



IMPACT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ON EDUCATION: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

The use of digital technology has been integrated in almost every aspect of our daily life. It has also transformed the way we communicate and knowledge is shared. The process of utilising digital technologies to develop new or alter current educational practices is known as “digital transformation” in education. Digital transformation has a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning, accessibility of education, management and administration, etc. It has also helped in making the education process more inclusive and enjoyable. Nowadays there are multiple social media platforms that students are using for academic purposes, such as Telegram, WhatsApp groups, and YouTube. So, we can say that social media platforms also play an important role in making education less expensive and more interesting in this digital era. But we can't ignore the fact that there are both positive and negative aspects of using digital technology in the field of education. On one hand, digital transformation in education and the use of social networking sites have made education very easy and accessible; on the other hand, it has many disadvantages too. The objective of the study is to understand the impact of digital transformation on education, and the other objective is to know how social media has transformed the way knowledge is shared and consumed. Is it positive or negative? The present study is totally based on descriptive nature.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; social media; Education 4

Introduction

The advent of digital transformation in the field of education plays a significant role in increasing the quality of education, making education-related tasks easier, and helping learners to learn at their own pace. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, billions of students have switched to online or blended learning. So, we can say that the digitalization of education or digital transformation of education increases significantly, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. The advent of digital transformation in education helps to make teaching and learning more comprehensive, easy and accessible. It helps both the students and teachers as well as other people involved in the field of education to minimize their workload and to complete their task on time. Online education has made learning more inclusive, cheaper, engaging, and interactive (Meena, 2013a). Online classes have made distance learning a huge trend and provided learning opportunities to the students who want to attend any college or university abroad. Some advantages of digital transformation in the field of education are easy accessibility of the content, interactive video lessons, online quizzes or mock tests, gamification, and artificial intelligence (AI)-based learning methods. Nowadays many AI tools are being used in research writing, reviewing literature, summarizing the content, and referencing. Kerala state has already launched India's first AI teacher named 'Iris' in schools. Students are using ChatGPT for doing their homework, assignments, projects, etc. Some AI tools, such as Gamma.ai, presentation.ai, Slide Speak, etc., are used for making interactive presentations and slides. We just have to give some relevant prompts, and the attractive PowerPoint presentations are ready.

Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube were designed initially for the purpose of building social connections. But now social media has emerged as a powerful force to transform the whole education landscape. It has made it easy for everyone to connect with anyone, anywhere, anytime, worldwide. Now students are learning many new skills, enhancing their creativity, and upgrading their knowledge by using various social networking sites. They can connect with experts outside the country and can discuss or share their views with millions of people without going anywhere. Today, children are expressing their talents, skills, and creativity online, which boosts their confidence level and somewhat makes them financially rich at a

very early age. It has changed the way educators educate and learners learn. Although it has many benefits, it has also had a number of detrimental effects on education. Students may have difficulty creating assignments or sticking to their studies due to spending hours on social media platforms, resulting in last-minute rushed work and poor-quality output, which also results in decreased study time and poor time management. Social media addiction can reduce critical thinking skills and can create mental health-related issues, which can sometimes result in dangerous circumstances. It can also cause sleep disruptions, privacy issues, cyberbullying, poor study habits, and unhealthy lifestyles also. The purpose of this paper is to identify and comprehend the role of social media usage in the education landscape.

Rationale of the Study

Social media has fully transformed the way we interact, communicate, and share information with each other. It has been integrated into every aspect of our daily life activities. In this paper, we will explore the impact of digital transformation and social media, especially on education. As we know, every technology change comes with both positive and negative aspects. Today we see that both the teachers and students are using multiple social networking sites to enhance their learning, to access educational resources, to learn new skills, and to showcase their talent and creativity, but excessive use of social media can cause addiction, distress in mind, and divert from studies. Today, instead of books, journals, and notes, we are completely dependent on the internet, which is full of fake and false information, and the main problem is that we cannot easily find the authenticity of the content. It also reduces our research capability as the content is easily available. Data privacy, cybersecurity, and cyberbullying are some of the major drawbacks of using social media. So, it is important to know the exact role of using social media on education or students.

Objectives

1. To understand the impact of digital transformation on education.
2. To know the positive impact of using social media in education.
3. To know the negative impact of using social media in education.

Method of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to understand the impact of digital transformation and social media on education. For this purpose, secondary sources such as relevant theses, online articles, research papers, and the literature available on relevant websites are used for the present study.

Discussion

Digital Transformation in Education

Digital transformation in education has a significant impact on institution management, teaching strategies, and the experience of learners. It also helps in doing time-consuming administrative tasks in seconds. One of the important elements of digital transformation in education is the advancement of technology infrastructure, which includes reliable and durable software solutions, high-speed internet, and modern devices that help in both instructional and administrative tasks (Joseph et al., 2024). IT (Information Technology) has the potential to utilize AI (Artificial Intelligence) to design and execute educational systems on the basis of the needs of the society, characteristics of the student, and information available globally (Sych et al., 2021).

Some of the Major Advantages of Digital Transformation in Education are

- Promotes a dynamic, engaging, and interactive educational experience.
- Provides a flexible way of learning; students can learn anything anytime, anywhere, from any device.
- Helps in making the admission and administration process seamless.
- Help teachers to experiment with pedagogy and provide new ways to assess students' performance (Zizikova et al., 2023).
- Helps in improving the learning outcomes of the students.
- Promotes innovative and interesting teaching and learning methods.
- Students can get syllabus, course, and scholarship-related updates through emails.
- Learners can connect with people outside the country through video conferencing and can talk with experts worldwide.

