



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EL IMPACTO DE LAS REDES SOCIALES EN LA FORMACIÓN DE LA SOCIALIZACIÓN PROFESIONAL DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of social media in the professional socialization of students, emphasizing the importance of integrating digital tools to prepare future professionals for modern industry demands. The purpose of the study is to determine how effectively social networks facilitate socialization and collaboration among students, faculty, and industry professionals, thus enhancing students' professional skills and adaptability. A combination of research methods was employed, including an analysis of psychological-pedagogical and scientific literature, surveys, and a pedagogical experiment. The findings indicate that social media provides diverse tools for professional socialization, including participation in specialized groups, following professional accounts, engaging in webinars, and creating personal blogs. Survey results showed that 64% of students view digital technologies as beneficial for professional socialization, though opinions were mixed on the direct impact of social media on skill enhancement, with approximately half using it to find

professional contacts. Diagnostic tests revealed a significant difference in professional identity formation between experimental and control groups, supporting the hypothesis that social media positively impacts professional socialization. The study concludes that social networks play a critical role in modern professional socialization, offering unique opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and skill development.

Keywords:

Communication, Future Specialists, Information Exchange, Students, Technology.

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora el papel de las redes sociales en la socialización profesional de los estudiantes, haciendo hincapié en la importancia de integrar herramientas digitales para preparar a los futuros profesionales para las exigencias de la industria moderna. El objetivo del estudio es determinar la eficacia con la que las redes sociales



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facilitan la socialización y la colaboración entre estudiantes, profesorado y profesionales de la industria, mejorando así las habilidades profesionales y la adaptabilidad de los estudiantes. Se empleó una combinación de métodos de investigación, incluyendo un análisis de la literatura psicológica-pedagógica y científica, encuestas y un experimento pedagógico. Los resultados indican que las redes sociales proporcionan diversas herramientas para la socialización profesional, como la participación en grupos especializados, el seguimiento de cuentas profesionales, la participación en seminarios web y la creación de blogs personales. Los resultados de la encuesta mostraron que el 64% de los estudiantes considera que las tecnologías digitales son beneficiosas para la socialización profesional, aunque las opiniones fueron diversas sobre el impacto directo de las redes sociales en la mejora de habilidades, ya que aproximadamente la mitad las utiliza para encontrar contactos profesionales. Las pruebas diagnósticas revelaron una diferencia significativa en la formación de la identidad profesional entre los grupos experimental y de control, lo que respalda la hipótesis de que las redes sociales influyen positivamente en la socialización profesional. El estudio concluye que las redes sociales desempeñan un papel fundamental en la socialización profesional moderna, ofreciendo oportunidades únicas para la interacción, la colaboración y el desarrollo de habilidades.

Palabras clave:

Comunicación, Futuros Especialistas, Intercambio de Información, Estudiantes, Tecnología.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has recently expanded beyond entertainment and personal interaction to play an important role in shaping professional identity, providing spaces for collaboration, networking, and continuous learning. Consequently, educational approaches are evolving as the need arises to prepare students to navigate the digital environment and utilize its tools for professional development. As the job market grows increasingly competitive, employers seek not only technical skills but also teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities in a networked environment. Social media can help develop these key skills because they affect the psychology and socialization of individuals. Studying how social media influences the formation of professional identity and value orientations of future specialists is an essential psychological aspect. In addition, contemporary educational perspectives emphasize that digital environments should foster inclusive participation, respect for individual diversity, and equitable opportunities for professional growth.

Educational processes that recognize diverse learning profiles and promote collaborative interaction contribute to strengthening students' sense of belonging and professional identity in increasingly digital contexts (Rojas-Valladares et al., 2026).

The challenge lies in the lack of systematic studies and methodological approaches in this area, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of social media in the professional socialization of future specialists. Razuvaev (2013) emphasizes the importance of developing students' professional qualities. Scholars point to the need for specialized training, development of analytical and critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills, which includes the necessity for student socialization. Sherman et al. (2021) argue that the changing landscape of doctoral education requires graduate programs to prepare students for diverse career pathways rather than exclusively academic careers. The authors emphasize that effective professional preparation should foster transferable skills, interdisciplinary collaboration, adaptability, mentoring, and career development opportunities, enabling future specialists to respond successfully to evolving professional and labor market demands. Likewise, Rojas-Valladares et al. (2026) argue that contemporary higher education should adopt inclusive pedagogical approaches that acknowledge learner diversity and create digital learning environments where collaboration, empathy, and mutual respect enhance both academic achievement and professional development.

