



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EDUCATION: EXPLORING ITS ROLE IN LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Social media has significantly transformed various aspects of society, and education is no exception. This study explores the impact of social media on undergraduate students', highlighting its role in learning and engagement. The frequent use of platforms like WhatsApp Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and educational forums has created new avenues for interaction, collaboration, and information sharing among students and educators. Social media provides a dynamic learning environment, enabling students to access educational content, participate in online discussions, and engage in peer learning beyond traditional classroom settings. The sample for the present study is fifty undergraduate students from different courses. The findings reveal that YouTube is very often used for academic purposes. While WhatsApp is majorly useful for academic discussions and collaborations. However, the study also examines the drawbacks, such as the potential for distractions, the concern for quality content, the spread of misinformation, and its role in fostering passive learning behaviours. The research emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to integrate social media into educational practices effectively. The participants suggest that social media can enhance engagement to prepare for competitive exams and provide opportunities to connect with the people of expertise. By understanding both the benefits and challenges, students can create strategies to optimize social media for academic success and engagement in the digital age.

Keywords: Education, engagement, learning, social media, students

Introduction

Social media has revolutionized the way we communicate, share information, and interact with the world around us. In recent years, its influence has extended into various domains, including education. As digital platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn become integral parts of students' lives, they also play a significant role in shaping their learning educational experiences. This impact is particularly evident in the context of undergraduate students, where social media platforms offer unique opportunities for engagement, collaboration, and knowledge sharing.

While social media can enhance the learning experience by providing students with access to diverse perspectives, academic resources, and peer support networks, it also presents challenges such as distractions and information overload. Understanding the backhanded nature of social media's role in education is essential for educators and students alike. This study seeks to explore how social media influences the learning and engagement of undergraduate students, examining both the positive and negative effects it brings to academic settings. By investigating its impact on student motivation, collaboration, and access to educational resources, this research aims to provide insights into how social media can be effectively integrated into the learning process to foster academic success and student development.

Social media

Social media refers to online platforms and applications that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, connect with others, and build communities through the medium of online platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. In today's digital age, social media has become a powerful tool for enhancing education. It fosters collaboration, provides access to diverse resources, and connects students and educators globally. By integrating social media into learning, a dynamic, interactive environment is being created that promotes creativity, knowledge sharing, and continuous growth. For graduate students, these platforms present unique opportunities for learning, academic collaboration, and professional development. As they are becoming adult learners. Social media can go beyond simple communication and play a pivotal role in enhancing engagement within academic communities. They provide a space for students to connect with peers and professionals around the world. "Social media can be defined as any web or mobile based platform that enables an individual or

agency to communicate interactively and enables exchange of user generated content” (pp. 38 Framework & Guidelines for use of social media for government organization) Ministry of communications & Information Technology Government of India. There is 24X7 connectedness possible through a variety of media and devices. This enables the people to collaborate and form communities, which is being used to create a virtual network with likeminded people facilitated through chat, instant messaging, photo sharing, video sharing updates etc. “While education will play a critical role in this transformation (India’s transformation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy), technology itself will play an important role in the improvement of educational processes and outcomes; thus, the relationship between technology and education at all levels is bi- directional.” (NEP 2020)

Review of Literature

Saini N. & Mir S. (2023) in social media: Usage and the impact on Education reveals that social media platforms offer a dynamic and interactive learning environment that can facilitate collaborative learning, engagement and knowledge sharing. They further extend that social media contributes to the democratization of education. Kumar S. & Shobhana D. (2024) ‘Study on the impact of digital transformation on student empowerment in Higher education in India’ discovered that digital tools and platforms offer immense potential to positively impact student engagement, participation and interaction in the learning environment. Mihret G. & Joshi J. (2016) ‘The Impact of Social Media on student’s academic achievement in higher education: literature reviewed and analysed systematically’ discovered that students who mostly use social media for academic purposes are helped to improve their academic performance. Li K.C. Wong, B.T.M (2020) social media in higher education: A review of their uses, benefits & limitations concludes that uses of social media revolved around two major areas- as a learning management system & a means to enhance student’s engagement. Mohanty A.K. (2024) in his study reveals the key findings that active use of visual platforms fosters increased engagement, providing opportunities for peer critique, resource sharing & inspiration, ultimately leading to improved academic performance.

