



#INTRODUCTION

The recent decade of technological advancements has shaped an increasingly digital experience in the everyday lives of people around the globe.

- **Social networking sites (SNSs)** are one such popular digital space, especially Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat.
- Largest SNS user-base: The adolescent and college-age demographic.
- To increase **student engagement (SE)**, educators are integrating SNSs into classrooms.

Social and psychological impacts of SNSs are widely debated.

Guiding Research Question: How does a student's sense of **belonging (SoB)** across physical and digital contexts influence student engagement in a SNS-integrated course? (see Figure 1)

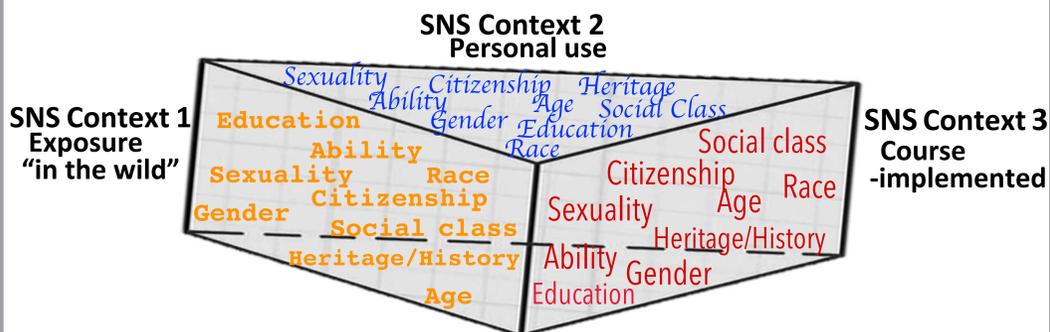


Figure 1. Drawing on the self-system model of motivational development (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner et al., 2009), the self is shown above as reflected and refracted uniquely across contexts.

#METHODS

Context: A single university in the southwest region of the U.S.

Data: Quantitative Survey; N = 83 | Qualitative Interviews; N = 18

Instrument 1: Facebook Social Connectedness Scale (Grieve et al., 2013) | Sample item: *I am in tune with others in my personal use of SNSs.*

Instrument 2: Course Engagement and Disaffection Scale for College Students (Chi & Skinner, 2010) | Sample item: *I try hard to understand the professor's lectures.*

#EMBEDDED MIXED METHODS

Time 1 Survey collected quantitative and qualitative data to inform purposive sampling of interviewees. Taken together, data was analyzed to build Time 2 Survey which was designed to examine SoB across contexts, and SE (see Figure 2).

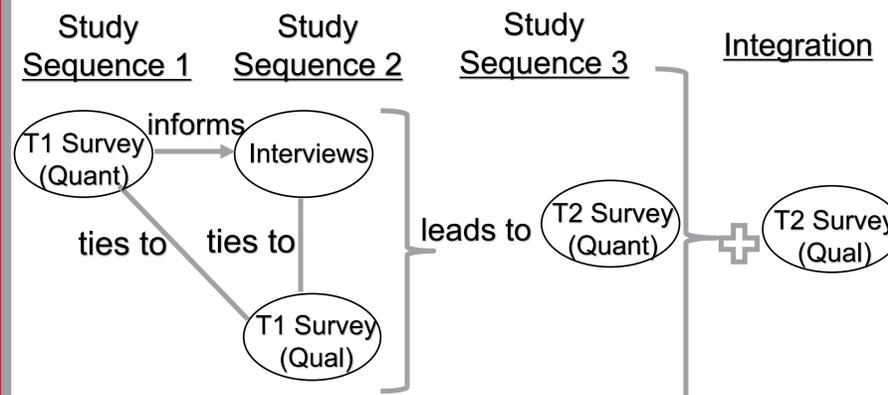
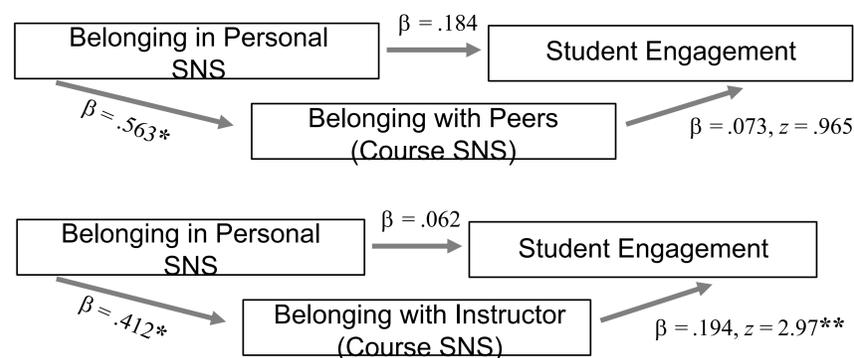


Figure 2. Embedded Mixed Methods Design

#QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

- SoB in the Personal SNS context had a significant, positive effect on SoB in the Course SNS (i.e., SoB with peers; SoB with instructor).
- SoB with instructor (but not SoB with peers) in the Course SNS mediated the relationship between SoB in Personal SNS and SE in the course (see Figure 3).
- SoB in Personal SNS and SoB with instructor in Course SNS together accounted for approximately 25% of the variance in SE ($F(2,79) = 13.18, p < .005$).



* $p < .005$ ** $p < .01$

Figure 3. Mediation Models

#QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Interview Themes -

- 1 Course SNSs can extend opportunities to learn.
- 2 Course SNS integration needs to be distinct from activity in traditional online learning settings.
- 3 The relevance of SNSs to modern life has appeal: *"I think it's fun that the professors are trying to stay current which makes me more engaged in the class."*

Qualitative Conclusions -

- SE in the SNS-integrated course seems to be shaped by student motivational systems relative to their personal SNS space and physical academic contexts:
 - Instructor actions (warmth, relevance support, control over peer dynamics) influenced the way students saw SoB as possible within a class, and how they discussed SE.
 - Personal SNS use taps into different social needs among students; but when students share the same need fulfillment in this space (e.g., self-expression), Course SNS addresses that need uniquely for each student based on the "ask" of Course SNS tasks and the need's functional significance in the Personal SNS.

#INTEGRATION

SNSs need to be intentionally built into a course to complement the time spent in-class if diverse social needs of the contemporary student are to be met and positively influence university SE.

#IMPLICATIONS

The relevance of incorporating SNSs into a university classroom is not enough to increase SE. Students appreciate and respond positively to an instructor's expressions of concern (e.g., using student names, inquiring on student interests). Course SNS must be sensitive to student time in and out of class, as well as to course objectives.