

Use of Social Media for Establishing Virtual Relationships among Select University Students

Abdulgaffar O. Arikewuyo

Department of Mass Communication
Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
arikewuyo.aa@unilorin.edu.ng; ORCID: 0000-0001-5266-6478

Bahire Özad, PhD

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Faculty of Communication and Media Studies
Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta
North Cyprus via Mersin 10, Turkey
bahire.ozad@emu.edu.tr

Abubakar Saidu, PhD

Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
saidu.a@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

This research is an investigation of a prominent social media community (*River 9ija*) of Nigerian students across various higher institutions. Through in-depth interview, the study sampled 27 Nigerian students studying in various higher institutions in different countries. Findings from this study revealed that social media platforms do not only function as a medium of social connection and interaction; they play pivotal and significant roles in educating, informing, establishing all forms of business, romantic and educational relationships. Findings further showed that River 9ija is a great tool for fostering community integration. It was also found that the virtual community creates an opportunity for students to understand themselves better and have a common goal. Based on the findings, it was concluded that university students have found a common and unifying ground where they can interact and express themselves. It was, therefore, recommended that interaction via River 9ija needs to be encouraged, but moderated so that these students will not lose focus or concentration while in school.

Keywords: Communication, Social Media, Relationship, Snapchat, Student, Virtual Community

Introduction and Motivation for the Study

The unequivocal and rapid development witnessed by the social media world in recent time has continued to make a direct and indirect impact in the lives of its users (Abdulbaqi & Arikewuyo, 2013). Social media have drastically increased the online presence of youths in various ramifications (Saul, 2016). Though what the youths use social media for is still an area that needs further investigation, it is obvious that the platform enhances integration, education and entertainment among others. The platforms have become an effective and efficient means of promoting inter-personal communication and education; they have created an opportunity for educational convergence by allowing youths from diverse academic backgrounds meet at a center point (Fischer, 2016), where they can interact and share ideas. According to Knight & Weedon (2014, p. 257), “the current generation has grown up with social media and like the 10-year-old Facebook, Twitter too has become part of some people’s every day here and now.” With the aid of social media, global education network has become easier and more accessible (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell & Logan, 2012). This has encouraged more presence and use of social media and in turn, more online presence and interaction of both young and old.

Social media have continued to make significant impact on users at various levels; the platform has served as a medium to create, sustain and enhance existing relationships among individuals and groups. With its numerous disadvantages, which include distractions, addiction and cyber bullying among others, social media have been able to create a community in the virtual space. These communities serve various functions, which includes mobilisation, orientation and education to mention a few. However, there are questions about how effective social are in bringing individuals of like minds together to create a positive and lasting impact. This is the problem the study investigates.

Research Objectives

The ultimate objectives of this study are to:

1. Investigate the activities of Nigerian students studying in different higher institutions on the virtual community.
2. Find out the relationships among Nigerian students on the virtual platform (*River 9ija*)

Theoretical Framework and Review of Related Literature

The study was anchored on the uses and gratifications theory. Pioneered as a television theory, the uses and gratifications theory has remained one of the most sought after communication theories in the 21st century (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). The theory emphasises that the media users desire one or more gratifications in using a particular media platform (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973-1974). The

theory seeks to create an understanding on what motivates the audience to select and use a specific media platform in achieving the desired gratifications (Katz, 1957). However, recent technological developments have further upheld attention to the uses and gratifications theory (Dias, 2016). For example, the sporadic invention and use of mobile communication platforms have established further relevance as many users now seek gratifications on social media.

The uses and gratifications theory further creates an understanding about the ultimate and intrusive nature of the media. As such, the audiences possess the power of selection; the media are further able to influence users by placing premium on a select message across various channels (Atkin, Hunt & Lin, 2015). The uses and gratifications theory has, however, continued to remain relevant and most importantly dominant in media and technology studies due to the ability of the audience to choose from a fleet of platforms (mainstream and social media) where gratifications is to be sought (Hunt, Atkin & Krishnan, 2012). For instance, media audience now have the opportunity to choose either Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram or Twitter to connect, access information and establish virtual relationships amongst others. Due to various technological innovations, the uses and gratifications theory further seeks to illuminate the personal, psychological and emotional motivations behind the use media use and selection by the audience (So, 2012). In the case of this research, the theory will help understand the gratifications achieved by Nigerian students studying in different higher institutions on the virtual community (*River 9ija*).