Objectives

1. To explore the usage of various social media platforms for academic purposes.
2. To examine the role of social media on student engagement in academic activities.
3. To identify the benefits of using social media for educational purposes.
4. To analyse students’ perceptions of the role of social media in their academic development.

Methodology

Research Method

A descriptive survey method was used for conducting the study.

Population

The population for the present study consists of all undergraduate students enrolled in different programs in Delhi and NCR.

Sample

The sample of the study consists of 50 undergraduate students pursuing various degree courses such as B.A, BBA, BCA. The sample of the study was selected through simple random sampling.

Tool

A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect the data. The tool consists of both types of items that are open ended and close ended questions.

Analysis

Data was analyzed qualitatively, some statistical measures were used to quantify the data i.e. mean, median, mode.

Findings

Objective 1: To explore the usage of various social media platforms for academic purposes.

Which social media platforms do you find most useful for academic discussions and collaborations
50 responses

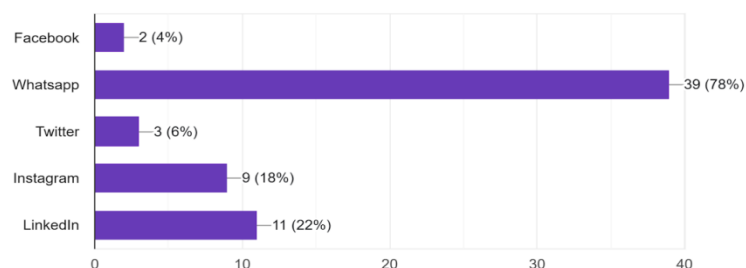


Figure 1: Usage of various social media platform

The results reveal that 78% of students find WhatsApp as the most useful social media platform for academic discussions and collaborations. Only 4% opted for Facebook. Other apps like LinkedIn and Instagram are moderately used.

Objective 2: To examine the role of social media on student engagement in academic activities.

Finding 2:

Table1: perception of students

Role of social media (SM)	Yes	No
SM helps to engage more actively in studies	90%	10%
SM helps to access free online courses/webinars	82%	18%
SM improves the availability of learning resources	83%	17%
using SM helps to retain educational information	84%	16%
SM helps to share one’s own academic work/idea	70%	30%
SM is effective for academic collaboration/ communication	72%	28%
overall academic productivity has increased due to educational content & discussion on SM	76%	24%

A significant majority (90%) believes that social media plays a key role in engaging students more actively in their studies. This suggests that platforms such as online forums, educational groups, or even subject-specific pages may motivate and engage students in ways traditional methods may not. 82% of respondents acknowledge that social media facilitates access to free learning resources, including online courses and webinars. This indicates that students and academics find platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn, or educational groups on Facebook and Twitter highly beneficial for continuous learning. A strong majority (83%) agree that social media increases the availability of learning materials. This reflects how SM platforms provide a vast array of free resources, including videos, articles, research papers, tutorials, and discussion forums. A large portion of respondents (84%) believe that social media contributes to better retention of educational content. This can be attributed to interactive forms of learning, peer discussions, and the continuous exposure to educational materials through SM. 70% of respondents agree that SM serves as an effective platform for sharing academic work and ideas. Social media allows students and researchers to connect globally, present their work, and receive feedback, fostering collaboration and exposure. A majority (72%) finds social media useful for academic collaboration and communication. This reflects the growing trend of academic groups, research collaborations, and student discussions being conducted on platforms like WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. 76% of respondents believe that their overall academic productivity has improved due to educational content and discussions on social media. This highlights how access to diverse viewpoints, learning resources, and peer discussions can inspire and motivate academic growth.

Objective 3: To identify the benefits of using social media for academic purposes.

Which of the following features of social media do you find most beneficial for academic purpose?

