



Perception Of Pre-Service Teachers Towards Social Media

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Abstract: The way pre-service teachers (PSTs) study, cooperate, and advance their careers has changed as a result of social media's growing influence in education. The advantages, difficulties, and potential of social media for education are the main topics of this study, which investigates how PSTs view and use it. According to the study, which surveyed 60 PSTs, YouTube is the most popular learning tool, followed by Instagram and WhatsApp. Collaboration with classmates and educators, interactive content, and simple access to learning materials are some of the main benefits. Nonetheless, issues like overuse, diversions, and the requirement for responsible participation underscore the significance of digital literacy education.

The majority of PSTs, according to the findings, are in favor of social media being incorporated into formal schooling and think that educational institutions ought to offer advice on how to use it responsibly. The necessity for inclusive techniques that accommodate a range of learning preferences is further indicated by gender variations in social media usage trends. While promoting structured regulations that optimize social media's positive effects and mitigate its negative ones, the study highlights social media's potential to improve education. The foundation for future research on the changing function of digital platforms in teacher preparation and the larger educational environment is ultimately laid by this study.

Index Terms - Pre – Services Teachers (PST), Social Media, Technology, Education

I. INTRODUCTION

The educational landscape has undergone significant transformation due to the rapid advancement of technology, moving from the basic tools of the 1980s to the advanced digital resources available today. This change aligns with the emergence of "digital natives," individuals who have been surrounded by technology from a young age, which has fundamentally changed their learning and engagement approaches. While early research primarily focused on digital natives in the role of students, a significant shift has begun to evaluate their position as educators. As these digital natives join the teaching profession, it is essential to understand their perspectives and practices regarding the integration of technology. Educators are now tasked with going beyond mere adoption of technology, aiming to cultivate learning environments that promote profound cognitive engagement and encourage active participation from students.

The Internet, especially with the rise of Web 2.0 technologies and social media, has become a vital component for sharing educational resources and gathering information. Modern students, familiar with instant connectivity and interactive environments, approach learning with a particular technological proficiency. Social media platforms, in particular, provide an active space for communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange, erasing the boundaries between formal and informal learning. For pre-service teachers (PSTs), these platforms offer crucial opportunities for professional growth, community engagement, and self-directed learning. However, the widespread use of social media also brings challenges, such as potential distractions and the necessity for responsible usage.

This research aims to fill the existing gap in understanding how PSTs perceive the value of social media. By examining how these future educators utilize social media, this study intends to yield useful insights for both

university faculty and students. Given the prominent role of social media in modern education and the inconsistencies observed in current literature, this inquiry is essential for informing effective strategies for integration. This study lays the groundwork for future research that will explore more thoroughly the influence of social media on the changing role of digital native educators.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Social media has emerged as a rapidly expanding online platform in the 21st century. As defined by Merriam-Webster, it enables individuals to connect, share their ideas, express their opinions, and communicate personal messages through electronic means. In contemporary education, social media has significantly enhanced learning experiences. It supports students in building connections, maintaining motivation, accessing tailored study resources, and fostering teamwork skills, establishing it as an essential asset for higher education (Wheeler et al., 2018; Rifkin et al., 2019).

- In today's world, technology is often regarded as a source of pleasure that keeps individuals occupied (Wang et al., 2016). This concept is founded on the Gratification Theory proposed by Katz and Blumler (1974), which posits that individuals select their media based on their specific goals and requirements. This theory indicates that social media serves various needs for people—ranging from learning and emotional connection to social interaction and entertainment (Kasirye, 2021). The function of media as a source of information was initially examined by Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld in 1983.
- Studies have shown that the characteristics and design of media can impact user satisfaction in addition to user requirements. This idea is referred to as technical affordances. For instance, social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram permit users to interact with content via reactions like “Like” and “Love,” which promotes ongoing engagement with these sites (Wang et al., 2016).

