

Functional ability to use social media in the group of nursing students. A nationwide cross-sectional study*

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Assessing practical social media skills of nursing students has real-world significance. It can shape educational policies, curriculum development, and even the formulation of ethical guidelines for future healthcare professionals.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical data on the practical social media skills of Polish nursing students and their ability to integrate social media into their everyday, educational and professional lives.

Materials and methods: All undergraduate (3-year bachelor's program) Polish nursing students were eligible for the study. Out of 679 study participants, first-year students (n = 397, 58.73%) and women (n = 589, 87.13%) were the largest groups. The mean age of

the study participants was 21.02 years (SD = 4.04). The Social Media Use Integration Scale was used, a p-value of <0.05 was considered.

Results: The research reveals a moderate level of social media integration in the student population. Interestingly, the study identifies greater variability in the emotional and social aspects of media use compared to its integration into daily routines.

Conclusions: In the broader context of the increasing importance of social media in educational settings, the study emphasizes the significance of assessment tools such as SMUIS. Thus, the research augments academic knowledge and provides practical insights for educational strategists and policymakers in the field of nursing education.

Keywords: cross-sectional study; nursing students; social media; social media literacy; standardized scale.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to effectively use social media, widely discussed in international scientific literature, is a highly complex issue that requires an interdisciplinary research approach [1]. The term "social media literacy" lacks a single worldwide accepted definition. The current scientific literature uses many definitions of social media skills, based on various concepts [2].

The concept of "functional social media ability" developed by Jenkins-Guarnieri et al. pertains to the ability to use social media platforms effectively and purposefully [3]. What distinguishes this concept from other definitions is the fact that it is more than just technical proficiency in handling individual user accounts or navigating the social media user interface. It also encompasses a competence closely related to understanding the social, legal, ethical and information context in which the media operate.

As described by Jenkins-Guarnieri et al., the concept of functional ability to use social media embraces the following aspects: 1) Technical skills: knowledge of the interface, functions and tools available on the platform. 2) Understanding the context: awareness of the purpose and audience, as well as understanding the impact of the content on the community. 3) Ethical considerations: understanding of and compliance with ethical standards and principles related to privacy, authenticity and copyright. 4) Critical thinking: the ability to analyze and evaluate information and its sources [3].

In this context, the term "functional ability" is not limited to simple social media operational skills, such as navigating

user interface or managing a social media account. Therefore, the concept of functional ability to use social media is much more extensive, encompassing both technical competences and understanding of social, cultural and ethical mechanisms [4].

In practice, the skill set for using social media also involves ethical and legal competences. Individuals with a greater mastery of these skills are aware of the implications concerning personal data protection, intellectual property rights and ethical responsibility in a digital context. Ethical awareness is necessary to understand what consequences may result from irresponsible use of social media, both for the individual and for the community in which he or she operates [5, 6].

It is also important to note that social media skills are a variable that depends on many factors such as age, education level, and technological experience [7]. Therefore, media education aimed at developing these skills should be tailored to suit the specific needs of target demographic groups. In this context, educational programs should be designed in a way that takes into account cultural and social diversity, as well as different levels of experience and technical competence.

From a critical perspective, social media skills also require the development of critical thinking skills. This is crucial for distinguishing authentic information from disinformation, as well as for understanding how social media can be used for social and political manipulation. In this regard, critical thinking is not only a tool for content analysis, but also a defense mechanism against potential threats related to the use of social media [8].

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In conclusion, practical social media skills form a complex competence that requires an interdisciplinary research approach. This is an area that deserves further research and analysis, from both theoretical and practical perspectives, to understand its impact on social and cultural dynamics in the digital age.

Taking into account the above issue, the practical use of social media skills among students, especially medical students, including nursing students, carries significant importance. Education on responsible social media usage should be an integral part of nursing curricula. Its ultimate goal is to consciously and ethically use these tools to improve the quality of education and professional practice [9].

Social media have become an integral part of everyday life, also in the context of medical education. In the nursing context, social media are used both by teachers, for both theoretical and practical instruction, as well as by students themselves for self-education and, above all, for communication [10, 11].

In terms of enhancing study effectiveness, social media are increasingly recognized as highly effective tools [12]. Thanks to them, students can instantly share resources such as current research articles, presentations and videos, which facilitates learning. According to the results of current scientific research, one of the key advantages of social-media based education is the capacity to interactively involve students in their learning activities [13, 14]. Students can ask questions, respond to posts and participate in online discussions, which in turn can foster a more profound understanding of the subject matter (social media is used by nursing students mainly to exchange learning-related information, such as exam materials, course updates and discussions about clinical placements) [15]. Social media also facilitates the real-time exchange of clinical experiences (e.g. students can share insights from clinical placements), which can serve as a valuable learning source for others [16]. In addition, these platforms are also used to build professional networks and communicate with experts in the field [17, 18].