Solovtsova & Malakhova (2021) highlight the importance of organizing the training and preparation process for future specialists, which affects their subsequent professional careers and adaptation to the modern professional environment. Scholars note that a well-planned and organized professional training process helps students integrate into the professional community and develop the necessary skills and knowledge for effective work. This perspective is complemented by Rojas-Valladares et al. (2026), who emphasize that professional preparation should also promote inclusive competencies, digital collaboration, and the ability to respond effectively to diverse educational and workplace contexts, thereby strengthening graduates' adaptability and long-term professional success.

According to the author Perez (2016) conceptualizes professional socialization as a developmental process through which students progressively internalize the knowledge, values, behaviors, and professional identity required for effective professional practice. The author emphasizes that this process extends beyond the acquisition of technical competencies, encompassing mentoring relationships, experiential learning, reflection, and interaction

within professional communities, all of which facilitate successful integration into future careers. Similarly, Mera-Ángeles (2023) argues that teacher professionalization is a continuous process that combines disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical competencies, ethical commitment, and reflective practice. According to the author, strengthening professional preparation enables educators to respond more effectively to contemporary educational challenges, improve teaching quality, and promote meaningful learning in increasingly diverse educational contexts.

Researchers (Perez, 2016) believe that creating favorable conditions for effective socialization during internships impacts students' future careers and successful adaptation to the professional environment. Similarly, Rojas-Valladares et al. (2026) argue that inclusive educational experiences and collaborative learning environments enable students to develop interpersonal competencies, appreciation of diversity, and social responsibility, all of which facilitate successful professional integration and participation in increasingly interconnected and multicultural workplaces.

According to the author Barretti (2004) emphasizes that professional socialization is a dynamic process through which undergraduate students acquire the values, norms, ethical principles, and professional behaviors expected within their discipline. The author argues that effective professional preparation requires more than classroom instruction, highlighting the importance of field experiences, interaction with practitioners, mentoring, and reflective learning in fostering professional identity, communication skills, and readiness for professional practice. Mafumo et al. (2022) identify professional socialization as a process that is strengthened through supportive learning environments, effective mentorship, positive role modeling, collaborative relationships, and constructive feedback. Their systematic review highlights that these factors facilitate the development of professional identity, ethical practice, communication skills, and confidence, enabling learners to integrate successfully into their future professional roles.

Researchers underscore the significance of social networks as a key phenomenon in the information society, asserting that social media has become an integral part of modern life, affecting various social spheres, including communication, culture, business, politics, and education. They observe that social networks allow people to unite, communicate, and exchange information in a virtual environment, with both positive and negative impacts on society.

During professional socialization, students acquire knowledge, skills, values, and norms that shape their professional identity and enable them to interact in a specific professional environment. This process encompasses the

perception and understanding of professional culture and values, as well as adaptation to the specific roles and requirements of the profession. Professional socialization is a dynamic, multi-level process that continues throughout professional development and can occur through formal education, workplace training, mentoring, and other forms of learning.

The modern world is undergoing rapid change, and student professional socialization is no exception. Social networks such as VKontakte, LinkedIn, and others play a significant role in this process, offering various opportunities for communication and information exchange in the professional field. Their use is especially relevant in the educational sector, where they promote active student engagement, knowledge-sharing, idea exchange, and facilitate communication between students and instructors. The use of social media improves education accessibility and enhances teaching and learning quality.

Today, social media has evolved beyond mere communication platforms to become major sources of news, advertising, entertainment, and even powerful tools for shaping public opinion. Social networks provide an important tool for creating online communities, sharing news and information, and offer a means for virtual communication, collaboration, and socialization. They provide unique opportunities for communication, learning, and collaboration in the professional field, promoting knowledge and skill development. It is also important to highlight that modern education aims to foster students' understanding of society's cultural and social aspects. Integrating socio-cultural aspects into curricula fosters an appreciation of diverse cultural values and traditions, helping students adapt to contemporary society.