Social media have been able to break the walls and barriers of transmission of education, thereby providing an array of opportunities for beyond the border education (Dumitrica, 2016). With the aid of social media, citizens can now organise a forum for the exchange of ideas, discuss class tasks and debates as well as for other educational purposes. Social media have created public fora for unbiased debate and exchange of ideas (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). Youths have now been able to find a more convenient means of sharing and receiving educational opportunities (Lee, Choi, Kim & Kim, 2014). With the development in this global technological trend, the virtual community has today, become a part of humanity. Scholars have stated that technology has brought about a total turnaround in human lives and changed the way we feel, think and act (Shen & Williams, 2011; Schouten, Hooff, & Feldberg, 2016). The virtual community exists to help people who are mostly of like minds, ideology and belief come together with the aid of technological innovations like social media, thereby transforming to a virtual community. Virtual communities have been linked with what is now known as digital cities. Myles (2004, p. 467) notes that “digital city networks, however, tend to be more interactive, have higher percentages of graphics to text and simulate a virtual reality (VR) form of participative environment.” This has fostered a global village as technology and digitisation have enhanced interactivity and connectivity.

Technology has been able to establish a platform where distance or difference in location would no longer be a barrier, thereby providing opportunities for holding meetings, conferences and discussions via social platforms (Crowston, Howison, Masango & Eseryel, 2007). For example, students or candidates could defend their proposals through skype calls, as well as, CEOs, advertisers or marketers could bid for contracts through the same platform, as such, satisfaction is achieved. However, it is important to note that technology has also contributed to a number of vices among students in higher institutions (Mayer & Moreno, 2003). These include lack of concentration in class, internet fraud and addiction amongst others. Based on the intrusive nature of the media, social media have become a major tool in influencing human decisions and ideologies (Ponder & Haridakis, 2015). They have provided a means of establishing a virtual community where people with like minds, motivation and drive come together to exchange ideas and thoughts to foster a better community, society and world at large (Wilkins & Huisman, 2015). One of such virtual communities is the River 9ija Community. This study conceptualises students in higher institutions as undergraduates who are studying at various universities and colleges.

Methodology

The virtual *River 9ija* community consists of over three thousand, five hundred members as at the time of this study. In-depth interview was the research method adopted in this study. According to Nixon, Scullion & Hearn (2016), in-depth interview enhances deep knowledge and understanding of activities and phenomenon. Through a purposive sampling approach, interviews were conducted with 27 members of the virtual community. This enabled us select active members of the community that have participated in the virtual snapchat community (*River 9ija*). The purposive sampling approach also helped to identify members of the virtual community who have hosted the daily interactions with the Snapchat community. Direct Messages (DM) for interviews were thereafter sent to all the participants via their Instagram handles. Out of all members that direct messages were sent to, only five members signified interested to be interviewed. The researchers then got directly across to the members of the community, but again, for the second time, only two more members responded positively

Thereafter, the researchers contacted the admin of the community. This act eventually proved highly productive. However, over 10 members of the community who responded to our message declined to be interviewed, while others acceded. We thereafter contacted the members who agreed to be interviewed through the mobile phone, but again not all of them responded to our calls. In all, 27 members of the virtual community were interviewed. The interviews lasted within 25-36 minutes each. Eventually, we got to a point of saturation after successfully interviewing these 27 members of the community.

Observations and notes were taken over the period of this study. However, the interview guide schedule formed the major instrument of the study and was used to provide in-depth analysis of the phenomenon being studied. The interviewees spanned across the UK, USA, Canada, Turkey, Nigeria, Australia, South Africa, Ukraine, Ghana, Sweden and Northern Cyprus.

Over a period of one year, we observed the community, becoming participant observers. Being a member of the community is free as there is no restriction, but we informed the “admin” who controls the activities of the virtual community as he further informed other members of our research project and intent. During the period, we observed activities and events in the community; we took notes, asked questions from members during and after hosting and eventually conducted formal in-depth interviews.

