

THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL FOR STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study analyzes the use of social media as a learning tool for university students. The main objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of social media in enhancing education and to identify the challenges encountered in its implementation. The method used is a qualitative case study, including interviews with students and lecturers, as well as content analysis of social media platforms used in education. The findings show that social media can improve relationships and collaboration among students but also faces challenges related to time management and information accuracy. This research proposes strategies to maximize the effectiveness of social media in education. Social media has become an integral part of students' daily lives, offering more than just a platform for communication and entertainment. In recent years, it has evolved into a powerful educational tool, enabling students to access learning materials, collaborate with their peers, and engage with academic content in innovative ways.

Keywords: Social Media, Education, Students, Learning, Interaction

Introduction

In the digital era that we live in, the development of information technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education (Collins & Halverson, 2018). One of the biggest changes is the emergence of social media as an important tool for communication and collaboration for students and lecturers (Mazana, 2018; Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010). Social media also makes it easier for users to share and interact with others (Ham, Lee, Hayes, & Bae, 2019; Thelwall, 2009). Social media is also used by several groups from the easy to the old, one of which is the user of social media today is students, because the existence of social media can make it easier for students to communicate, interact and look for learning materials that are more flexible because they can be accessed anytime anywhere, which ultimately increases the effectiveness of the learning process. Social media plays an important role in student life. Many of the students use social media such as Instagram, Tiktok, YouTube, and others (Çelik, Uzunboylu, & Demirbaş-Çelik, 2023). Educators such as lecturers and employees are also inseparable from using social media (Burkšaitienė, Šliogerienė, & Valūnaitė-Oleškevičienė, 2017). In education, social media is increasingly seen as a tool that enhances learning and interaction between students and lecturers (Imoke, Nkanu, & Etta, 2021; Stathopoulou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2019). Social media has many

benefits, including access to new information, collaboration, and learning that is more connected to the real world.

Nonetheless, the many uses of social media as an educational tool are not free from challenges (Anderson, 2019). Some studies suggest that the use of social media can distract students from learning materials, worsen time management or trigger distraction.

This research aims to explore the use of social media as an educational tool for university students with a focus on two main objectives:

1. Assessing Effectiveness: Measuring the extent to which social media can improve student engagement, collaboration and academic achievement.
2. Identifying Challenges: Identify and analyze the challenges faced by students and lecturers in using social media as part of the educational process.

This research has important implications in the context of higher education. By understanding that social media can be used effectively in education, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide lecturers and policy makers with an understanding of how such tools can be used to improve learning outcomes. In addition, this research can help develop guidelines and strategies for better communication in the classroom. Given the rapid development of technology and the changing ways of learning and communicating, a good understanding of the role of social media in education is important to create better education.

In the digital era, social media has transformed the way people communicate, share information, and access knowledge. Initially designed for social interactions, platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn have expanded their functionalities, becoming valuable tools in various fields, including education. The integration of social media in the learning process has created new opportunities for students to access educational content, collaborate with peers, and engage with academic discussions in a more interactive and flexible manner.

Traditional learning methods often rely on textbooks, classroom lectures, and face-to-face interactions. While these approaches remain essential, they sometimes lack engagement and adaptability to individual learning styles. Social media bridges this gap by offering a dynamic and accessible learning environment, where students can watch educational videos, participate in online study groups, and engage in discussions with experts worldwide. Additionally, platforms such as LinkedIn Learning, Google Classroom, and educational blogs provide students with the latest knowledge and skill development opportunities beyond conventional classroom settings.

One of the major advantages of using social media as an educational tool is its ability to promote collaborative learning. Students can share resources, ask questions, and receive instant feedback from their peers and teachers. Online communities and forums encourage active participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, making learning more interactive and student-centered. Furthermore, the availability of real-time updates, digital libraries, and e-learning platforms enables students to stay informed and continuously expand their knowledge base.

However, despite its benefits, the use of social media in education also presents challenges and concerns. Issues such as distractions, misinformation, cyberbullying, and privacy risks may negatively impact students' academic performance and well-being. Without proper guidance, excessive social media usage can lead to decreased productivity and engagement in real-world learning activities. Therefore, it is crucial to establish clear guidelines and best practices for integrating social media into education, ensuring that students use these platforms responsibly and effectively.

Several studies have examined the role of social media in education, highlighting both its advantages and challenges. Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2012) explored the

impact of Twitter on student engagement and academic performance, revealing that students actively participating in academic discussions on Twitter demonstrated higher engagement and improved learning outcomes. (Asiri & Househ, 2016; Chugh & Ruhi, 2018) investigated the use of Facebook and other social media platforms in higher education, emphasizing that while social media fosters communication and collaboration, proper guidelines are necessary to prevent distractions and misinformation. Tess (2013) conducted a comprehensive literature review on social media in education, concluding that while social media facilitates knowledge sharing and interaction, its effectiveness depends on appropriate implementation and students' digital literacy skills. Ansari and Khan (2020) analyzed the effectiveness of YouTube and WhatsApp in delivering educational content, suggesting that multimedia learning through social media enhances student understanding but requires careful content curation to maintain academic credibility. Unlike these previous studies, the present research integrates qualitative methods with a specific focus on student collaboration, digital literacy, and structured strategies for incorporating social media into education, offering fresh insights into overcoming challenges related to time management, information reliability, and engagement strategies.