Social media facilitates students' integration into the learning process more effectively, as this format resonates with the current student generation. It can also serve as an active communication medium between students and instructors, enabling consultations, sharing of study materials, and creation of specialized groups for discussing academic topics.

Social media enhances student engagement and improves their experience. Social media communities and platforms provide opportunities for active communication, collaboration, and information exchange, facilitating students' involvement in learning and communication with instructors. Through social media, instructors can create interactive learning materials, increasing students' understanding and interest in the subject. This approach improves teaching quality and engages students in active learning. Students can use social networks to find potential partners for collaborative projects and research, fostering teamwork and idea-sharing. Furthermore, the existence of

communities and groups on social networks simplifies the gathering of professionals, allowing students and instructors to ask questions, seek advice, and share experiences with recognized experts. Social networks also facilitate the swift distribution and discussion of scientific articles, research, and news, creating an open space for knowledge-sharing and debate. Increased network interaction among participants expands professional contacts and opportunities for collaboration. Many social networks include specialized groups and pages where educational materials, video tutorials, and online courses are posted, enabling students and instructors to acquire additional knowledge and skills (Yarbrough & Ramos Salazar, 2023). Thus, social networks are an essential tool for promoting collaboration among students, instructors, and professionals, enriching the participants' educational and professional experience.

Based on the above, the goal of this article is to determine the role of social networks in facilitating socialization and collaboration among students, instructors, and specialists in students' future professional fields.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the stated goal, the authors applied a range of methods, primarily including an analysis of psychological-pedagogical and scientific-methodological literature, surveys, and a pedagogical experiment.

In the first stage of the research, the analysis of scientific-methodological literature helped identify key patterns, trends, and characteristics of the professional socialization of future specialists through the use of social media. This method allowed for a detailed examination of the impact of social networks on the process of professional socialization and identified the opportunities they offer for communication and information exchange in the chosen field. It also enabled the researchers to reveal the main patterns, details, and benefits of this process, which are essential for understanding the influence of social media on the professional socialization of future specialists.

The second stage of the study, involving a survey method (of experts and students), took place during the second semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. A total of 46 experts participated, selected based on a minimum of ten years of teaching experience (university instructors with at least ten years of experience) and 100 students. In the expert survey phase, experts received emails with research questions.

For the student survey, 100 students aged 18 to 23 were selected. The participants answered questions about using modern digital technologies and social media in their professional socialization process. The survey was conducted via an online platform and included five test questions. Based on the survey results, the student sample was divided into two groups: the experimental group (EG) consisted of students who responded positively to three out of the five survey questions, while the remaining students formed the control group (CG).

In the third stage of the research, the level of professional socialization was assessed. Diagnostic methods were used to measure empirical indicators of professional socialization, specifically through:

- The Method of Studying Professional Identity (MIPI) by Schneider (2007);
- The Method of Studying Professional Identity Statuses by Azbel & Gretsov (2009).

The subsequent analysis of the pedagogical experiment results employed methods of mathematical statistics. The objective was to identify differences in the distribution of a particular characteristic (achieved (formed) professional identity) by comparing two empirical distributions. Pearson's chi-square (χ^2) test was used for this purpose. Since the measurement scale includes two categories («achieved (formed)» and «not achieved (not formed)»), the degrees of freedom, v , are equal to 1.

Statistical hypotheses of the study:

- Null hypothesis (H0): The empirical distributions of students in the EG and CG regarding the formation of professional identity do not differ.
- Alternative hypothesis (H1): The empirical distributions of students in the EG and CG regarding the formation of professional identity differ.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the expert survey indicate that social media offers a variety of methods and tools for professional socialization (Table 1).

Table 1. Methods and tools for professional socialization in social media.