The interviews were conducted within a period of three months and were done via WhatsApp audio call and recorded with the aid of a recording midget. This is based on the fact that the interviewees were spread across different higher institutions. The interviews were thereafter transcribed with the support of research assistants. The transcriptions were thoroughly read and the answers grouped into themes (Wilson, Åkerlind, Walsh, Turner, & Shield, 2013). These thematic groupings helped in categorising the responses into sub-headings for analysis (Phillips, 2013; Jones, 2015). Reliability and validity were carried out in the research. The transcripts were verified and checked appropriately. Copies of the transcripts were initially sent to the interviewees so that they could verify and authenticate the transcriptions and themes. Among the 22 participants whom we sent the transcriptions due to the availability of their emails, only 19 of them replied and verified our transcriptions. According to Guba & Lincoln (1982), engaging experts in the area of research can also enhance validity. As such, we sent the transcripts to two senior researchers who are well experienced in qualitative research, a Professor of Communication and Media Studies and two Associate Professors in the field of education. These scholars thoroughly read the transcripts and independently coded the transcripts. Their suggestions were adopted in the study. These suggestions enhanced the quality of the analysis and the entire research. In order to protect the participants and not to go against research ethics, all participants were assigned pseudonym.

Results

The Virtual Community

The virtual community is an initiative of a Nigerian student studying at the Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. Its initial aim was to connect Nigerian students studying within and outside Nigeria to foster unity and cordial relationships, but over time; it began to accept other students from other parts of Africa. It also provides an avenue for students of higher institutions to build and promote their talent, business or educational skills. In one of our observations, we

noted that the community also provides an opportunity for these students to promote their different cultural heritage, as most of the hosts are always quick to tell which country they represent and as well, promote the uniqueness of their culture. Our findings over the period of observation reveal that the community, just like any other community comprises youths with diverse opinions and views to life.

The *River 9ija* community has grown from just a few Nigerian students in higher institutions to over three thousand five hundred students from various African countries who are located (studying) in different higher institutions across the globe. Gabrielle, 23 (a female accounting student in the United States who is in her 4th year at the university), said:

When you hear *River 9ija*, you would think it is just a normal Snapchat page that youth or students host, but when you become a part of the community, you will discover that this is a large community and it quite different. For instance, the highest view an individual will receive is about 100, but the *River 9ija* community has over 2000 viewers on snapchat, which is overwhelming.

Ulfred, 19 (a male Business Administration student in South Africa who is in his 1st year at the university), provided further explanation to the virtual community. He says:

The platform introduces students to the world of opportunities. The host tells people about himself and then tells people to ask him questions. In addition, people ask questions to know more the host. So it's basically question tags, maybe sometimes the host could be doing like some makeup tag just to show people his or her makeup skills or discussing the uniqueness of his/her university or course of study.

Participants in this study are also of a unifying opinion that the virtual community is a productive and intelligent initiative, which is quite thoughtful and different from the contemporary ways social media is being used positively. Keeva, 22 (a female Computer Science student in Sweden who is in her 2nd year at the university), said:

At first, it was a bit overwhelming for me because I see it as a way of going out of our 'cupboards.' I am the type that does not like to speak on a normal day because I am quite reserved. However, the *River 9ija* community is very nice since I like challenges.

Reynard, 24 (a male Medicine student in the United Kingdom and who is in his 4th year at the university), said:

I like the community. Though, that is when people who have memorable and interesting things to share are talking, but when someone has nothing to say, it does not really add up to me. I do not see why people will come up to talk on a populated and diverse platform to tell us that they are clubbing or smoking. It does not add any value nor does it benefit us as young adults who are studying to build a future.

The community has also been essential in bringing up talents and as well an avenue for the exchange of ideas. We observed that one of the participants who hosted earlier was at a point giving details of what entrepreneurial skill she possesses. She saw the platform as a perfect avenue to market her products. Vadim, 20 (a male Medicine student in Ukraine and who is in his 2nd year at the university), said:

It is a good platform for advertisement and to build knowledge. If you come up with a very good business idea people will look down on you and tell you there is no way you would get a lot of people to give you attention at the same time, but on *River 9ija* you grow fast in a very short time.

Revelations from participants indicate that the advent of technology has been one of the most prominent factors that have led to the development of global communication and in-turn enhanced virtual community (McLoughlin, Patel, O'Callaghan & Reeves, 2018). The virtual community has been able to break the communication barriers that can be found within communities.

