



# Exploring the Role of Social Media in Shaping Students' Learning Behaviour

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Background:**

Socialmedia has evolved from a tool for social interaction into a major educational resource that shapes how students learn, collaborate, and engage in academic environments. Its influence is especially notable among university students, where digital platforms have become integral to knowledge exchange and self-directed learning.

### **Objective:**

This study investigates the impact of social media on students' learning behaviour, with a focus on how platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn influence study habits, motivation, and academic collaboration among Indian higher education students.

### **Methods:**

A qualitative research design was employed, and data were collected through Google Forms from 47 undergraduate and postgraduate students. Thematic analysis was used to identify key behavioural patterns, challenges, and perceived benefits of social media in education.

### **Results:**

Findings revealed that social media significantly enhances student collaboration, access to learning materials, and motivation. However, issues such as distraction, misinformation, digital fatigue, and reduced concentration were frequently reported. The dual nature of social media use—both facilitative and disruptive—was evident across responses.

### **Conclusion:**

Social media can serve as a powerful educational tool when integrated responsibly into learning environments. To harness its full potential, educational institutions must focus on developing digital literacy, ethical use policies, and teacher training in digital pedagogy. Promoting mindful and structured use of social media can enhance learning outcomes while minimizing its negative psychological and cognitive impacts.

### **Keywords:**

Social media, learning behaviour, digital literacy, student engagement, academic performance, higher education.



## INTRODUCTION

Imagine enjoying home-cooked meals in a calm and secure environment, surrounded by family and friends to share both happiness and challenges, participating in social gatherings, watching the latest movies and test cricket, and at the same time attending classes delivered by the nation's finest educators—all without stepping outside your home. What once appeared to be an unrealistic aspiration for committed students has now become achievable through the rapid growth of digital and social platforms.

In today's world, smartphones and internet connectivity have become integral to student life, transforming social media from a source of entertainment into a powerful educational tool. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp now function as virtual classrooms, peer discussion spaces, and instant information hubs. While these platforms facilitate collaboration, interaction, and the exchange of ideas, research also highlights their potential drawbacks, including distraction, reduced attention span, and adverse effects on academic performance (1,2). Several studies suggest that excessive social media usage among students, particularly children, is associated with poorer educational outcomes (3).

Prior to undertaking this research, several critical questions arise: Are educational systems prepared to adopt online teaching either fully or in hybrid forms? What infrastructural barriers hinder digital education across different regions of India? How do we conceptualise digital literacy, and why is it essential for adapting to modern learning environments? What regional disparities exist in access to online education, and what factors contribute to these inequalities? Additionally, what level of governmental investment and policy support is required to meet online education goals, and what quality control mechanisms are necessary to ensure that social media supports educational objectives effectively?

Digital literacy refers to the ability to use computers, smartphones, and internet-based platforms for daily tasks and communication. India has made considerable progress in digital integration through initiatives such as Aadhaar and the Unified Payments Interface, both of which rely heavily on digital engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this digital shift, particularly in the education sector, expanding opportunities for online learning. Social media supports self-directed, collaborative, and participatory learning, yet it also raises concerns related to data privacy and security. Studies indicate that the educational impact of social media depends largely on the purpose, manner, and duration of its use (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Junco, 2012).

Through peer-to-peer interaction and knowledge exchange, social media promotes collaborative learning environments (Adelakun et al., 2022). Platforms such as Twitter, discussion forums, and messaging groups enable asynchronous learning, doubt clarification, and shared understanding. Learning management systems like Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard, and Google Classroom further enhance engagement by facilitating structured and interactive educational experiences.

Resource sharing has become more accessible and cost-effective through platforms such as Twitter and LinkedIn, allowing students to connect with experts and engage with diverse perspectives (Al-Adwan et al., 2020). Online learning also enables personalised education tailored to individual learning needs, a feature often difficult to implement in traditional classroom settings. Furthermore, digital education reduces geographical barriers, improving



access to quality learning resources in tier-2 and tier-3 cities where educational infrastructure is limited. Despite its benefits, social media also presents significant challenges. Issues related to privacy, data security, and ethical use require clear regulatory frameworks. Educators must ensure appropriate platform usage, as misuse—such as irrelevant participation or inappropriate communication—can disrupt learning outcomes. However, data analytics can assist educators in identifying disengagement or procrastination while maintaining academic integrity. Teaching students digital literacy, critical thinking, and time-management skills is essential to mitigating these risks. Excessive social media exposure also raises concerns regarding children’s mental, physical, and cognitive development, with studies indicating that prolonged screen time may negatively affect cognitive growth (Paasonen, 2021). Nevertheless, social media has fundamentally reshaped learning practices, enabling students to engage in virtual study groups, online discussions, and multimedia-based learning environments (Wong & Hughes, 2023; Jiang et al., 2022). Overall, this topic holds significant relevance across educational, psychological, and societal domains. Educationally, it demonstrates how technology can both enhance and hinder learning processes. Psychologically, it influences motivation, concentration, and cognitive abilities. Societally, it contributes to the development of a digitally competent generation capable of participating in the evolving digital economy. This study explores the impact of social media on students’ learning behaviours, offering insights that can guide curriculum development, teacher training, and digital policy formulation. While social media is an indispensable component of modern education, its effective use depends on careful evaluation through SWOT analysis, robust privacy safeguards, and sustained infrastructure investment to ensure inclusive and meaningful learning in the digital age.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Social media has become an important part of student life over the last 10 years and has had an impact on how students communicate with each other in and out of the classroom. While many believe that social media provides only positives, the findings from AlKhadari et al. indicate that this is not entirely true. In Jordan's study of 832 undergraduates, AlKhadari et al. concluded that social media (like Instagram and Facebook) is not just used for light-hearted chatting between friends, but is also effective in helping students collaborate and collaborate on academic topics and ideas and to communicate with each other. In addition, the report has concentrated on issues of communication, rather than how social media affects students' learning.