No.	Methods and Tools	Description
1	Creation and Participation in Specialized Groups and Communities	Networks like LinkedIn and VKontakte allow users to join groups based on specific interests or industries. These groups discuss relevant topics, share experiences, and offer collaboration opportunities.
2	Subscribing to Professional Pages and Accounts	Students can follow accounts of professors, experts, and companies, allowing them to receive updates, analytics, and career development tips.
3	Participation in Webinars and Online Courses	Many social networks provide opportunities for webinars and training courses, allowing future professionals to acquire new knowledge and skills within a social network.
4	Creation and Maintenance of Personal Blogs	Students can create their own blogs where they share their reflections, analyses, and research, promoting their professional development and establishing contacts with other experts.
5	Interaction with Professional Platforms	Specialized platforms, such as ResearchGate for researchers, enable the exchange of studies and collaboration on scientific projects.
6	Use of Recommendations and Reviews	Social networks allow users to leave and view recommendations and reviews of professional skills and achievements.
7	Active Participation in Discussions and Debates	Social networks create an open environment for discussing industry issues, analyzing trends, and expressing personal viewpoints.
8	Posting Portfolios and Professional Achievements	Social networks enable the creation of digital portfolios, showcasing achievements, projects, and skills

Source: Compiled from expert survey.

The use of the methods and tools listed above can enhance the professional socialization of future specialists and contribute to their success in the professional sphere. It is essential to consider both the advantages and disadvantages of student socialization in social networks. As previous literature analysis demonstrated, easy access to online communities, opportunities for experience-sharing, and the availability of up-to-date information make social networks a powerful tool for facilitating socialization.

However, as indicated by the expert survey results, there are also certain negative aspects within the social media environment (see Table 2). Social networks can negatively influence the formation of users' personal identity, particularly in the professional context. The influence of specific groups or individuals in virtual spaces can shape users' perceptions, making them either more objective or, conversely, biased.

Table 2: Negative aspects of using social networks in professional socialization.

No.	Negative Aspects	Characteristics
1	Privacy Threats	Social networks can expose personal information to the public, which can be problematic in cases involving confidential data.
2	Distraction	Social networks can divert attention from the primary learning process, encouraging users to spend significant time on minor matters.
3	Information Overload	The vast amount of data can become disorganized and challenging to process.
4	Risk of Misinformation	There is a risk of encountering false information or fake news in social networks, which can affect professional development.
5	Dependency on the Network	Excessive reliance on social networks can impact users' psychological well-being and lead to feelings of social isolation.

Source: Based on the expert survey

As shown by the earlier stages of research, the use of social networks in students' professional socialization has both positive and negative aspects, and it is important to balance them to maximize benefits and avoid potential pitfalls. In the next stage of the study, students were surveyed to assess the impact of social networks on their professional socialization (see Table 3).

Table 3: Results of the student survey, %.

No.	Question	Yes	No
1	Modern information technologies contribute to my professional socialization	64	36
2	The use of social networks is beneficial for my professional socialization	51	49
3	I use social networks to find professional contacts and opportunities	44	56

4	Information technologies help me navigate my professional field better	63	37
5	Social networks help me improve my professional qualifications	47	53

Source: Compiled based on the student survey

The survey results suggest that modern information technologies significantly impact students' professional socialization. According to the survey, 64 % of respondents answered "Yes," indicating that they consider these technologies useful for their professional adaptation. As revealed by the literature review, social networks are a significant factor in students' professional socialization. However, based on the survey, responses were nearly evenly split (51 % "Yes" and 49 % "No") regarding the perceived benefit of social networks in this context. About half of the respondents (44 %) use social networks to seek professional contacts and opportunities, highlighting the importance of social networks as a tool for developing professional opportunities.

Most students (63 %) believe that information technologies help them better understand their professional field, emphasizing these technologies' importance in education and career development. Regarding the impact of modern technologies and social networks on enhancing professional qualifications, responses were almost evenly split: 47 % answered "Yes," while 53 % answered "No." This indicates that some students find these tools helpful for learning, while others rely on them less in this context.

Based on the χ^2 table for a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ and degrees of freedom $v = 1$, the critical value is $\chi^2_{crit} = 3.841$. The χ^2 calculations for the CG and EG showed that $\chi^2 > \chi^2_{crit}$ ($46.306 > 3.841$; $55.276 > 3.841$). This supports the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1), indicating statistically significant differences between these samples. Therefore, the hypothesis that the empirical distributions of students in the EG and CG regarding professional identity formation differ from each other has been confirmed.