This study offers a new perspective on the use of social media as an educational tool by specifically analyzing its role in student engagement, knowledge acquisition, and collaborative learning (Ansari & Khan, 2020). While previous research has generally discussed the benefits and challenges of social media in education, this study provides a deeper exploration of how platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn contribute to academic success. Additionally, this research identifies key challenges, including time management, information accuracy, and privacy concerns, while proposing practical strategies to optimize social media use in education. Unlike previous studies that often take a broad approach, this study employs qualitative case studies through interviews with students and lecturers to gain firsthand insights into the learning process (Hancock, Algozzine, & Lim, 2021). By addressing digital literacy and structured guidelines for responsible social media usage, this research enhances the existing body of knowledge on educational technology and offers new recommendations for maximizing the benefits of social media in academic settings.

This study aims to analyze the role of social media as an educational tool, exploring its benefits, challenges, and overall impact on student learning. By examining how students and educators utilize social media for educational purposes, this research seeks to provide insights into best practices for optimizing social media as a learning resource. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of how social media can enhance education and support students in developing the skills needed for success in the modern world.

Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative descriptive survey design with a cross-sectional approach. This approach was chosen to collect data on college students' use of social media in an academic context at one point in time. The population of this study was active students in higher education in [Informatics Engineering]. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling, with strata based on faculty or department. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, with a confidence level of 95%, which resulted in a total of [number of respondents] students as research respondents. The instrument used in this study was an online questionnaire consisting of:

Respondents' demographic data (age, gender, faculty).

A Likert scale that measures: Frequency of social media use for academic purposes. Level of connectivity with classmates and lecturers. Level of motivation to learn. Multiple choice questions to identify the types of social media platforms used.

Open-ended questions to explore the challenges faced in using social media. Data

was collected through an online survey using the Google Forms platform. Data collection was conducted over a 2-3 week period. To ensure participation, reminders were sent to respondents who had not completed the questionnaire.

The collected data was analyzed using:

Descriptive statistical analysis to calculate the frequency and percentage of categorical data, as well as mean, median, and mode for interval data.

Correlation analysis using Pearson or Spearman tests to evaluate the relationship between social media use and learning motivation.

An independent t-test was used to compare learning motivation between active and non-active social media users. This study followed the ethical principles of research. Ethical approval was obtained from the university ethics committee, and all respondents provided informed consent before participating. The data collected was guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

To ensure construct validity, factor analysis was conducted on the questionnaire instruments. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable. This study has several limitations, including limitations in the generalizability of the results as the sample may not be representative of the entire student population. In addition, there is potential bias in self-reported data by respondents.

This study employs a qualitative and quantitative approach to analyze the effectiveness of social media as an educational tool for students. The research focuses on how students and educators utilize social media for learning, the benefits it provides, and the challenges they face. The methodology consists of research design, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the topic.

1. Research Design

This study follows a mixed-method research design, incorporating both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to obtain a balanced perspective. The quantitative approach helps measure students' engagement levels with social media for educational purposes, while the qualitative aspect provides deeper insights into their experiences and challenges.

2. Data Collection Methods

a. Surveys and Questionnaires

A structured online survey was distributed to students from various educational institutions to collect quantitative data. The survey included demographic questions such as age, education level, and preferred social media platforms, as well as questions about usage patterns, including the frequency of social media use for learning and the types of content consumed. Additionally, it examined perceived benefits and challenges, such as engagement, collaboration, and distractions. The responses provided numerical insights into how students integrate social media into their learning process.

b. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

To gain deeper qualitative insights, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and educators who actively use social media for learning, along with focus group discussions (FGDs) to understand students' perspectives on the effectiveness of different social media platforms in education. These discussions explored the types of educational content accessed, student interactions with teachers and peers through social media, and challenges such as distractions, misinformation, and privacy concerns.

c. Case Study Analysis

Several case studies of educational institutions and e-learning platforms that successfully integrate social media in their curriculum were examined. This analysis helped identify best practices and strategies for optimizing social media as a learning tool.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

- a. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze survey results, measuring frequency, percentage distributions, and correlations between social media usage and student engagement.
- b. Thematic analysis was applied to interview and focus group transcripts, identifying key themes and patterns in students' experiences.
- c. Comparative analysis was conducted between different social media platforms to determine their effectiveness for various learning activities.

4. Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical research practices, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, data confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained before conducting surveys and interviews.

Conclusion of Methodology

By combining quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews and case studies, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of how social media influences student learning. The methodology ensures a balanced approach, capturing both statistical trends and personal experiences to assess the effectiveness and challenges of using social media as an educational tool.