Social media also provides nursing students with a platform for communication and social support, which is especially important in stressful academic and clinical settings [19].

While social media has many advantages in the educational context, also it also presents several potential disadvantages. For example, the quality and reliability of information available online is not always guaranteed, requiring students to think critically and verify sources [8]. There are also concerns about ethics and professionalism. Some studies point to potential risk of patient privacy violation and breach of confidentiality [20, 21]. Based on available research, it is recommended to integrate social media into traditional teaching methods, being mindful of ethical considerations [22].

In times of the growing role of social media in students' lives, it is crucial to understand how students, especially medical and nursing students, use these tools. It is not only about knowing whether and how they use social media in everyday lives and to communicate with others, but above all, about whether students use social media effectively but also ethically in academic and professional settings [23].

The research outlined in this study, focusing on the practical application of social media skills, has the potential to highlight gaps in academic understanding concerning the use of social

media competencies. Such insights could pave the way for the implementation of specific educational interventions aimed at enhancing students' proficiency in this domain.

Understanding the students' practical ability to use social media is critical to maintaining ethical and professional standards in nursing practice. Inappropriate use of social media can lead to privacy violations and other forms of unprofessional behavior.

Given the lack of research in this area, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical data on the practical ability of Polish undergraduate nursing students to integrate social media into their educational and professional lives, with the Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design and setting

During the period spanning March to April 2021, invitations were extended to all 12 Polish universities with undergraduate nursing programs to take part in our nationwide, cross-sectional online survey.

Participants and sample size

Eleven universities chose to engage in the research, allowing all eligible students enrolled in undergraduate nursing programs to participate, resulting in a potential pool of 5,122 respondents. Each university designated a coordinator well-versed in the study protocol. A total of 679 students submitted fully completed questionnaires. With this sample size and the overall count of undergraduate nursing students ($n = 5122$), the margin of error was 3.50% at a 95% confidence level, assuming a proportion of 0.50.

Instrument

The Social Media Use Integration Scale is a diagnostic tool designed to measure the degree of integration of social media use into an individual's social behaviors and daily routines, while also evaluating the importance and emotional attachment associated with this use. Though initially devised by Jenkins-Guarnieri et al. at the University of Northern Colorado in 2013 [3] with a focus on Facebook use, the scope of SMUIS has since broadened to encompass various social media platforms, offering a robust framework for researchers and clinicians to understand and operationalize social media integration, especially among emerging adults. The scale is designed as a 10-item assessment employing a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 6 – strongly agree, with item 8 reverse coded), and is divided into 2 subscales: a 6-item subscale on Social Integration and Emotional Connection (subscales 1), and a 4-item subscale on Integration into Social Routines (subscales 2). The core dimensions of SMUIS include: Integration into Social Behavior, which assesses the extent of social engagement facilitated through social media and its impact on social behavior; Integration into Daily Routines, investigates the habitual nature of social media use and its assimilation into daily activities; Importance of Use, which evaluates the importance of social media for personal or professional interactions, entertainment, or obtaining information; and Emotional Connection, exploring the emotional

investment and sentiments evoked through social media use. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the entire scale was 0.914 and for scores on the subscale 1 and 2 were 0.893 and 0.828, respectively [3]. The authors obtained oral permission from the creators of the tool to apply SMUIS in this research. Its prior use in international studies across varied populations further reinforces the rationale for employing it among Polish nursing students.

Research design

A nationwide cross-sectional study design allows for a broad sampling of nursing students from various educational institutions. This enhances the generalizability of the findings and provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of social media integration among nursing students.

The Social Media Use Integration Scale

The Social Media Use Integration Scale is a validated tool that measures the extent to which individuals integrate social media into their daily activities. It can provide nuanced insights into behavioral patterns, attitudes, and the practical ability to use social media effectively. Using SMUIS in the context of nursing students can provide valuable data on how this group integrates social media into their educational framework.

The SMUIS was initially developed to assess Facebook usage (Table 1). Nonetheless, it was deliberately designed to be adaptable to measure other forms of social media usage.