Establishing Relationships

The *River 9ija* community has helped in linking up youth especially students who are of the same orientation or otherwise thereby prompting them to interact and share views. It was also discovered that it is a good way of making new friends and meeting new people as it helps individuals develop themselves. Linda, 19 (a female Accounting student in the United Kingdom and who is in her 2nd year at the university), said:

It really helps but there are so many people that feel certain relationship are wrong. Some people ask about the pros and cons of distant relationships. Most of the people who ask those questions have had some kind of experience and there are many people who do not have such experience.

Quite a number of the respondents described the platform as one of the modern day ways of meeting romantic partners, stating that social networks have provided avenue for romantic relationships to thrive across borders. They explained further that with the *River 9ija* community, quite a number of youths

have met one another, established a relationship and taken it further, stating that such relationships are working and doing fine. Gabrielle, 23 (a female accounting student in the United States who is in her 4th year at the university), said:

In terms of relationships, I will say it is good. Like my dad says, university and school are not just for education, you go out to meet people, and you build relationships because you never know when or where that particular relationship will help. For *River 9ija*, I know some very intelligent people that got my attention and we became friends on snapchat and all social media platforms because I felt they are intelligent and they have something I wanted or I needed.

Among the male participants, only one of them does not totally affirm that it is a basic platform for building romantic relationships. Genevieve, 21 (a female Psychology student in Australia who is in her 4th year at the university), said:

I do not find such on the platform. It is not what I am looking for on that platform, but am sure some people do find love there. I have seen a feedback about a lady who said she found someone she likes on the platform and things are moving pretty fine for them. This makes me affirm that it is a good relationship and socialisation platform but for me I am interested in friendship and business partners.

In addition, on the contrary, Rosalind, 19 (a female Medicine student in Ukraine and who is in her 2nd year at the university), said:

I actually have met so many people through *River 9ija* when I hosted. It was a person that added me up but unfortunately, I do not do all the love talk, but my friend actually met her boyfriend on *River 9ija*. She hosted and the 'guy' was in another city close to her. He was interested in her, they met and that was how the relationship started. I strongly believe it is a good platform for establishing relationships, depending on motive and personality.

Majority of the members of the community believe there is nothing wrong with a relationship or friendship over social media, especially in such a virtual community where members are youth and most importantly students. They enumerated that quite a number of youths do not physically connect with people on matters of their relationships, but when it comes to social media, they are able to connect and explore with other people, as well as, build strong relationships. They stated that *River 9ija* community also helps to promote good business relationships, thereby describing it as a wise platform to establish, build and promote all forms of relationships. Franka, 21 (a female Law student in Nigeria

and who is in her 2nd year at the university), said some of the members see it as a way of socialisation and building relationships.

I do not think the group has achieved its ultimate objective. For example, when a new host comes on, the first thing members of the group would ask is: do you have a boyfriend? I do not know if it is to push women but with me, after I hosted, there were quite many males contacting me but I was not ready for that. I do not think I see myself getting involved with someone just because he saw me on a social media platform but it depends on the personality involved.

Building and maintaining relationships is an integral part of human life and with the advent of the virtual community, relationships have been further built, sustained and enhanced in different ramifications (Chih, Hsu, & Liou, 2017). These include business, friendship, romance and other forms of human relationships.

Virtual Education

One of the basic functions of the community is to provide its community members with educational resources and highly intellectual discussions. They also say the community has over time encouraged them to strive hard and accomplish their dreams. Abdul, 20 (a male Environmental Science student in Turkey and who is in his 2nd year at the university), said:

When I saw someone host and he shared some of the things he has gone through in life, I discovered that I have not gone through anything in life. As such, I need to stay strong and pursue my dreams. It has helped me personally to know how to live my daily life.

The participants described the educational contents on the page as highly empowering, stating that the contents on the community page motivate and inspire the members. Rosalind, 19 (a female Medicine student in Ukraine and who is in her 2nd year at the university), said:

In terms of education, it is like a diverse feeling of people from different places with different educational backgrounds and levels of intelligence. For instance, I am a medical student so I have seen a few medical students, and we have connected, we now share ideas and quite a number of them are very intelligent and brilliant.