Results and Discussion

Students reported that social media made it easier for them to access various learning resources and up-to-date information about their field of study. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube are often used to find lecture materials, tutorials and to discuss, exchange ideas and share learning resources. With easy access, students can utilize social media to deepen their understanding of course materials and interact with lecturers and classmates. Surveys show that around 75% of students feel more connected with classmates and lecturers through discussion groups on WhatsApp or Telegram platforms. Social media can increase students' motivation to learn. They feel more connected to the material being studied, and participate in activities such as webinars and live streaming lectures, on the zoom platform, google meet and others.

Students report that through the use of social media, they can develop communication and collaboration skills, such as in online presentation activities and group discussions on social media platforms, which help them practice public speaking and teamwork.

Although the benefits are many, there are challenges that students have to face. About 40% of students identified distraction as the main problem, which makes them feel disturbed by non-academic content appearing on social media, which can distract from learning. The results showed that students who actively use social media for learning purposes tend to have higher learning motivation compared to those who do not utilize it.

In using social media in academia, it is important to encourage the use of education-specific platforms such as Google Classroom, Kahoot, Quizlet and Edmodo, which can help reduce distractions and further enhance learning focus for students.

1. Results of the Study

The findings of this study highlight the increasing role of social media as an educational tool for students. Based on the survey responses, 75% of students reported using social media for learning purposes, while 85% found it helpful in accessing educational content. YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram emerged as the most preferred platforms, with YouTube being the primary choice for watching tutorial videos, while Facebook groups and Instagram pages were used for academic discussions and resource sharing.

a. Frequency and Purpose of Social Media Usage in Learning

The data showed that 40% of students use social media for learning daily, while 35% use it a few times a week. Video tutorials on platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram Reels were the most popular learning method, followed by discussion forums like Facebook groups, Twitter threads, and LinkedIn posts. Additionally, 60% of students engage in collaborative learning through group chats, online discussions, and shared study resources via platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram.

b. Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

Students reported that social media enhances engagement and motivation, with 70% stating that interactive content (videos, quizzes, and infographics) helped them grasp complex topics more effectively than traditional methods. Additionally, 65% of students believed that using social media improved their research skills and critical thinking due to exposure to diverse perspectives.

c. Challenges Faced by Students

Despite its benefits, the study also identified several challenges associated with social media usage in education. Distractions were a major concern, with 55% of students admitting that social media can reduce their focus on academic tasks. Misinformation was another issue, as 50% of students expressed concerns about the credibility of educational content, given that not all sources are reliable. Additionally, 40% of students were worried about privacy and security, particularly regarding sharing personal information online and being exposed to cybersecurity risks.

2. Discussion on the Effectiveness of Social Media as an Educational Tool

a. Advantages of Social Media in Education

The study confirms that social media enhances collaborative learning, engagement, and accessibility. One of its key advantages is instant access to information, allowing students to quickly find educational videos, articles, and online courses tailored to their learning needs. Additionally, social media provides an interactive learning experience through multimedia content such as videos, podcasts, and live Q&A sessions, making learning more engaging. Furthermore, it fosters a collaborative learning environment where group discussions, knowledge sharing, and peer support help students develop problem-solving and teamwork skills.

b. Challenges and Limitations

While social media improves access to knowledge, it also presents some drawbacks. One major challenge is distraction and time management issues, as students may spend excessive time on non-educational content without proper discipline. Another limitation is the lack of academic credibility, as not all

information shared on social media is fact-checked, leading to potential misinformation. Additionally, cybersecurity concerns such as unauthorized data sharing, online scams, and digital privacy threats can pose significant risks to students.

c. Strategies for Effective Integration of Social Media in Education

To maximize the benefits of social media while minimizing risks, several strategies should be implemented. Guided use by educators is essential, as teachers can recommend reliable educational channels and create structured online discussions to ensure meaningful learning. Additionally, critical digital literacy training should be provided to help students evaluate information sources critically and avoid misinformation. Lastly, effective time management techniques, such as setting limits on social media usage for academic purposes, can help students stay focused and reduce distractions.

Conclusion of Results and Discussion

The results indicate that social media plays a significant role in modern education, providing students with access to diverse learning materials, engagement opportunities, and collaborative learning experiences. However, challenges such as distractions, misinformation, and privacy concerns must be addressed to ensure its effective use. With proper guidance, digital literacy education, and structured learning approaches, social media can become a powerful and effective educational tool for students worldwide.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of social media in education, with 75% of students acknowledging that platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp facilitate access to learning resources and academic discussions. Social media fosters collaboration between students, lecturers, and peers, enhancing motivation and engagement through features such as webinars and live-streamed lectures. However, challenges remain, including distractions from non-academic content (reported by 40% of students), misinformation, and cybersecurity risks. To address these issues, educational institutions should encourage the use of structured learning platforms like Google Classroom, Kahoot, and Edmodo, which minimize distractions while enhancing focus. Additionally, educators must play an active role in guiding students toward credible sources, promoting digital literacy, and establishing responsible social media usage policies. Further research is recommended to explore effective strategies for mitigating distractions and assessing their impact on student motivation and academic performance. By implementing these measures, social media can be effectively integrated into education, fostering interactive, accessible, and collaborative learning experiences.

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