The effort to quantify and analyze social media usage is a reflection of the digital age we currently live in. The SMUIS, initially designed to assess Facebook engagement, is a tool that emerges from the need to understand the impact of social media on our lives. Yet, its architects envisioned a wider range of its possible applications, making it adaptable, through flexible design, to use with other social media platforms.

This adaptability is crucial as the world of social media is constantly changing, with new platforms emerging and existing ones changing in popularity and functionality. An unalterable measuring tool would quickly become obsolete, but the adaptability of SMUIS allows it to remain applicable. It can change along with the trends in social media, providing a consistent tool to analyze different platforms.

The narrative of SMUIS is like a well-authored book with an open ending, enabling readers to continue the story in diverse directions. Its initial chapters focus on Facebook, yet the later pages remain blank, ready for further research in the vast world of social media. This design is a conscious choice, a silent nod to the dynamic nature of human interaction in the digital space.

This adaptable nature of SMUIS not only allows for a broad spectrum of application but it also invites a multidimensional analysis of social media usage. It encourages an ongoing dialogue among researchers, promoting a cross-platform examination that might unveil shared patterns and differences in user behaviour, and potentially, the broader societal implications of engaging in social media.

Therefore, the design of SMUIS is a wise acknowledgment of the ever-changing nature of digital interaction, ensuring its longevity and relevance in social discourse analysis. It

emphasizes the necessity for flexible tools in capturing the multifaceted interactions within the social media ecosystem.

In conclusion, the SMUIS is an example of a thoughtful, forward-looking approach to social media analysis, embodying a blend of specificity and adaptability that is crucial in navigating the intricate, constantly changing landscape of digital social interaction.

A detailed examination of specific studies employing SMUIS across various social media platforms could offer a more nuanced understanding of its adaptability and effectiveness. Such explorations would further contribute to the body of knowledge on social media engagement and its broader implications.

For further insights, it would be advantageous to consider studies that employed SMUIS beyond Facebook usage, and engage with researchers who have adapted SMUIS for other social media platforms [3].

TABLE 1. Scale Items and Pattern Coefficients for 13-Item Two-Factor Model (original scale) [3]

Item text	Two-factor solution	
	factor 1	factor 2
I get upset when I can't log on to Facebook	0.886	-0.147
I prefer to communicate with others mainly through Facebook	0.873	-0.172
Facebook plays an important role in my social relationships	0.697	0.092
I would like it if everyone used Facebook to communicate	0.685	0.137
I feel disconnected from friends when I have not logged into Facebook	0.683	0.084
I would be disappointed if I could not use Facebook at all	0.630	0.190
Using Facebook is part of my everyday routine	0.067	0.786
I enjoy checking my Facebook account	0.108	0.703
I don't like to use Facebook (r)	-0.020	0.597
I respond to content that others share using Facebook	0.319	0.491

Bold items were retained for respective factors.

Data collection

Given the restricted opportunity for direct contact with respondents due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions mandated by the Minister of Health, the questionnaire was disseminated online through the LimeSurvey web platform. The process was overseen by investigators at the participating universities, and the online approach facilitated respondent access while prioritizing everyone's safety [24, 25].

Ethical consideration

The study protocol received approval from the University's Ethics Committee (IRB approval no. KB/76/2021). Prior to their involvement in the study, participants were briefed on the

confidentiality measures applied to the collected and processed data. To safeguard data anonymity, no personal or sensitive information was gathered, and computer IP addresses were not tracked.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistical methods were employed to analyze quantitative and categorical variables. For quantitative variables, central tendency (mean – M) and dispersion (standard deviation – SD) were calculated, while categorical variables were characterized by the number (n) and frequency (%).

RESULTS

Sample characteristics

The study included a total of 679 participants, comprised mainly of first-year students (n = 397, 58.73%) and females (n = 589, 87.13%), mirroring the typical gender distribution in Polish nursing faculties. The average age of the participants was 21.02 years (SD = 4.04). Table 2 provides a detailed overview of the selected characteristics of the study group.