One other essential aspect of the educational roles of the community is the use of various hosts to educate and enlighten members about the various places and cities across the world and as well building individual communication skills.

Xander, 20 (a male Communication and Media Studies student in North Cyprus and who is in his 3rd year at the university), said:

One of my greatest wishes in life is to go around the world, but you know that is quite expensive and you cannot have access to everywhere based on age or visa and some other circumstances beyond control. Therefore, this platform serves as a way of moving around the world just by sitting in my room. With the community, you also get to find out things that you are not educated about or you would have to pay money to get.

Franka, 21 (a female Law student in Nigeria and who is in her 2nd year at the university), said:

The group is very educative, it tells you that the youth are actually doing many things and not just idle. There is this young man, he was involved in a YouTube tutorial. I find him as one of the most educative persons I have seen and he was actually doing something amazing. I feel the tutorial is very educative and can empower other people who are interested. I believe it all depends on the integrity and educational level of the person that is hosting as not everyone has such to offer.

It is obvious that the virtual community is a platform where education, ideas and knowledge can be received and shared (Ghanbarzadeh & Ghapanchi, 2018). The platform has also elaborated that education takes various forms and can be of benefit to a large number of people.

Discussion of Findings

This study creates a better understanding of the various activities in the virtual community and most importantly highlights the various uses and benefits of such community among university students. Findings from this study reveal that social media platforms do not only function as a medium for social connecting and interaction; they also play pivotal and significant roles in educating, entertaining, informing, establishing all forms of romantic, business and educational relationship, as well as, a great tool for fostering integration. The platform has provided an avenue to help university students studying in different parts of the world have limitless access to educative contents. This is due to the variety of people who are located in different places across the world and as well, have access to different forms of education. With this, members are able to have an understanding of events and practices in different parts of the world. This has brought about a change of orientation, as well as, the way of life, thereby improving their skills and ability as a result of technological development (Welzer, Venuti, Ward, Hölbl & Družovec, 2011).

Communication patterns established by the community have helped members grow in different ramifications. Based on access to the Internet, educating the youth through such a virtual community has become easy and quite effective. This is due to the pleasure many youths derive when logged on to the various social networking sites, as such becoming an effective way of reaching them and passing the required messages.

This study further establishes an understanding of activities of university students in virtual communities and how they use social media in promoting mutual relationships. One of the most prominent advantages of the virtual community is building a long lasting relationship. With the aid of the *River 9ija* community, relationships have been built in all ramifications. This study establishes that the community has not only become an agent of socialisation, it has contributed immensely to building, enhancing and sustaining relationships. Such community has been able to increase the global friendship base of its members.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study has been able to establish that university students have found a common and unifying ground where they can interact and express themselves. The study also has been able to create a more detailed understanding of activities such as education, integration and relationship that exist within the virtual space of students, though not without its disadvantages. This is in tandem with the uses and gratifications theory, which postulates that media users seek gratifications from their use of media. As in the case of this study, the gratifications sought by these university students include: education, integration and building relationships. Therefore, social media play an important role in establishing, maintaining and harnessing global brother-hood among university students without distance or proximity as a barrier. This is an important development and needs to be encouraged, but moderated so that these students will not lose focus or concentration while in school.

References

- Abdulbaqi, S. S. & Arikewuyo, A. O. (2013). The broadcast media and sustainability of peace in Ilorin: An assessment of the impact of radio and television. In A. A. Oladosu., Z. I. Oseni. & M. A. Adedimeji (Eds.). *History, Culture and Lessons of Peaceful Co-Existence* (p. 244-257). Ilorin: Centre For Ilorin Studies.
- Atkin, D. J., Hunt, D. S. & Lin, C. A. (2015). Diffusion theory in the new media environment: Toward an integrated technology adoption model. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18(5), 623-650.