50 responses



Figure 2: Features of social media platform

Finding 3: The largest proportion of respondents (58%) indicated that the ease of accessing educational resources is the biggest benefit of social media for academic purposes. Social media platforms are an invaluable resource for finding academic materials such as articles, tutorials, videos, lectures, and discussions. Real-time communication (28%) such as instant messaging, video calls, and online office hours, allow students to reach out to teachers or peers with questions or concerns without delay. Although only 10% of respondents cited staying informed about academic events and news as the primary benefit, this still represents an important aspect of social media's contribution to academic life. Peer-to-peer collaboration ranks lowest among the benefits of social media for academic purposes at 4%. Despite this smaller percentage, the value of collaborating with peers through social media should not be overlooked.

Objective 4: To analyse student's perceptions of the role of social media in their academic development.

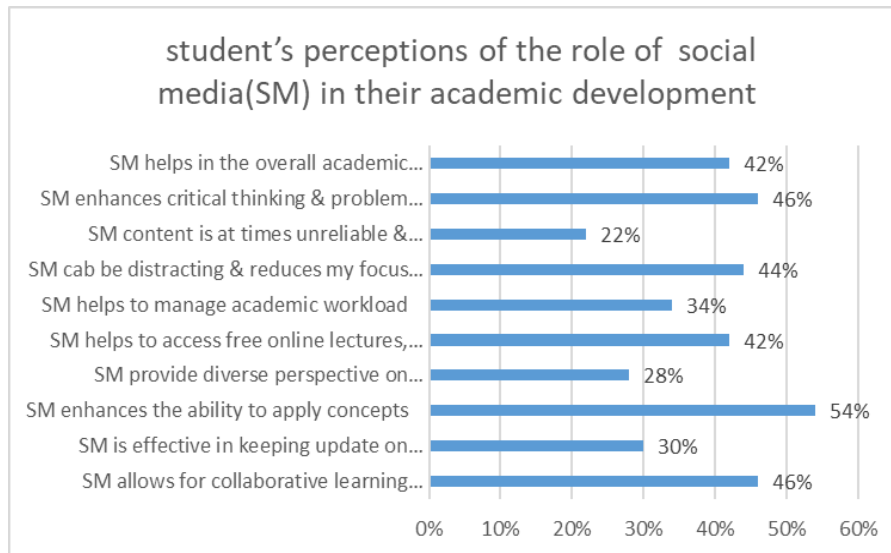


Figure 3: Perception of the role of social media

Finding 4: Nearly half of the students (46%) view social media as a platform that facilitates collaborative learning. Approximately 30% of students consider social media effective for staying informed on academic news. This suggests that a significant portion of students utilize social platforms to receive updates about course materials, exams, institutional announcements, and relevant academic events. Over half of the students (54%) believe that social media enhances their ability to apply academic concepts. Only 28% of students agree that social media offers diverse perspectives on academic subjects. Social media appears less effective in helping students manage their academic workload, with only 34% of students finding it beneficial. A substantial 42% of students acknowledge that social media provides access to valuable free online resources such as lectures, tutorials, and webinars. A lower percentage of students (22%) express concerns about the reliability and accuracy of content on social media. 46% believe that social media contributes to enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. 44% of students report that social media can be distracting and reduce their focus on academic tasks.

Conclusion

The data supports the notion that social media plays a significant and positive role in enhancing various aspects of education. However Social media platforms are often filled with entertainment, personal posts, and non-academic content. This can easily distract students from their academic goals. The constant flow of notifications, updates, and the urge to check other unrelated content can decrease students' focus on important academic tasks, such as studying, reading, or engaging in meaningful academic discussions. The addictive nature of social media can lead to procrastination, negatively affecting productivity and overall academic performance. From engagement in studies to improving academic productivity, social media has proven to be an invaluable tool for students and academics alike. Educational institutions can further leverage these platforms to foster engagement, collaboration, and resource sharing. It is clear that the future of education is increasingly intertwined with social media, and its effective use can significantly improve educational outcomes. Peer collaboration on social media encourages diverse thinking and allows students to solve problems collectively. Social media promotes Internet Based Learning (IBL) to promote self-learning and adult education. Students must undertake some internet-based projects i.e. the search & learn approach. Social media helps in the development of communication, presentation skills, knowledge enrichment, library resources, self-assessment etc. Recommendations for educators and institutions include, promoting active engagement through academic groups on social media, Incorporating more utility subjects for free online courses and webinars into the curriculum.

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