Abuzar and Hussain have commented on the academic achievement of high school students in Pakistan. Their research indicates that using social media in a cooperative manner (e.g., group study, sharing resources) has a positive effect on academic performance compared to students who primarily use these resources for entertainment purposes; these latter students are likely to experience problems with time management and decreased grades as a result. However, the authors relied on student self-reported data, therefore, there may be additional behavioural characteristics that are more pertinent to the students that were not included in their findings.



In a different context, Horrich, Ertz, and Bekir looked at how social media can inspire people to motivate each other through peer networks and by telling their experiences digitally. Their study is about consumer behaviour and not academic behaviour, however much of what they have found can be applied here as well. It brings forth the idea that trust and community are strengthened by platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. It also raises the question: “Is it possible to use the same strategies to promote more student engagement within online learning environments?” Through the lens of my classroom experience, it parallels the outcomes seen by Rahman and Devi’s work in India. Digital platforms such as Google Classroom and LinkedIn give students new ways of interacting with each other and developing their skills. Yet, for students who experience constant distractions and notifications—the digital “noise” that can restrict focused learning—satisfaction can be elusive. I have witnessed the impact of “notification fatigue” every term while prising the nature of my students’ group discussions. While Ali and Sultana’s findings demonstrate the importance of social support and encouragement among their groups as a resource for success, they also note that relying on others for validation via the internet may create anxiety and reduce motivation. Their overall conclusion is that social media has the capacity to motivate and inspire or to cause fear and frustration depending on how one uses it and manages their boundaries and roles. The findings of Ali and Sultana as well as a growing body of literature capture the complexities and different aspects of social media and how students are impacted by this platform. In addition to providing opportunities for collaboration and sharing of resources, social media has the potential to be distracting and diminish one’s ability to self-regulate their behaviours. Therefore, there is a critical need for continued research on the behavioural dynamics of social media.

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

### **AIM**

This study aims to investigate how social media influences and informs students’ learning behaviour, and to assess how the use of social media platforms and digital technologies, including YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn, influences students’ study strategies, collaboration with others in knowledge building, motivation levels, and ability to focus.

### **OBJECTIVE**

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#### **The Primary Objective:**

The main objective is to identify outcomes related to students’ learning habits and interest in learning (i.e., their willingness to learn) in relation to technology use (i.e., their interaction with social media and other digital tools).

#### **The secondary objectives:**

- \* To determine the extent that learners use social media in their education
- \* To investigate the benefits and drawbacks of using social media for learning



- \* To assess the influence of social media on collaborative learning and interaction with peers
- \* To examine factors influencing a learner's choice to utilize social media as a learning resource
- \* To propose methods of utilizing social media as a beneficial and ethical resource in education

## **METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

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### **STUDY DESIGN**

#### **Study Design:**

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative survey analysis with qualitative thematic analysis. Quantitative data were collected through structured close-ended questions using Google Forms, and descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used for analysis. Qualitative data were obtained through open-ended questions and analysed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 47 students initially responded to the survey. After screening for completeness and eligibility criteria, 46 responses were included in the final analysis. One response was excluded due to incomplete data.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling through academic networks and student WhatsApp groups across universities in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. The survey link was circulated online via Google Forms

1. Students enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate studies.
2. Students who are active social media users (e.g., YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn) for educational or learning experiences.
3. Students who agree to participate and provide a written indication of their informed consent.
4. Students who can read and respond in English or Tamil.
5. Students who have access to the internet to engage with social media on a regular basis.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

1. Students who do not participate in educational or learning activities on social media.
2. Students under 18 years of age.
3. Students who do not agree to participate or withdraw consents during the study.
4. Students with limited internet access or who are not active social media users.
- 5.

### **TOOLS**

An interview guide with open-ended questions will be constructed.



### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Data will be analysed using thematic analysis.

Trustworthiness: To ensure trustworthiness, we will:

- Check the information with the participants (member checking).
- Remain neutral and examine any biases from the researchers.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The expected ethical considerations will include the authenticity and voluntariness of the experience, participants' informed consent, the confidentiality of participants' names and personal information, and participants' ability to opt out at any time.

### **EXPECTED OUTCOME**

This research will provide an understanding of how students use social media to support or disrupt their learning, attention, and engagement/working with others. Furthermore, the study aims to offer clear ways for educators and students to use social media effectively in the classroom/learning practices.