In England, social media has emerged as a vital resource for pre-service teachers, who utilize it for their professional growth while attending university (Shea, 2016). They form online communities to offer advice, seek help, and share ideas aimed at enhancing their teaching abilities. Consequently, social media holds significant importance in education, presenting innovative methods for teaching and learning (Carpenter & Justice, 2017; Carpenter, Tur, & Martin, 2016; Junco et al., 2013).

A variety of social media platforms facilitate students in collecting research data, producing content, and collaborating with others (Prendes et al., 2016). Furthermore, it enables pre-service teachers to maintain connections with their colleagues and broaden their professional networks (Carpenter, 2015; Korhonen et al., 2019; Quong & Snider, 2012).

Based on Gratification Theory, the effects of social media vary according to the platform utilized. Facebook supports individuals in satisfying their desire for social interaction and expressing themselves (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). Instagram provides a space for users to display their identities and engage visually (Lee et al., 2015). Snapchat is often utilized for brief and casual communication among close friends (Piwek & Joinson, 2016).

Education is continually changing, which means that both educators and learners gain from being adaptable (Collie & Martin, 2017; Parsons & Vaughn, 2016). To equip upcoming teachers for variability and unpredictability, adaptability is highlighted in pre-service teacher preparation, ensuring they develop the essential knowledge and abilities.

At the University of Wollongong (2013), aspiring science educators viewed social media as a valuable resource in instruction and began to incorporate it into their teaching methods. As social media continues to evolve in various forms, educational institutions are now promoting the effective use of these platforms among pre-service educators for learning and as teaching aids (Nielson et al., 2013). This shift has prompted researchers to investigate the extent to which aspiring teachers perceive social media as beneficial to their education.

Nonetheless, there are worries about its adverse effects. Siddhartha et al. (2020) noted that excessive social media usage is detrimental to university students' academic performance, as it detracts from their study time. It also diminishes face-to-face communication, impairing their interpersonal skills. Moreover, frequent engagement with social media can result in missed deadlines, a significant concern for pre-service teachers, who require strong communication abilities.

Despite these challenges, Friedman (2013) contended that social media promotes vital traits such as collaboration, community engagement, creativity, and knowledge exchange. To mitigate its negative

consequences, technology is creating new avenues for online learning, allowing students and educators to connect in real-time and at their convenience (Susilo, 2014).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An online survey hosted on the Google Forms platform was conducted to gather data over a period of three weeks. Before taking part, students received a comprehensive explanation of the study's objectives and methods, and their voluntary, informed consent was secured through the questionnaire itself. They were clearly informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any penalties. This research utilizes a quantitative approach to gather pertinent information. The aim is to explore how social media benefits pre-service teachers by examining their experiences and viewpoints. A total of 60 pre-service teachers took part in the research. The researchers employed purposive sampling, specifically utilizing the convenience sampling technique, to choose the participants.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results we obtained are shown below. As Table 1 shows, the most commonly used social media for educational purposes are **Youtube (56.8%)**, **Instagram (22.7%)**, **Whatsapp (13.6%)**, and **LinkedIn (4.5%)**. However, the frequency of using these social media platforms we found are **Daily (95.5%)** and **A few times a week (4.5%)**.

Social Media platforms	Usage (in %)
Youtube	56.8
Instagram	22.7
Facebook	0
LinkedIn	4.5
Whatsapp	13.6
Other	2.3

Table 1. Usage of the Social Media platforms

Forms of Educational technology	Preferred (in %)
Online Courses	15.9
Social Media-based learning	29.5
Traditional classroom	11.4
Hybrid	43.2

Table 2. Preferred forms of Educational Technology

What are the main advantages of using social media for educational purposes?

Easy access to learning materials	75%
Interactive and engaging content	45.5%
Collaboration with peers and educators	36.4%
Instant updates on educational trends	45.5%
None of the above	2.3%

Table 3. Advantages of Social media

Indicators	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Do you believe social media enhances learning experiences?	34.1	47.7	15.9	2.3	0
How often do you use social media to seek academic help?	11.4	38.6	31.8	18.2	0
Do you think social media should be integrated into formal education?	43.2	36.4	20.5	0	2.3
Do you think educational institutions should train students to use social media responsibly for learning?	6.8	36.4	36.4	18.2	0
In your experience, do men and women use social media differently for educational purposes?	40.9	43.2	11.4	4.5	0
Do you think social media will become a primary tool for learning in the next 10 years?					

