57	1.32	0.47		

Note: *: $p< 0.05$, χ^2 : Chi-square test, M: Mean, SD: Standard Deviation, N: Number.

On the other hand, the marital status significantly differed in terms of accessibility of information on social media ($\chi^2=1.201, P< 0.01$), whereas the single ($M=1.33, SD=0.47$) found the midwifery content on social media more accessible than married ($M=1.25, SD=0.43$). For implemented acquired knowledge from social media, there was no significant difference in age groups and marital status ($P> 0.05$).

Discussion

This study assessed social media integration in midwifery education as perceived by midwifery students. The result highlights disparities in the perceived benefits of educational content available on social media platforms between midwifery students aged less than 25 years. Students who were aged less than 25 years reported greater benefits from social media platforms for learning purposes, especially in the context of midwifery education, as it encourages active participation and facilitates meaningful exchanges between students and instructors. This finding was consistent with a study conducted by [37] who observed that nursing and midwifery students had positive attitudes toward social media. This finding may be attributed to the increasing prevalence of social media usage among students. However, it is crucial to emphasize the need for the mindful integration of social media into midwifery education, enabling purposeful utilization of social media technology. [19, 36]

Telegram emerged as the preferred social media platform among Jordanian midwifery students (50.56%). This finding was in the same line as a study performed by [36] who stated that the use of Telegram and other social media platforms in the field of nursing

and midwifery education and training is a fundamental instrument for nurse training and education because they provide new avenues for acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge in this field. According to the participants, nursing and midwifery education can greatly benefit from the educational content shared through social networks, including articles, blogs, videos, courses, and other platforms. A web-based cross-sectional study conducted by [38] emphasized the value of publishing nursing and midwifery educational materials in various formats, such as articles, wikis, videos, blogs, and electronic books.

Participants also mentioned that social networks have introduced new approaches to midwifery education, encouraging original thought. This result is consistent with a study performed by [39] who concluded that midwife-mediated social media groups are a highly successful tool to provide tailored information and social support to pregnant women. Knowledge and communication technologies (ICTs) have created new means to share and disseminate educational knowledge, and these social networks have the potential to change midwifery education. Participants believed that the educational content published on social media was trustworthy. Concerns raised by several studies regarding the veracity of instructional material shared on social media should be thoroughly assessed through the lens of midwifery theory and practice. [37] It is equally important to consider the legal and ethical implications of the revealed information. [39] To address these issues, it is suggested that teachers actively participate in social media events to encourage students to use these platforms for learning and to help them select credible content. [19]

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However, future research should use effective outcome measures to delve further into the implications of these integrated teaching techniques.

According to the results of this study, participants had no trouble discovering instructional content on social media. Based on these findings, Jordan seems to be an ideal location for incorporating social media into midwifery programs. The theoretical and practical implications of this investigation's findings are diverse. By considering the perspectives of all users, these results provide insights into various opinions and contribute to the existing knowledge about the impact of social media. Policymakers can use these findings to determine the best ways to integrate social media into midwifery curricula.

However, it is important to note that this study has limitations, including its small sample size and singular focus on Jordan's southern region. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized to all Jordanians. Another limitation is that the study does not assess how social media impacts midwifery education or how users feel about it; it only examines the occurrence. Future research can address these limitations by including larger and more diverse samples. The lack of suitable outcome measures to evaluate the impact of social media integration on student learning was evident from the conversation. Discovering such metrics should be a priority for future studies to establish the consequences precisely. Additionally, individuals should exercise caution while using social media for school or work-related reasons; therefore, it is essential to examine different traits.

Conclusion

The results of this study highlight the significance of social networks as vital resources for midwife education and training. Most participants expressed this belief, recognizing that these platforms offer new opportunities for advancing theoretical and practical understanding in the field. There is optimism that leveraging these tools can contribute to improving midwifery education, ultimately enhancing the health outcomes of the Arab population. This is particularly relevant given the widespread usage of social networks in Jordan, indicating a strength in this aspect of the country's digital landscape.

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