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DATA COLLECTION:**

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Education Status:
5. Residence (City & State):
6. Do you have your own Smart Phone?
7. Do you have an internet connection on your smart phone?
8. What are all your main purpose of using smart phone?
9. Mark the Social Media Platforms that you are using for studies.
10. Which social media platform do you use most frequently?
11. Do you use social media platforms for educational purposes?
12. How often do you access social media during study sessions?
13. Has social media improved your knowledge in exploring new fields?
14. Rate how social media distracts negatively affects your concentration while studying.
15. How many hours do you spend on social media?
16. Do you think exposure to social media changed your study habits?
17. Do you follow educational influencers or accounts on social media?
18. Rate how social media helps you to discover new study techniques
19. Have you experienced misinformation on social media that affected your learning
20. If "Yes" for previous question please mention the platform
21. Which social media feature is more useful for your learning
22. Does social media make you compare your academic progress with others for your improvement?
23. Do you think social media helps to enhance your critical thinking skills through debates and discussion in commenting options
24. Do you limit your social media use during exam times?
25. Does your School/College have social media pages for giving online educational support?
26. Has social media given you exposure to new online courses or resources that you don't know before?
27. Have you ever felt anxious when you cannot access social media while you are studying?



28. How much does social media use affect your sleep quality?
29. Have you ever missed study deadlines because of excessive social media use?
30. What kind of social media distracts you from your learning process?
31. How has social media learning impacted your mental health, positively or negatively?
32. What kind of social media platform do you use the most, only for study purposes?
33. Explain why that platform?
34. Comment on your suggestions to improve educational content on social media.

## RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

This thematic analysis draws on survey data collected via Google Forms from 46 respondents, primarily young adults aged 18-25 from India, mainly Tamil Nadu, with some participants from Kerala, Karnataka, and other states. The sample includes both males and females across undergraduate, postgraduate, and researcher levels. All respondents own smartphones with internet access, demonstrating high digital connectivity. The analysis highlights key patterns in qualitative ratings, responses to open-ended questions, and participants' suggestions. The coding was based on respondent elements such as "Distractions" and "Knowledge gain," illustrating social media's positive and negative influences on students' learning behaviours.

### CHARTS:

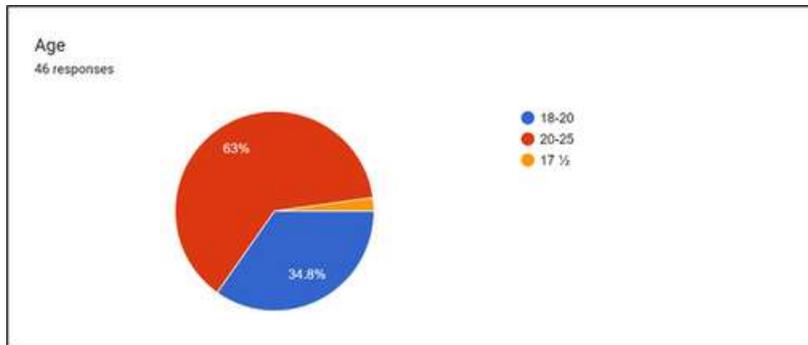


Figure: Age of the respondents

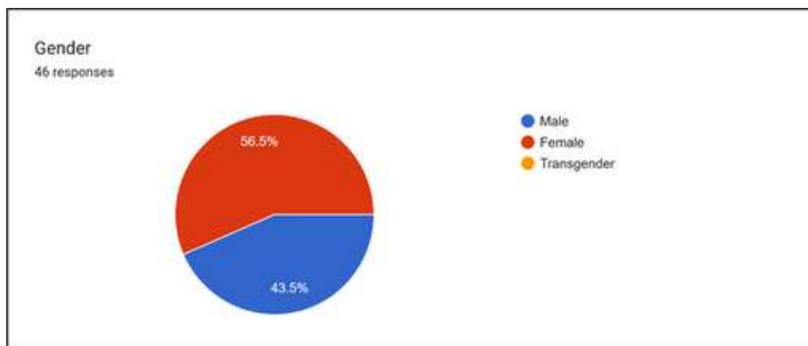
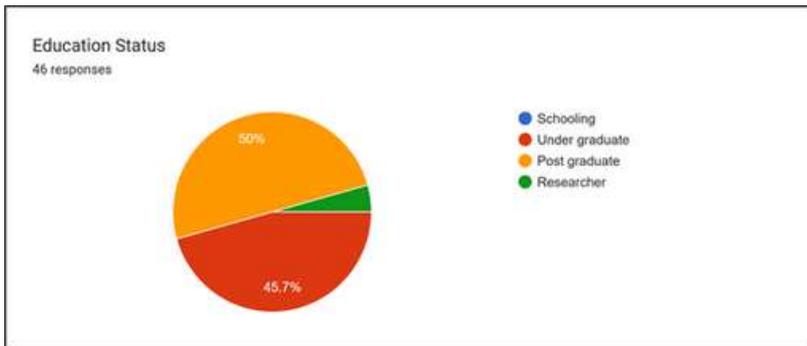
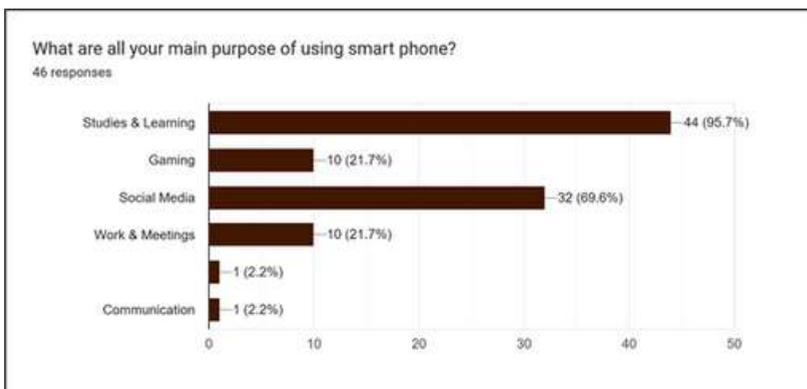