Table 4. Opinions of Pre Service Teachers

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the use of social media in learning by pre-service teachers (PSTs). Accordingly, it was found that of all available social media platforms, YouTube (56.8%), Instagram, and WhatsApp are the ones PSTs are using. YouTube, therefore, appears to be the most preferred learning resource for video by PST, a factor that reinforces previous studies stating that using multimedia resources can engage students and increase their understanding.

Among the advantages, learning through social media was easy enough for respondents, with a numerical indication of 75%. Here also, the trend goes with that of Just-in-Time Learning, whereby learners are connected to digital platforms for on-time acquisition of information they require at all times and anywhere they are. Furthermore, an interactive and participatory nature that social media content possesses as 45.5% of respondents stated illustrates how it can enhance learning as much more dynamic and fun experiences.

This research further indicates that most PSTs are of the view that social media should be integrated into formal education (56.8%) and that students must be taught by schools on responsible use of social media for educational purposes (38.6%). This trend indicates the rising consciousness of the worth of digital literacy in present-day educational contexts. Future pedagogies of PSTs may include social media. Therefore, teacher education programs should equip PSTs with the knowledge and skills that will allow them to use such platforms effectively and responsibly.

While stating some of the disadvantages of the use of social media, this research disregards some distractions and influences on performance in studies reported by Siddhartha et al. (2020). The gender difference on how

students utilize social media as a study resource shows the necessity of instituting gender-specific measures that would support the requirements and demands of male and female learners.

The following recommendations can be taken into consideration:

- **Integrate Social Media into Class:** Social media sites, including YouTube and Instagram, as well as WhatsApp, should start being integrated into curricula in schools and other learning institutions. These sites are great examples wherein students can get interactive and exciting content; hence the students are going to have more accessible learning materials.
- **Digital Literacy Enhancement:** That way, students can appropriately learn the productive measures in utilizing social media and, at the same time, realistically cope with the classroom distractions rather than leaving them aside. It is important that the disruption use is learned to be more productive without ruining the academic profile.
- **Gender Inclusiveness:** Understand that male and female students tend to learn differently when it comes to the use of social media. Creating strategies to cater to those different needs can expand an otherwise inclusive learning environment.
- **Inculcate Responsible Usage:** Schools can establish well-defined rules of social media usage that is responsible. This should be done by educating students about the possible pitfalls and how to shun them so that they can remain dedicated to their academic objectives.
- **Facilitate Collaboration and Community:** Use social media to create an environment of community and collaboration among students with teachers. Collaborative projects, online discussion forums, and sharing knowledge through these mediums will enhance the learning process.
- **Adapt Over Time:** Survey from time to time and adjust social and other practices on the educational use of media. Gather feedback and suggestions from teachers and students, track the emerging trends, and keep the tools in use current and relevant.
- **Future Studies:** Continue with research to investigate the long-term effects of social media on education so that strategies can be developed to maximize its benefits and minimize the adverse effects thus promoting a balanced approach to social media use in education.

CONCLUSION

- Dynamic flexible learning spaces ensuring maximum social media networking among PSTs have also opened avenues for easy access to information anytime or anywhere learning can occur. The existence of gender differences in the use of social media for learning suggests, therefore, that there is a need to develop specific strategies that address gendered learning needs. Such a strategy can leverage social media to the possible enactment of an inclusive learning environment. The overall perception is that social media in education is serving a positive purpose. The findings endorse the possibility of social media advocating for the cause of collaboration, involvement of the community, creativity, and sharing of knowledge as pointed by Friedman (2013). To maximize its potential, institutions of learning should inculcate social media in their programs and conduct training sessions for responsible use.
- Thus, while leveraging social media into learning possess its challenges and opportunities, its potentials to improve the learning experiences is undeniable. Future researches must be continued on exploring the long-term effects of social media on education achievement, as well as develop countermeasures against these adverse effects.

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