Perception And Attitude Of Undergraduate Students On Social Media Use: A Cross-Sectional Study.

Apurva Potharkar*, Ruchi Kothari, Pradeep Bokariya, MR Shende.

Running Title: Perception of UGs on social media usage.

Contributors:

APURVA POTHARKAR*
Third MBBS Student,
Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sevagram, Wardha-442102(Maharashtra)

RUCHI KOTHARI
Associate Professor,
Dept. of Physiology, MGIMS, Sevagram, Wardha-442102, Maharashtra-India

PRADEEP BOKARIYA
Associate Professor
Dept. of Anatomy, MGIMS, Sevagram, Wardha-442102, Maharashtra-India

MR SHENDE
Professor & Head,
Department of Anatomy, MGIMS, Sevagram, Wardha-442102, Maharashtra-India

Abstract

Context:

Over past few years, social media and networking sites have been metamorphosedfrom few-user- based sites into billions ofusers. The undergraduate students as well as teachers both are becoming more techno savvy, it helps in promoting social media usage for teaching and learning activities. Thisstudy is concerned with observing the trend of social media usage and sites by the UG students.

Aim: To determine the Perception and attitude of undergraduate students on social media use.

Material and Methods:

The study was 'a cross sectional Descriptive survey' research. 400 undergraduate Medical students from 6 medical colleges of Vidharbha region were employed in this study to derive responses to a self-constructed questionnaire consisting of about 25 items including some open ended questions, divided under 4 aspects; i.e. education, social, collaborative learning and personal innovativeness. Data collection was done with the help of printed questionnaire sheets and Google forms. Experiences were collected on the basis of students' views, their own experiences as well as actual practices followed by them. Statistical data analysis was done using mean score obtained by application SPSS.

Results:

Out of 400 respondents, 99% admitted the use of internet with 98.8% confirming the use of social media. Regarding the duration, 41.7% students spend less than 2 hours while 29.8% spend 2-4 hours on using social media. Majority of the respondents accept Whatsapp (95.8%), Youtube (86.6%), Wikipedia (73.2%) and Facebook (70%) as the various categories of social network sites used by them. Questionnaire based study showed that Undergraduate students are using social media for personal innovativeness, Education, Collaborative learning and Social purpose. As for connecting with friends and family; for exchanging information, to know updates in technology, healthcare; and for social and professional development. While some consider it as addiction, communication barrier and study distracter. Students stated that social media emphasizes on freedom of expression and also in respecting opinions of others.Students were also aware about associated challenges with social media usage.

Conclusion:

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the students' perspective towards the use of social media and examine the relationship between students' beliefs and attitude towards social media usage in UG medical students in Vidarbha. It was found that most of the students depicted a positive opinion towards the efficacy and utility of social media tool and their use in Education. It was suggested that online groups can be used as study

groups to share information, discuss and interact with each other and provide students with accessibility to more education-related information.

Keywords: Social media, teaching, learning, undergraduate students, attitude.

Introduction

Over the years, social media and networking sites have metamorphosed from few-user-based sites into phenomena that have become niches for billions of users. The undergraduate students are becoming more techno savvy nowadays and it will not be an overstatement if we say that they almost become an addict to its perennial use. Simultaneously teachers have also started using various sorts of multimedia to promote teaching and learning activities. Although the advent of new media technologies such as the Internet and social media provide exciting opportunities to facilitate and enhance worldwide communication, uncertainty also remains regarding potential negative consequences. The distinction between private and public life are changing as a result of social media, causing some to question the merit of this form of communication [1]

The Internet and social media are extensively being used as reference guides for sensitive health issues by professionals and students alike.[2]

As per Awake [3] who buttressed an important point by noting that "social networking has become hugely popular. As it took 38 years for radio to reach 50 million users, 13 years for television to attract the same number and 4 years for the Internet to do so, but it took Facebook 12-month only to gain 200 million users. The growth and popularity of social media has generated concerns among college authorities and educators about the benefit and potential risks facing undergraduates, as they engage in online social networking media tools to cater for their social and information needs rather than oral or face-to-face communication. This field of study is important because sociability is an underlying theme in using forms of social media. Since this social media phenomenon is continuing to grow at a fast pace, it is important to understand the effects it has on personal communication.

Social media has also created a revolution in health services. The Internet and social media are being used as reference guides for sensitive health issues by nonprofessionals and physicians alike [4].

However, despite the fact the change in technology impinges upon a change in learning and teaching styles also, there had been lack of studies that focus on understanding the students' perspective towards the use of social media in education. Also, there seems to

be a limited research done to understand the relationship between students' attitude towards usage of social media and their academic performance specifically in the Indian context and mainly in Medical students. There is a scarcity of research on social media usage in education in India and due to this needed focus; the present study is an attempt to fill the gap.

Social media use in undergraduate education is an emerging field of scholarship that merits appropriate investigation. Social media tools are expected to be associated with improved knowledge (e.g., exam scores), attitudes (e.g., empathy), and skills (e.g., reflective writing) [5,6,7]. Although educators across the country face challenges in adapting new technologies, but they also look upto opportunities for innovation. It is known fact that Technology is a double-edged sword. Its power for bad and good resides in the users [8]. Exploring students' perception regarding the use of such latest technological resources can provide a substantiated framework on which to base any desired interventions or future research to rectify the difficulties of students in their learning process at various education centres country-wide[9]. Hence, there is the need to fashion out some means of selecting and using the right social media responsibly. This study was concerned with observing the trend of use of the social media and sites by the students.