Figure: Gender of the respondents

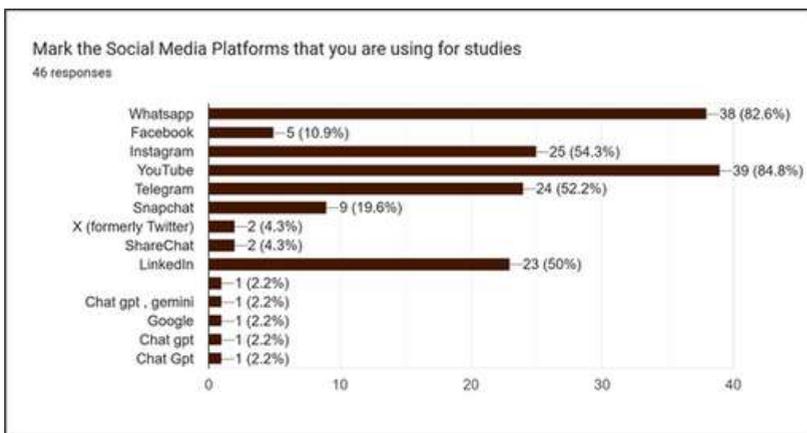


**PLATFORM PREFERENCE FOR EDUCATIONAL USE:**

Respondents view socialmedia platforms as accessibletools for their studies. This highlights the shift of traditional learning to digital platforms, with the preference of visuals and discussion forums.



**Figure: Purpose of using smart phone of the respondents**



**Figure: platforms for studies used by the respondents**



From this graph, we can see that most respondents use YouTube and WhatsApp for their studies. The respondents mentioned “Video Tutorials” for clear explanations. WhatsApp and Telegram are for quick sharing of information for studies, and Instagram is for educational reels and short content.

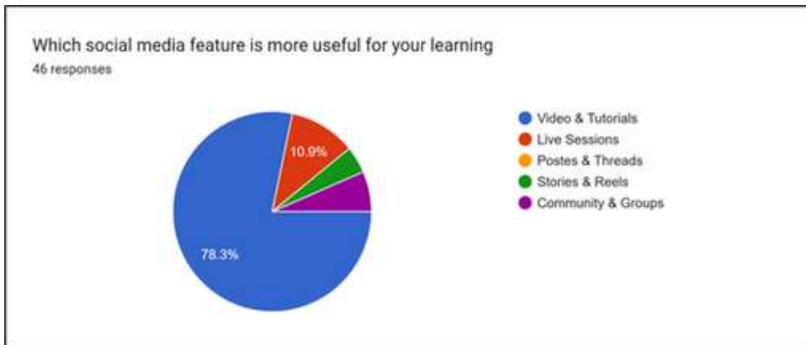


Figure: Useful media features for learning by the respondents

### POSITIVE IMPACT ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Social media is expanding knowledge, discovering resources, enhancing skills, and even improving respondents' learning behaviour.

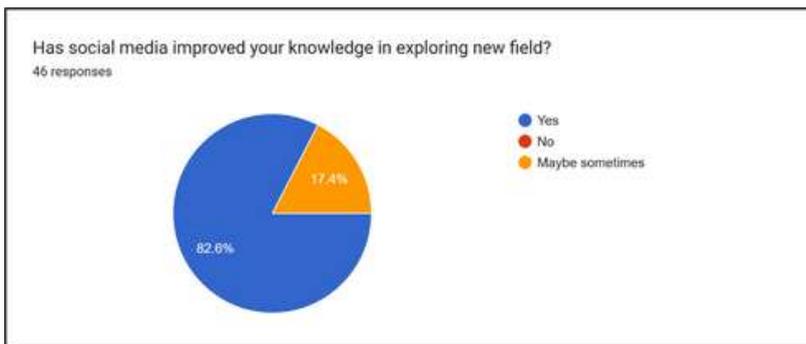


Figure: Improvement of the respondent's knowledge Behavioural Changes:

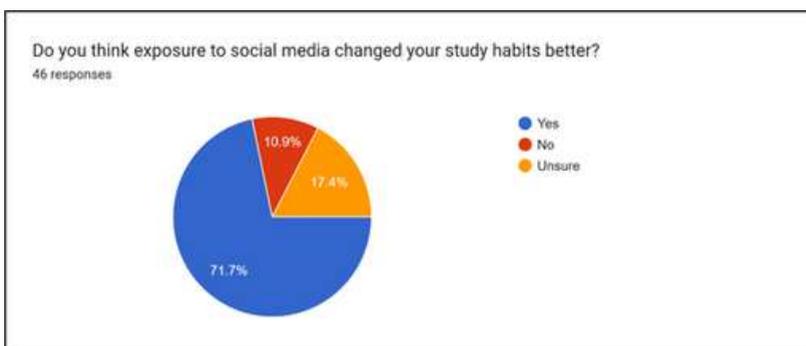


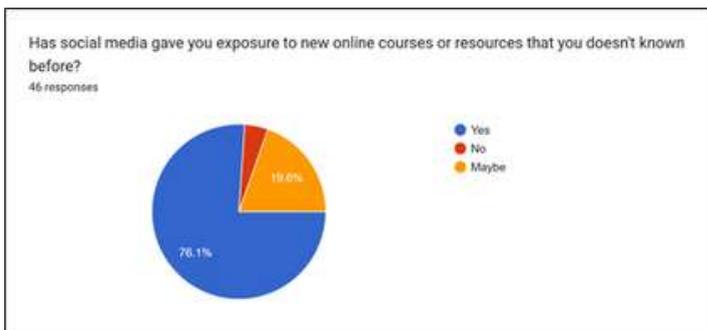
Figure: Improvement of the respondent's habits of studying