TABLE 2. Characteristics of the study group (n = 679)

Nursing Department	n (%)
Medical University of Białystok	179 (26.48)
Jagiellonian University Medical College	132 (19.53)
Pomeranian Medical University	119 (17.6)
Medical University of Łódź	61 (9.02)
Poznan University of Medical Sciences	59 (8.73)
Medical University of Warsaw	50 (7.4)
Medical University of Gdańsk	21 (3.11)
Medical University of Lublin	20 (2.96)
Jan Kochanowski University Medical College	17 (2.51)
Medical University of Silesia	14 (2.07)
Ludwik Rydygier Collegium Medicum in Bydgoszcz	4 (0.59)
Year of study	
Year 1	397 (58.73)
Year 2	176 (26.04)
Year 3	103 (16.24)
Gender	
Female	589 (87.13)
Male	66 (9.76)
Refusal to answer	21 (3.11)
Age (years)	
M ±SD	21.02 ±4.04
Range	18.0–60.00

Analysis of social media use integration among undergraduate nursing students

Table 3 provides data on the reliability and descriptive statistics of each of the ten items of the SMUIS. Based on Cronbach's alpha value (0.836), SMUIS appears to be a reliable research tool. In general, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable, with the scale items measuring the same underlying construct or concept [26]. The items appear to have a relatively consistent mean, but variations in standard deviations. This may point to potential disparities in how respondents interpret or respond to each item.

TABLE 3. The reliability and descriptive statistics of each of the ten items of the Social Media Use Integration Scale

Variable	Cronbach's alpha: 0.836	
	Mean	SD
Social Media Use Integration Scale_1	2.738166	1.165336
Social Media Use Integration Scale_2	2.776627	0.997234
Social Media Use Integration Scale_3	3.245562	1.166976
Social Media Use Integration Scale_4	2.884615	1.132025
Social Media Use Integration Scale_5	3.038462	1.142447
Social Media Use Integration Scale_6	3.355030	1.091918
Social Media Use Integration Scale_7	3.591716	0.951656
Social Media Use Integration Scale_8_R	3.847633	0.956309
Social Media Use Integration Scale_9	3.800296	0.917355
Social Media Use Integration Scale_10	3.507396	1.034919

Item 8 marked with an „R” indicate that this item is reverse scored.

Table 4 presents the results of the analysis on social media use among nursing students with SMUIS. This scale is divided into 2 subscales: SMUIS-A, which measures Social Integration and Emotional Connection, and SMUIS-B, focusing on Integration into Social Routines. The theoretical score range for the main SMUIS scale is 10–50 points [3]. In the study group of nursing students, the average score on this scale was 32.79, with a coefficient of variation of 20.54%.

In the context of the subscales, SMUIS-A showed a mean of 18.04 with a standard deviation of 4.73 and a coefficient of variation of 26.20%. On the other hand, for SMUIS-B, the mean was 14.75, the standard deviation was 2.64, and the coefficient of variation was 17.91%. This indicates a moderate level of social media integration in the study group, with some differences on the SMUIS-A subscale compared to the SMUIS-B.

Detailed results of the study using SMUIS in a representative group of nursing students are shown in Figure 1.

The distribution of the SMUIS is left skewed (skewness –0.481), with the highest number of observations in the range of 35–40. A few observations fell in the range of 5–15, which can be considered outliers. As for the analysis of the most important descriptive statistics, the average value obtained for the entire scale is 32.78. The standard deviation is 6.734, which suggests that the data is quite scattered. The variance of the results is 45.34, a value that confirms the dispersion of the data. The Shapiro–Wilk test,

which tests the normality of the distribution, has a p-value < 0.00001 (the data distribution is not normal).

TABLE 4. Social Media Use Integration Scale

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	CV (%)
Social Media Use Integration Scale	32.79	6.73	13.00	50.00	20.54
SMUIS-A Social Integration and Emotional Connection subscale	18.04	4.73	6.00	30.00	26.20
SMUIS-B Integration into Social Routines subscale	14.75	2.64	5.00	20.00	17.91

Mean – the average value of results for a given category; SD – standard deviation, this indicator shows how much individual results differ from the average; Minimum – the lowest score obtained in a given category; Maximum – the highest score obtained in a given category; CV (%) – this indicator shows how big the relative differences in the results are; it is the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean, expressed as a percentage.

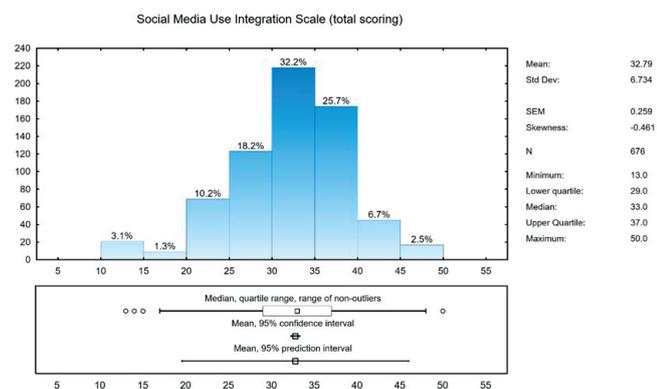


FIGURE 1. Detailed results of the study using the Social Media Use Integration Scale in a representative group of nursing students

DISCUSSION

The study at hand examined the integration of social media among nursing students in Poland through the utilization of the SMUIS tool. The results of the study are important from both theoretical and practical perspectives, as they provide a better understanding of how social media influences students' lives and what factors may generate differences in the level of social media integration.