Impact of Social Media on Education

Social media is a collective term for websites and applications such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook, etc., that are used to create, share, and exchange information and ideas. The Merriam-Webster dictionary has defined the concept of social media as "forms of electronic communication (as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)." It has influenced every aspect of our lives, either educationally, socially, politically, or economically. With the help of social networking sites, we can create and transmit content easily in the form of pictures, PDFs, videos, and audios (Meena, 2013b). Also, students have the opportunity to easily connect with their teachers, parents, peers, and mentors on a 24×7 basis.

Positive Impact

The positive role of social media in education can be defined through the following points.

1. Flexible Learning

social media provides the opportunity for flexible learning. Students can learn anything according to their needs and interests anytime, anywhere, through any device.

2. Increase Students' Engagement in Learning

The advent of social networking sites promotes active participation of the students in learning and interaction with teachers. (Zheng, 2013), which facilitates better learning outcomes.

3. Teacher-Student Interaction

Social media provides platforms for 24×7 interaction between teacher and student. A study conducted by Alles Sewand (2023) showed that the percentage of students' social media usage is higher than the teachers.

4. Diverse Learners

Social media platforms provide a good opportunity for the students to connect with peers from different backgrounds, cultures, languages, and opinions, which helps them to explore a wide range of new experiences and ideas.

5. Easy access to Educational Resources

Today, we can access a vast amount of information in seconds. Students can easily access a wealth of educational content, including articles, expert speeches, video tutorials, or video lessons, etc., through social media. From all around the world.

6. Inclusive Learning

Some platforms offer some specific features such as screen reader compatibility and adjustable text sizes, etc., which make content accessible for the learners with disabilities.

7. Online and Blended Learning

Digital platforms offer online learning where students can easily access notes, course material, PDFs, quizzes, online lectures, and much more. Students who have poor financial conditions can learn anything without any cost. They can use both the traditional methods and online methods of learning, which is called blended learning or hybrid learning.

Negative Impact

No doubt social media enhances engagement in learning, but it is also responsible for distraction from studies. The excessive use of social media can lead to anxiety, depression, body image issues, low grades, poor physical health, etc.

The negative role of social media in education can be define through following points.

1. Excessive use of social media can impact the mental health, physical health, academic achievement, and study habits (Tuan, 2021) of students.
2. The use of mobile phones for entertainment purposes makes students more addicted to social networking sites (Elias, 2021).
3. It may contribute to feelings of isolation or disconnection and reduced face-to-face interactions, affecting social skills and emotional development among students.
4. Sometimes, students unknowingly share their personal data when using online platforms. This can be risky and can cause cyberbullying and identity theft-related issues. A large number of online social network (OSN) users share their personal data without reading privacy statements (Ali et al., 2018).
5. There is a lot of material available on the internet that needs to be kept out of the reach of children.
6. The vast amount of information available on social media platforms can make it challenging to identify authentic sources, leading to misinformation or rumours, which can harm individuals and society in both political and social aspects.
7. The excessive use of social media can also affect the study habits and academic achievement of adolescent students. (Mensah & Nizam, 2016).
8. A large number of students are using ChatGPT to complete their homework, for exam preparation, and to get insights. Most of them don't verify the answers to the questions, which also reduces students' research capability. (Pawar et al., 2023)
9. Artificial Intelligence and Chat GPT is getting lots of student data which can be used for additional purposes like advertising and targeted marketing.
10. India's first AI (artificial intelligence) teacher in Kerala schools is named "Iris". Hence, according to some researchers, AI may eliminate teacher jobs.

Suggestions

In this Education 4.0 era, we can't survive without using digital technology and social media platforms, but we should know how we can minimize the negative aspects of using social media in education. We should not forget that technology is for us; we are not for technology. Here are some suggestions to minimize the negative impact of using social networking sites in education:

- Students should set their clear boundaries on social media usage while studying.
- Teachers can educate the students on digital literacy.
- Government and schools can make policies on responsible social media usage.

- Parents should also be aware of their children's social media accounts and activities.
- Students should not rely too much on the internet for gaining information. Instead, they should prefer books, journals, newspapers, articles, etc.
- Students and teachers should develop critical thinking skills to identify the authenticity of the information available online.
- Students should give priority to face-to-face interaction with teachers, peers, family, and neighbours, etc.
- Unfollow the accounts that spread negativity, hate speech, cyberbullying, and fake information, etc., and follow the accounts that are relevant to your studies.
- AI tools and ChatGPT should be utilized mindfully and securely without losing privacy of data and quality of education.

Conclusion

After reviewing the related literature, it is found that there are various studies that have been done on social media usage and the impact of digital technology on education, and the results were contradictory; some studies had found that digital transformation impacts education positively, but others found the negative aspects more. Therefore, it can be concluded that digital transformation of education has brought revolutionary change to the educational landscape, and social media usage impacts education both positively and negatively. It plays a dual role; one is as an enabler of learning and the other is as a disrupter. To minimize the negative aspects of using social media and technology in the field of education, one should be aware of cyberbullying, cybersecurity, privacy of data, identity theft, online harassment, etc. Teachers play an important role in integrating social media in education, so they must educate their learners on the negative effects of excessive social media usage. Schools should implement responsible social media usage policies.

Today, everyone is using AI tools to complete their tasks effectively, but there is always a risk of losing privacy of data. Recently, the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, has announced that the use of AI tools in office devices should be strictly avoided because it poses a risk for the confidentiality of government data and documents. Every person whether it is teacher, student or administration, should try to read security and privacy terms and conditions before installing any application in their mobile phones.

Students can use digital technology to improve their academic achievements, for skill development, to connect with educators and experts worldwide, and to showcase their creativity. But they should use it mindfully without getting addicted to it. Students should not completely rely on the internet or digital technology; they should also use traditional ways of learning, such as reading books, journals, and research papers. One should use technology in education as assistance, not as a master.

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