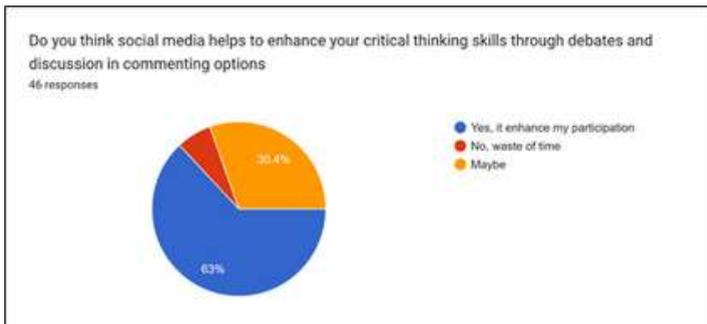
From this, we can understand that social media positively changes study habits through comparisons and motivation, and even improves mental health by sharing thoughts.

**INTERPRETATION:**

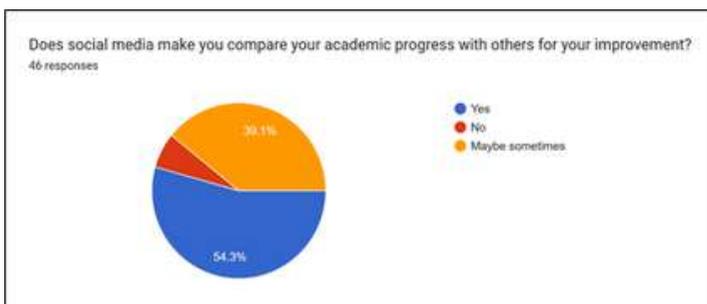
This illustrates social media's role in shaping adaptive behaviours like self-learning, social participation, and global awareness. Through formal education, students gain only academic knowledge, but through social media, they can gain global knowledge and opportunities.