The reliability analysis of the SMUIS tool, as measured by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.836), indicates good reliability of the tool. It is worth noting that this level of reliability is acceptable, attesting to the consistency of the results and their reliability [26]. Nevertheless, the differences in standard deviations indicate that there is some variation in the participants' interpretation or responses to the scale items.

The SMUIS mean score in the study group was 32.79, indicating a moderate level of social media integration. This finding aligns with outcomes observed by other researchers who

employed the SMUIS scale to assess the extent of social media integration in various student populations [27, 28]. Among nursing students, the findings in this study align with international literature [29, 30].

The analysis of the results obtained from our own research conducted on a representative group of Polish nursing students studying at Polish universities in first-degree courses reveals significant differences in the scope of social integration and emotional connection (subscale SMUIS-A) and the integration of social media into social routines (SMUIS-B).

The occurrence of the above differences suggests that there are important variables or factors that influence these 2 aspects. The mean score on the SMUIS-A subscale was 18.04, suggesting that students show relatively high levels of social integration and emotional connection through social media. In contrast, the mean score on the SMUIS-B subscale was 14.75, indicating lower levels of social media integration into daily routines. These disparities suggest that students may be using social media primarily to make social connections and sustain relationships rather than to integrate them into their daily routines. When analysing the differences observed, it is valuable to account for the factors that could influence the results. Age and experience may be one of them. First-year students, being part of the vast majority of the study group, may be more active in using social media, which may affect their higher level of integration [31]. Social media education and goals for social media use may be further factors influencing the results. Students who have received education related to the use of social media for educational purposes may show a higher level of their integration into their daily routines. As the majority of the study participants were first-year students, it is likely that the lower scores obtained on the SMUIS-B subscale are indicative of a lack of or insufficient education in this area [17]. These differences may also be related to cultural aspects that influence the use of social media [32].

A high coefficient of variation (CV) of 26.20% for the subscale SMUIS-A indicates diversity in the use of social media for social and emotional purposes. It can be inferred from this that for a certain subgroup of students, social media is a key element of emotional and social support [33]. At the same time, there is a large homogeneity in the scope of the SMUIS-B. A lower CV for SMUIS-B (17.91%) suggests less variability and more uniform use of social media in daily routines. This may mean that in contrast to the diversified attitude of students towards social media in the emotional and social aspect, social media is widely accepted as a communication and organization tool among nursing students [34].

Additionally, it is important to take into account the distribution of scores on the SMUIS scale. This distribution is left-skewed, meaning that the majority of the participants have scored in the 35–40 range, with only a few scoring lower. This suggests that the majority of the students achieve a moderate level of social media integration, but there are also those who use social media more intensively, as well as those who rather avoid using social media. The analysis of the distribution of the results shows that this is not evenly distributed in the study group.

In the literature, many factors are pointed out that may influence the level of social media integration among students, such as technology accessibility, cultural and social influences, or economic factors [35]. Another aspect that may affect the analyzed variable is the place of residence. Respondents living in large cities often exhibit a higher level of social media integration compared to individuals residing in smaller towns or villages [36]. In the presented study, the survey did not include a question about the place of residence, but the nursing students surveyed studied at medical universities that are large academic centers, so their place of residence should not be a factor influencing their level of social media integration. Regardless of the place of residence, students' use of social media is complex and multidimensional, covering various aspects of their academic, social, and personal lives [37]. Students often use social media for communication with friends or family. These platforms enable them to maintain connections, regardless of geographic distance. Social media is often used for collaboration and sharing educational resources as well. Student groups on Facebook, LinkedIn, or discussion forums focus on common subjects, projects, or the exchange of notes. Students also use social media for entertainment, such as browsing content on Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. Additionally, social media is utilized by students for building professional networks, seeking internship and job opportunities, and personal development through access to educational content and online courses. Social media can also serve as a source of current information, allowing students to stay updated on global and community events. Moreover, students often use social media to participate in social movements, campaigns, and discussions on important social and political issues [38, 39, 40].