- Chih, W. H., Hsu, L. C. & Liou, D. K. (2017). Understanding virtual community members' relationships from individual, group and social influence perspective. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 117(6), 990-1010.
- Crowston, K., Howison, J., Masango, C. & Eseryel, U. Y. (2007). The role of face-to-face meetings in technology supported self-organising distributed teams. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 50(3), 185-203.
- Dias, P. (2016). Motivations for multi-screening: An exploratory study on motivations and gratifications. *European Journal of Communication*, 31(6), 678-693.
- Dumitrica, D. (2016). Imagining engagement: Youth, social media and electoral processes. *Convergence*, 22(1), 35-53.
- Fischer, M. (2016). #Free_CeCe: the material convergence of social media. *Feminist Media Studies*, 16(5), 755-771.
- Ghanbarzadeh, R. & Ghapanchi, A. H. (2018). Investigating various application areas of three-dimensional virtual worlds for higher education. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 49(3), 370-384.
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29(2), 75-91.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *ECTJ*, 30(4), 233-252.
- Hermida, A., Fletcher, F., Korell, D. & Logan, D. (2012). Share, like, recomend. *Journalism Studies*, 13(5-6), 815-824.
- Hunt, D., Atkin, D. & Krishnan, A. (2012). The influence of computer-mediated communication apprehension on motives for facebook use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56(2), 187-202.
- Jick, T. D. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Triangulation in action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4), 602-611.
- Johnson, S. R. & Stage, F. K. (2018). Academic engagement and student success: Do high-impact practices mean higher graduation rates? *The Journal of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F00221546.2018.1441107>.
- Jones, J. M. (2015). The looking glass lens: Self-concept changes due to social media practices. *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, 4(1), 100-125.
- Katz, E. (1957). The two-step flow of communication: An up-to-date report on an hypothesis. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21(1), 61-78.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G. & Gurevitch, M. (1973-1974). Uses and gratifications research. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509-523.
- Knight, J. & Weedon, A. (2014). Identity and social media. *Convergence*, 20(3), 257-258.

- LaRose, R. & Eastin, M. S. (2004). A social cognitive theory of internet uses and gratifications: Toward a new model of media attendance. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 48(3), 358-377.
- Lee, JLee. K., Choi, J., Kim, C. & Kim, Y. (2014). Social media, network heterogeneity and opinion polarisation. *Journal of Communication*, 64, 702-722.
- Mayer, R. E. & Moreno, R. (2003). Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 38(1), 43-52.
- McLoughlin, C., Patel, K. D., O'Callaghan, T. & Reeves, S. (2018). The use of virtual communities of practice to improve interprofessional collaboration and education: Findings from an integrated review. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 32, 136-142.
- Myles, J. (2004). Community networks and cultural intermediaries: The politics of community net development in greater Manchester. *Media, Culture & Society*, 26(4), 467-490.
- Nixon, E., Scullion, R. & Hearn, R. (2016). Her majesty the student: Marketised higher education and the narcissistic (dis)satisfactions of the student-consumer. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(6), 927-943.
- Phillips, L. M. (2013). Offering hope and making attributions through YouTube: An exploratory ethnographic content analysis of the social change-oriented: It gets better project. *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, 2(1), 31-65.
- Ponder, J. D. & Haridakis, P. (2015). Selectively social politics: The differing roles of media use on political discussion. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18, 281-302.
- Saul, R. (2016). Education and the mediated subject: What today's teachers need most from researchers of youths and media. *Journal of Children and Media*, 10(2), 156-163.
- Schouten, A. P., Hooff, B. & Feldberg, F. (2016). Virtual team work: Group decision making in 3D virtual environments. *Communication Research*, 43(2), 180-210.
- Shen, C. & Williams, D. (2011). Unpacking time online: Connecting Internet and massively multiplayer online game use with psychosocial well-being. *Communication Research*, 38(1), 123-149.
- So, J. (2012). Uses, gratifications and beyond: Toward a model of motivated media exposure and its effects on risk perception. *Communication Theory*, 22, 116-137.
- Tufekci, Z. & Wilson, C. (2012). Social media and the decision to participate in political protest: Observations from Tahrir Square. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 363-379.
- Welzer, T., Venuti, M. Z., Ward, A. E., Hölbl, M. & Družovec, M. (2011). Virtual education centre for the development of expert skills and competencies.

Virtual Education Centre for the Development of Expert Skills and Competencies, 4(4), 51-53.

- Wilkins, S. & Huisman, J. (2015). Factors affecting University image formation among prospective higher education Students: The case of international branch campuses. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40 (7), 1256-1272.
- Wilson, A., Åkerlind, G., Walsh, B., Turner, B. & Shield, A. (2013). Making professionalism meaningful to students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38 (8), 1222-1238.