**Figure: New opportunities for respondent**



**Figure: Enhancement of the respondent**



**Figure: Comparison of the respondent with other progress**



## Distractions and negative impacts:

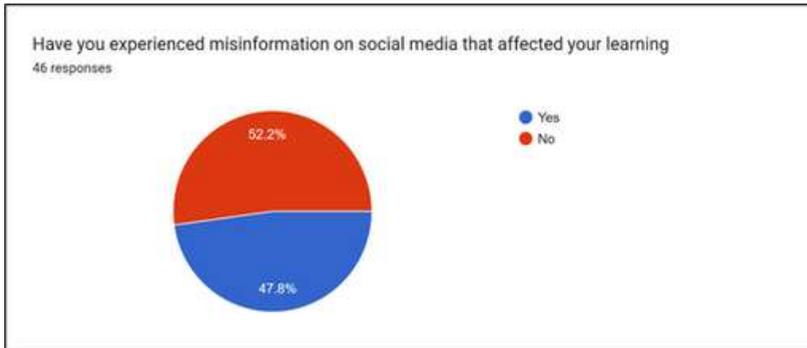


Figure: Misinformation which affects the respondents

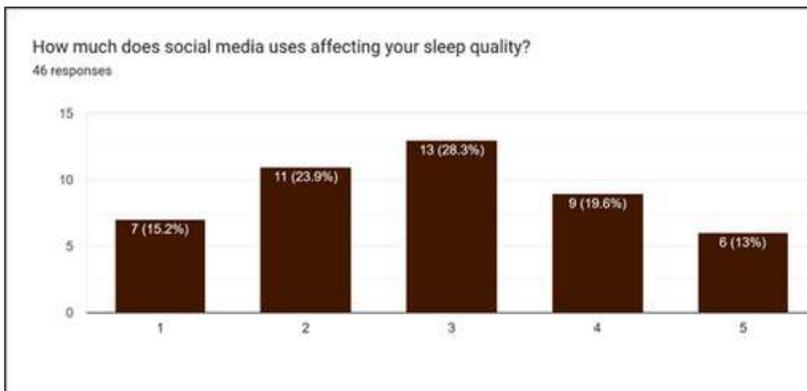


Figure: Affecting of health of the respondent

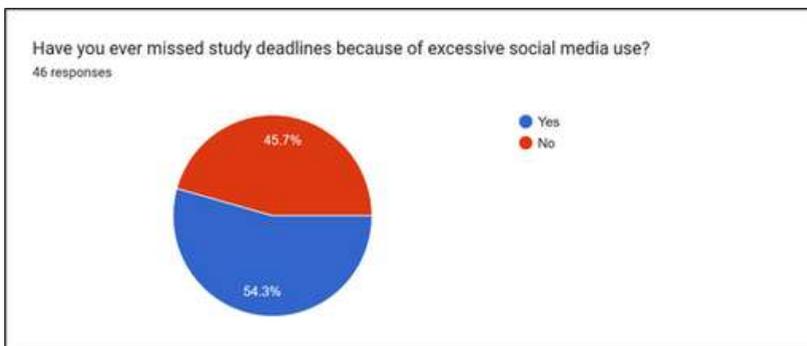
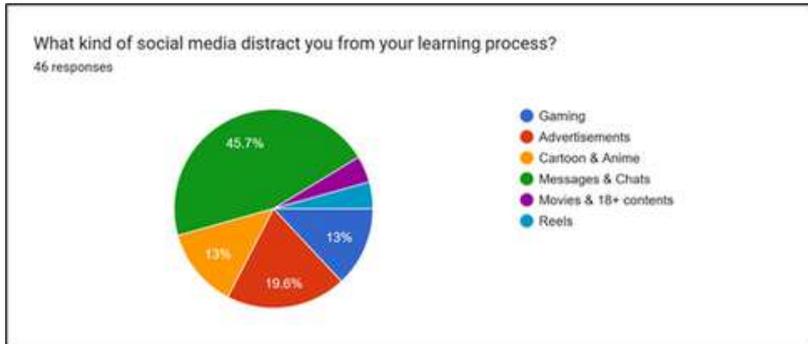


Figure: Addiction of the social media by the respondents



## BARRIERS TO ADOPTING DIGITAL LEARNING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This section outlines the systemic, infrastructural, and psychological barriers that impede the full and equitable integration of social media and digital platforms into students' learning behaviour in India.

### Infrastructure and Accessibility

Several fundamental infrastructural deficits limit the reach and effectiveness of online learning:

- **Limited Access to Devices:** Rural students frequently rely exclusively on smartphones; access to laptops, desktops, or tablets is uncommon. One study found that only approximately 17% of students had access to laptops/desktops, 78% had mobile phones, while about 15% lacked any device entirely (Sabrang India, 2023). Furthermore, devices are often shared among multiple family members, restricting their availability during designated study hours. **Poor or**
- **Intermittent Internet Connectivity and Bandwidth:** Even where connectivity exists, bandwidth is often insufficient, and frequent outages and high latency are common. This makes synchronous online classes or participative digital governance interactions difficult. Studies on online learning, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, consistently cite network and connectivity issues and software incompatibility as frequent complaints (SRELS Journal of Information Management, 2023). **Electricity and Power Reliability:** Many rural and semi-urban areas experience unreliable electricity supply. Power cuts inevitably
- disrupt online learning or social media-based academic activities (Amulya Charan, 2024). **School Infrastructure Lags:** Government schools in numerous states still lack essential digital resources such as functional computer labs,
- digital libraries, and smart classrooms. For instance, in Madhya Pradesh, only about 0.9% of government schools possess digital libraries (compared to a national average of 6.1%), and only about 11.6% have smart classrooms (Times of India, 2024).



## DIGITAL LITERACY AND SKILL GAPS

While access is the first-level digital divide, literacy represents the second-level divide:

- **Students' Digital Skills Limited:** Even with devices and connectivity, many students lack critical skills needed for effective online learning, such as navigating complex learning platforms, using tools beyond basic social media, managing digital content, and critically evaluating information (MDPI, 2022; Sabrang India, 2023).
- **Teacher/Educator Readiness:** Teachers often lack adequate training in digital pedagogy, may be unfamiliar with leveraging social media as a pedagogical tool, or lack the necessary confidence. This significantly compromises the effective integration of digital and governance initiatives into the learning process (The Academic Journal, 2025; SRELS Journal of Information Management, 2023). **Language and**
- **Content Comprehension Issues:** A significant portion of digital tools, platforms, academic content, and government portals are offered in English or official languages, often failing to align with students' home languages. Technical terminology is frequently not localised or culturally adapted, which limits understanding, causes confusion, and reduces participation (Public Administration Institute, 2023). **Cognitive Overload and Information Literacy:** The sheer abundance of content,
- particularly via social media, makes it challenging for students to filter credible information, manage distraction, and assess sources. This affects both academic engagement and participation in digital civic life (MDPI, 2022).

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## SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

Disparities across demographics and geographies exacerbate the digital gap:

- **Affordability Constraints:** The cost of devices, data/internet subscriptions, and sometimes electricity is prohibitive for many low-income households. Students are often forced to choose between basic necessities and connectivity (One Young India, 2024). **Rural-Urban**
- **Divide:** Urban students typically have better access to devices, connectivity, school infrastructure, and teacher support. In contrast, rural students lag significantly, limiting their access to online classes, social media for learning, and participation in digital governance (MDPI, 2022; One Young India, 2024; Delhi Post News, 2023).



- **Gender Disparities:** Studies consistently demonstrate that girls and young women face disadvantages in digital access (device ownership, autonomy of use), confidence, and participation in e-governance or social media-mediated learning. This is influenced by social norms, safety concerns, time constraints due to household chores, and lower encouragement (JMIR Public Health and Surveillance, 2020; International Journal for Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology, 2024).
- **Caste/Socio-economic Status:** Disadvantaged caste groups (SC/ST, etc.) often face a double disadvantage: lower income and lower educational attainment lead to weaker digital access and less trust in official digital governance platforms. Studies confirm both first level (access) and second level (skills) divides along caste lines (arXiv, 2021).
- **Home Environment and Parental Support:** Students whose parents have limited education or digital literacy receive less support in managing remote learning, technical issues, or understanding governance tools. Distractions and the lack of a dedicated study space also influence learning outcomes (MDPI, 2022).