The research findings obtained carry important educational and psychological implications. Higher scores in SMUIS-A can also be an indicator of a greater need for emotional support, which may be particularly important in the context of a stressful professional environment in the field of nursing. A high CV for SMUIS-A indicates the need for more individualized educational strategies to be offered by universities, as well as diversified forms of emotional support. For instance, emotional support programs may be more effective if they are tailored to the individual needs of students [41]. At the same time, a detailed analysis of the results obtained for the SMUIS-B subscale, i.e., a lower CV, suggests that educational strategies, such as disseminating information or educational materials through social media, may be effective on a broader scale.

It is noteworthy that the differences in scores on the SMUIS-A and SMUIS-B subscales suggest that social media integration is not a uniform process and may have different aspects. There is a need for further research to understand what factors influence these differences and how educational strategies can be adapted to meet the different needs and preferences of students.

The analysis of the SMUIS subscales indicates a complex picture of the integration of social media into the lives of nursing students, with various implications for educational practices and emotional support. Therefore, a multidimensional approach is recommended to understand and utilize social media in the educational and psychological context.

It is important to emphasize that the findings of this study are relevant not only in the context of nursing, but also in a wider educational context. As social media becomes more prevalent in everyday life, there is a need to better understand how this affects the processes of its integration into daily routines [42]. Research on the integration of social media into social life can provide important insights into how to use these tools effectively for educational purposes [43].

Strengths

In the context of the growing importance of social media in education, measurement tools such as the SMUIS are gaining importance. This publication provides the first analysis of nursing students' attitudes toward SMUIS use, filling a gap in the scientific literature. Thus, this study provides valuable data that can be used by educators and researchers in the country. The SMUIS scale is a relatively new tool, and its use in different cultural and educational contexts is crucial to its validation. In this study, the scale was used to assess the attitudes of nursing students, further strengthening its reliability and applicability in a variety of settings. This study is the first Polish representative survey of nursing students using the SMUIS scale. Therefore, its results are representative of the nursing student population in Poland, enabling the results to be generalized and applied to various educational contexts.

Further research

The results of the study presented in this publication can serve as a foundation for future research that may focus on specific interventions or on the understanding of cultural and demographic influences on social media use.

Future research could focus on longitudinal studies conducted to understand how nursing students' ability to use social media evolves over time or comparative analyses with students from other healthcare faculties. Studies could also explore the ethical implications of social media use, its formal integration into the nursing curriculum, and cross-cultural differences in social media use among nursing students globally.

When it comes to research gaps, there is a notable lack of tools specifically designed to measure the practical social media skills among nursing students. Most existing studies focus on broader demographics, leaving a gap in the literature that pertains to nursing students. Additionally, there is a lack of research that translates findings into practical ethical guidelines and real-world applications in nursing education. Outcome-based studies linking social media use to educational or clinical outcomes among nursing students are also sparse.

Limitations

In the context of the first study in Poland on nursing students' attitudes with the SMUIS, there are several critical points that need attention. First, validation of the SMUIS in different cultural and educational contexts is crucial, especially with its relatively new nature. Second, the study may not reflect the full range of SMUIS applications in educational practice.

Furthermore, a significant limitation of the survey instrument employed in this study is its inability to gauge the correlation between perceived social media integration and academic achievement levels throughout the undergraduate nursing education program. Consequently, additional research utilizing a more comprehensive research tool is imperative to yield more nuanced and thorough results.

As a result, although this study is a pioneering step in Poland, its limitations and shortcomings point to the need for further, more complex research that can provide a more comprehensive picture of the role and effectiveness of SMUIS in the context of nursing education.

CONCLUSIONS

The study offers an initial investigation into how Polish undergraduate nursing students integrate social media into their educational and professional lives. With the SMUIS, the research revealed a moderate level of social media integration among the student population. Interestingly, the study identifies greater variability in the emotional and social aspects of media use compared to its integration into daily routines.

This research serves as a cornerstone by being the first study to examine the attitudes of Polish nursing students regarding social media integration using SMUIS. It addresses a significant gap in current literature, and sets a model for future research in this area. However, the study has its limitations, signaling the necessity for more intricate research to comprehensively understand the role and efficacy of SMUIS in nursing education.

In the broader context of the growing relevance of social media in educational settings, the study underscores the importance of assessment tools like SMUIS. Thus, the research is twofold in its contribution: it augments academic knowledge and offers practical insights for educational strategists and policymakers in the field of nursing education.

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