

## Sharing Learning Materials via SNS: Altruistic Behavior in a Competitive World? (Poster)

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### Abstract

This study focuses on students' sharing of learning materials via SNS: the scope of the phenomenon, what, when, why and how material is shared. Based on a representative sample of 205 Israeli teenagers, sharing learning materials is common practice. Students recognize the advantages of shared materials (higher grades, peers' support) but also struggle with dilemmas with regards to it (feelings of exploitation or inadequacy or conflicts regarding cheating).

SNS have drastically increased students' abilities to share learning materials (lecture notes, summaries, etc.) with their peers. However this phenomenon has not received much attention in educational research (Lampe, Wohn, Vitak, Ellison & Wash, 2011). What is the scope of the phenomenon, and what, when, why and how is material shared? Why should the best students spend efforts helping others who might threaten their relative place in the hierarchy? There seems to be an apparent, internal contradiction in motives within the act of sharing (Olson, 1965).

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These questions were address in a nationwide online survey conducted among a representative sample of Israeli high-school students (15-18 yrs. old, N = 205). The goal of this survey is to map the prevalence and usages of the sharing phenomenon.

All participants reported that they have either active Facebook or WhatsApp accounts. Most students (86%) reported having shared learning materials during the last school year. 80% view the use of SNS for academic purposes favorably, and 86% of the students felt that it helped improve their grades. The majority (85%) of students reported they are members in at least one SNS learning group. Finally, students with higher grades tend to share learning materials more. No gender differences were found regarding any of the sharing measures.

High school students' sharing of learning materials through self-organized social network groups is a wide-spread phenomenon involving the majority of students. On the group level, this results is an impressive operating mechanism that students perceive as helpful to their academic achievement.

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However, on the individual level there are several pitfalls and challenges that warrant further examination.

**Keywords:** SNS, Sharing knowledge, learning materials, students' practices.

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