## MOTIVATION, ATTITUDES, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Internal factors influence a student's willingness and ability to engage with digital tools:

- **Low Confidence/Self-Efficacy:** Students, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, may doubt their ability to master digital tools or fear making mistakes, leading to a reluctance to explore beyond familiar applications (JMIR Public Health and Surveillance, 2020).
- **Distrust/Privacy Concerns:** Engaging with digital governance necessitates providing personal data, which raises fears about misuse, privacy violations, and data security. A survey revealed that only about 16% of Indian consumers understand the new Data Protection Act (DPDP) (PwC India, 2024). This lack of awareness reduces willingness to engage fully.
- **Digital Fatigue, Overload, and Distraction:** Social media, even when used for learning, is inherently distracting. Students report that it blurs the line between academic and leisure activities, and excessive screen time can cause disengagement or feeling overwhelmed by continuous digital demands (MDPI, 2022).
- **Perceived Irrelevance:** Students may perceive certain digital governance initiatives or even MOOCs as irrelevant or confusing. Studies have shown that the intention to use MOOCs is reduced by concerns over usefulness, self-regulation, and course quality (Springer, 2020).



## INSTITUTIONAL AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

- Barriers at the policy and educational system level hinder effective implementation: Policy/Programmatic Gaps: Despite national policies like NEP 2020, implementation remains uneven due to underfunding, lack of local adaptation, and weak monitoring (Delhi Post News, 2023; One Young India, 2024).
- Teacher Training and Curriculum Integration: A systemic lack of professional development in digital pedagogy and integrating digital skills, social media literacy, or governance participation into the curriculum means teachers often revert to traditional methods (The Academic Journal, 2025).
- Regulatory/Legal Barriers: Weak enforcement of privacy laws and sometimes ambiguous regulations regarding student data may discourage engagement.
- Restrictive policies can also limit open participation (Delhi Post News, 2023).
- Cost of Maintaining Infrastructure: Beyond the initial setup, the ongoing costs of maintaining and updating hardware, paying for data, and managing technical support are continuous challenges that governments and schools may not adequately budget for (Public Administration Institute, 2024).

## PARTICIPATION IN DIGITAL GOVERNANCE: SPECIFIC BARRIERS

While many of the above issues apply, specific barriers restrict student engagement in civic-digital systems:

- **Lack of Awareness of Rights/Mechanisms:** Students often do not know which digital governance platforms exist (e.g., grievance redressal portals), how they function, or what rights they possess (e.g., under the DPDP Act) (PwC India, 2024; Delhi Post News, 2023).
- **Complexity of Digital Governance Systems:** Many government portals suffer from poor user-friendliness, complex bureaucratic steps, and require documentation that students may not have, actively discouraging participation (Public Administration Institute, 2024).
- **Trust and Legitimacy Issues:** Students often lack trust that providing feedback or using digital governance tools will lead to concrete change. This is exacerbated by past experiences where participation yielded little effect (BANotes.org, 2023).
- **Digital Divide in Civic vs. Private Uses:** Students who readily use social media for personal or educational purposes may not transition that usage to civic participation due to perceived irrelevance, privacy risks, or lack of confidence. Gender and sociocultural norms also contribute to limiting civic engagement (International Journal for Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology, 2024).



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the findings regarding the dual impact of social media and the identified infrastructural and psychological barriers, the following recommendations are proposed to maximise the benefits of online platforms while promoting responsible learning behaviour and digital citizenship.

### Policy and Curriculum Reforms:

- **Integration of Digital Literacy into Curriculum:** Educational institutions should embed comprehensive digital literacy modules within the curriculum across all disciplines. According to Li et al. (2025), higher digital literacy significantly enhances students' learning outcomes and critical engagement online.
- **Promotion of Responsible Social Media Use:** Structured workshops and awareness programs on ethical, critical, and responsible social media use are crucial. Cai et al. (2025) emphasise that critical literacy on social platforms enables better discernment of credible information and fosters constructive online engagement.
- **Digital Literacy Assessment and Certification:** Regular assessment and national certification frameworks should be developed to monitor and accredit digital competencies among students (Polizzi, 2025). This aligns with the need to measure and validate second-level digital skills (Yuan et al., 2025; Getenet et al., 2024).
- **Policy-Level Reforms:** Policy makers must adopt holistic strategies linking digital education, media literacy, and citizen participation within the framework of India's Digital India and NEP 2020 (Srivastava & Saxena, 2022).

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- **Improvement of Infrastructure and Access:** The government should prioritize addressing digital inequality by enhancing Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and affordability in rural and underserved regions (Sabrang India, 2023; Gogoi, 2025).
- **Capacity Building for Teachers and Administrators:** Educators should be trained to use social media and digital platforms effectively for pedagogical innovation and student interaction (Wulandari et al., 2022). Teacher training programs must include digital governance and data privacy awareness.
- **Partnerships with Technology Platforms:** Collaboration between educational institutions and technology providers can promote the creation of digital ecosystems conducive to inclusive learning and governance (Isabella, 2024).



## ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

- Enhancing Digital Governance Participation: Institutions should develop participatory e-governance models that encourage student involvement in policy feedback and online decision-making platforms (Doğan, 2025; The triad of digital governance, 2025). Encouraging Research and Innovation: Further
- interdisciplinary research on the pedagogical use of social media, digital literacy, and civic engagement should be promoted (Vallès-Peris et al., 2024). Parental and Community Involvement: Awareness programs for parents and local
- communities can bridge the gap in digital understanding and encourage safer online practices (Maisuroh et al., 2024).