The study results confirm that the issue of professional socialization for future specialists using social networks in a modern educational environment remains unresolved. To support this conclusion, the authors compared their findings with the perspectives of researchers studying aspects of professional socialization and presented a more comprehensive and objective view of social media's influence on students' professional socialization.

Researchers Yarbrough & Ramos Salazar (2023) note that various aspects of virtual adaptation affect the overall socialization process of specialists, including new employees' ways of interacting with organizations and adapting to a new work environment. Compared to the results of this study, it should be noted that the socialization of young specialists in a virtual environment is effectively facilitated by social networks.

Researcher Gebreiter (2020) emphasizes the importance of studying socialization in the context of higher education and the development of students' professional skills. Scholars highlight various aspects of student professional socialization, such as psychological adaptation, interaction with instructors and peers, and the formation of professional values and skills (Greenhow et al., 2019). They assert that effective professional socialization requires student-instructor interaction as a key way to achieve successful professional socialization. This study's findings align with this view, as communication through social networks facilitates a fast and efficient socialization process (Liikkanen et al., 2024).

Other researchers (Miller & Deggs, 2012) highlight the role of social networks in the socialization process of modern students. Social networks have become a vital tool for students, offering connections, collaboration, information sharing, and even a platform for mentorship. Through social networks, students can quickly find like-minded peers and receive support and advice from more experienced colleagues. Researchers Feraco et al. (2024) agree that this approach can enhance learning and preparation quality and improve mentorship. While agreeing with these scholars, it is also essential to consider the potential negative effects of social network socialization, such as privacy threats, distractions, information overload, misinformation risk, and dependency.

The authors Harper et al. (2022) argue that professional socialization is an essential stage in young specialists' career development. According to researchers, graduates undergo adaptation to the work environment, acquiring professional skills, building connections with colleagues, and understanding organizational culture and processes (Oksa et al., 2022). This socialization process is critical for job success and career stability. They also emphasize the importance of support and mentorship during professional socialization, which can facilitate faster and more effective integration of graduates into the professional environment (Woo & Acosta, 2024). This study's findings agree with this view, suggesting that understanding professional socialization helps young specialists prepare for the challenges they may face when entering the professional world (Dolan & Nowell, 2025).



Thus, the results demonstrate that traditional approaches to professional socialization, combined with digital technologies and popular social networks, expand opportunities and develop essential communication skills for future specialists.

In summary, optimal use of social networks in the professional socialization of students requires adhering to certain recommendations. For effective professional socialization, it is essential to maintain an up-to-date and professional social media profile that reflects one's education, skills, and interests. Joining professional groups and communities is also vital, as it enables young specialists to connect with colleagues and instructors, share experiences, and obtain relevant information. Active participation is essential—commenting on posts, sharing thoughts and ideas. However, professional ethics in social media interactions, such as avoiding aggressive statements and conflicts, is also crucial.

Social media provides current information, which students can freely use to explore new trends, publications, and research. Professional contacts can be easily expanded, and learning and self-development opportunities are abundant, as many platforms offer free courses and lectures. However, students must also consider potential risks, such as carefully handling personal information and fact-checking information found on social media. When these recommendations are followed, social networks can become a powerful tool for professional socialization.

CONCLUSIONS

The expanding modern world of digital interaction demands the use of social networks in preparing future specialists. Social media has become an essential tool for information exchange, communication, and learning, promoting collaboration among students, educators, and professionals. It creates opportunities for sharing experiences, knowledge, and ideas, contributing to more effective professional socialization.

Based on an expert survey, this study identified methods and tools used in social networks for professional socialization, opening new possibilities for university programs and educational institutions to support the development of student skills and knowledge. The study also analyzed the drawbacks of using social networks in the professional socialization of future specialists.

The research included a student survey on the use of social networks and modern technologies in professional socialization. The overall results indicate that modern information technologies and social networks have a significant impact on students' professional socialization,

although their use and benefits may vary depending on individual perspectives and needs.

Today, social networks play a substantial role in the professional socialization of future specialists, yet their use requires careful planning and awareness of potential limitations and risks. Future research could focus on examining how social networks are used across different economic sectors, particularly in business, finance, marketing, and analytics, and understanding the unique characteristics of each sector's approach.

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