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of social media browsing on students' learning behaviours and academic performance, contributing to the growing body of literature in contemporary educational research. The findings indicate that, although concerns persist regarding distraction and misuse, the benefits of social media generally outweigh its drawbacks when these platforms are used purposefully. Specifically, limiting non-academic social media engagement appears to be associated with improved academic outcomes (International Journal of Future Management Research, n.d.).

The results underscore the dual nature of social media in academic contexts. On one hand, social networking platforms facilitate access to diverse educational resources, peer collaboration, and interactive learning opportunities. On the other hand, excessive or unfocused use for non-academic purposes can encroach upon study time, diminish concentration, and negatively affect academic performance. These findings highlight the importance of cultivating students' time-management skills and digital literacy, enabling them to leverage social media as an intentional learning tool. Accordingly, educators and policymakers play a crucial role in guiding students toward responsible and academically productive use of these platforms (International Journal of Future Management Research, n.d.).

While prior research suggests that social media can enhance student engagement and motivation, this study reveals a more nuanced reality. Although supportive in certain contexts, social media can also function as a significant distraction, encouraging superficial learning practices and exposing students to unreliable or misleading information. As noted by the International Journal of Creative Research Thought (IJCRT, n.d.), the impact of social media on academic performance largely depends on whether its use aligns with educational objectives or detracts from them.



An important consideration emerging from this study concerns how social media can be effectively integrated into student learning. Participants' experiences suggest that these platforms can be valuable not only in structured classroom activities but also in informal, learner-centred environments (Chen & Bryer, n.d.). When informal social networks are organised around clear learning goals, meaningful educational engagement can occur. Although it remains uncertain whether such learning surpasses traditional, content-driven instruction, the open and participatory nature of social media enables students to access a broader range of information and perspectives than is typically available within closed learning systems. Nevertheless, the academic use of social media presents notable challenges. Persistent notifications and rapidly changing content can undermine students' ability to sustain attention and focus (Kathuria, 2024). Furthermore, although students often perceive social media as a convenient academic resource, unstructured and purposeless use may result in shallow engagement and lower academic achievement (Kathuria, 2024). Exposure to misinformation also poses a significant risk, potentially weakening critical thinking skills and impeding the formation of well-informed viewpoints. Overall, this qualitative study provides a comprehensive understanding of how social media shapes students' learning behaviours by highlighting both its educational potential and its inherent limitations. While social media can enhance collaboration, resource sharing, and engagement with academic content, it also introduces challenges related to distraction, superficial learning, and mental well-being. By reinforcing the need for deliberate management of social media use in educational settings, this study contributes valuable insights for educators, students, and policymakers seeking to integrate these tools effectively while minimising their adverse effects (Exploring the Role of Social Media in Shaping Student Learning Behaviours, 2025).



### **FUTURE SCOPE**

The findings of this study demonstrate that social media plays a significant role in shaping students' learning practices, communication patterns, and social interactions. Although these platforms offer substantial opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaborative learning, they also raise concerns related to distraction, dependency, and emotional strain. Future research is therefore essential to deepen understanding of these dynamics and to identify strategies that optimise the educational use of social media.

### **UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Students with higher levels of self-regulation are better equipped to manage the psychological challenges associated with social media use (Vannucci et al., 2017). Future studies should further examine the cognitive and emotional impacts of social media on students, particularly in relation to anxiety, loneliness, and attention regulation. Educational institutions may benefit from implementing programmes that promote focus, self-control, and balanced digital habits.

### **IMPROVING TEACHING METHODS**

Social media has the potential to enhance instructional practices by making learning more interactive and engaging (Bodur & Korkmaz, 2023; Sahraç & Urhan, 2021). Future research should compare different pedagogical approaches that incorporate social media to identify the most effective strategies. Additionally, age-specific analyses are warranted, as instructional methods that benefit one age group may not yield similar outcomes for another.

### **BRIDGING SOCIAL AND REGIONAL GAPS**

Unequal access to digital infrastructure remains a significant barrier for many students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged or remote regions. Limited internet connectivity, inadequate access to devices, and language constraints continue to restrict equitable participation in digital learning environments (Sabrang India, 2023; ArXiv, 2021). Future studies should evaluate the effectiveness of awareness programmes, training initiatives, and multi-stakeholder partnerships involving educational institutions, government agencies, and technology providers in addressing these disparities (Rahman & Devi, 2023; Gogoi, 2025; Isabella, 2024).



## **LINKING EDUCATION AND DIGITAL GOVERNANCE**

An emerging area for future inquiry involves students' engagement in digital governance and participatory decision-making processes (Doğan, 2025). Educational institutions can adopt transparent feedback mechanisms that allow students to communicate concerns and contribute to institutional development. Investigating these practices may offer insights into fostering more inclusive, transparent, and student-centred governance structures (Vallès-Peris et al., 2024).

## **ETHICS, PRIVACY, AND RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY USE**

As educational technologies and AI-driven platforms continue to expand, ethical considerations and data privacy must remain central. Many students lack awareness of how their personal data are collected, stored, and utilised by digital applications (PwC India, 2024). Future research should explore ways to enhance transparency and accountability within digital learning environments (Cai et al., 2025). Integrating digital ethics and data literacy into school and university curricula may empower students to understand their online rights and responsibilities. By aligning technological innovation with ethical governance, the education system can become more secure, inclusive, and empowering for all learners (Li et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2022).

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