Aim & Objectives

The aim of the study was to determine the perception and attitude of undergraduate students regarding the use of social media. The objectives were-

1. To investigate the extent of usage social media by the undergraduate students
2. To determine the various categories of social media used by the students.
3. To examine the purpose of the usage of social media by undergraduates
4. To ascertain the benefits of using social media.

Material and Method

Type of Study:

   a) Study Design:

It was a cross sectional Descriptive survey research. This design was used because the study intends to elicit the opinions of the respondents on use of social media among undergraduate students.

b) Place of study:

The study was conducted in the Department of Anatomy, MGIMS. Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences is a rural Medical College & hospital located in a village, Sevagram in Wardha district in central India.

c) Sample size :

A sample size of 400 undergraduate medical students from Vidharbha region was employed in this study to derive responses. In the study, Six Medical colleges from Vidharbha region were included namely MGIMS, Sevagram; DMIMSU, Sawangi; IGMC, Nagpur; GMC, Nagpur, GMC, Amrawati, GMC, Yavatmal.

Sampling Technique

We used Complete Enumeration technique for sampling.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Students using social media
- Who have given their consent for the participation in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students who refuse to take part i.e. do not give their consent.

Ethics consideration

The study protocol was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee. We have obtained a written informed consent from all study participants, and consent was (a) given voluntarily,(b)fully informed,(c)and is obtained from the persons who are competent to do so.

Methodology

The survey design was adopted for this study. It was essentially considered as the most suitable design for the work because students' opinion would be the main source of primary data collection. The population for this study comprises 400 undergraduate students in Vidarbha region.

Data collection tool

The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire consisting of about 25 items including some open ended questions, divided under 4 aspects i.e.

education, collaborative learning, social and personal innovativeness. A section of the questionnaire was keyed in a 4-point Likert scale and the subjects were guided to respond to each items thus: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; SD-Strongly Disagree; D - Disagree.

Responses were collected on the basis of students own views, their experiences and actual practices followed. Data was collected with the help of printed questionnaire forms (offline) and via Google forms including consent part (online). Among them 250 responses were collected offline and 150 responses were collected online.

Reliability and Validity

By face validation experts in research and media studies affirmed that the measuring instrument contains intelligible information useful enough to answer all the research questions adequately in order to actualize the objectives of the study. Then test of reliability was conducted by administering a pre-test questionnaire randomly to selected respondents within our institute constituting the radius of the study. The result of this pilot test was used to assess and ascertain the reliability of the measuring instrument. As such, the result of it was not presented at the final statistical analyses in this study. Meanwhile, the reliability of the contents of the measuring instrument was further tested using SPSS.

Method of Data Analysis

In this study, the data generated were analysed using mean score and percentage obtained by application of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

It is important to note the following which were used in the data analysis of this work.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, M=Mean, Decision= Yes or No.

To get the Mean cut off point= (SA+A+D+SD) ÷ 4, i.e. (4+3+2+1) ÷ 4 therefore, the mean cut-off point = (10) ÷ 4= **2.5**

Decision: yes means acceptance of a statement, while

Decision: no, means rejection of it.

Results

The total number of respondents in the present study was 400, out of which 124 (31%) were from MGIMS, Sevagram, 96 (24%) from DMIMSU, Sawangi, 72 (18%) from IGMC, Nagpur, 44 (11%) from GMC, Nagpur, 36 (9%) from GMC, Amrawati, and 28 (7%) were from GMC, Yavatmal.

Internet Usage:

As per our study a considerably higher percentage i.e. 99% of students were using internet and among them 98.8% confirmed the use of social mediawhich is depicted in Figure 1. This roaring percentage of internet usage might be due to available wifi facilities in various institutes or affordable net schemes like Jio, etc.
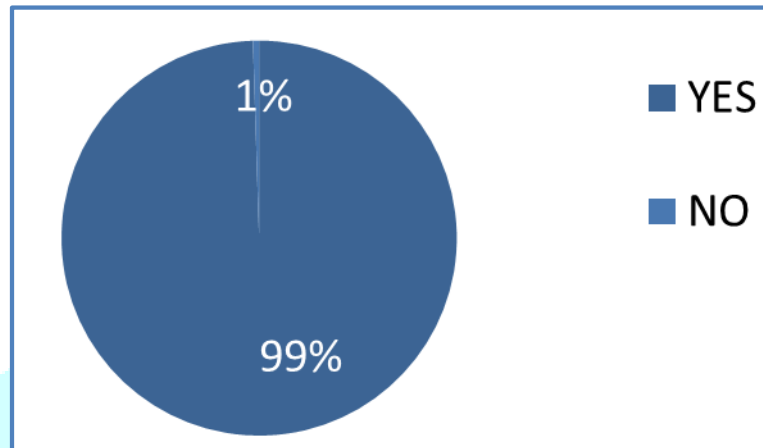

Figure 1: Internet Usage

As per Figure 2, among all responses 41.7% students use social media for less than 2 hrs in a day, followed by 29.8% students for 2-4 hrs and 14.6% students for more than 4 hrs while 13.9% of UG medical students use social media rarely in a day.
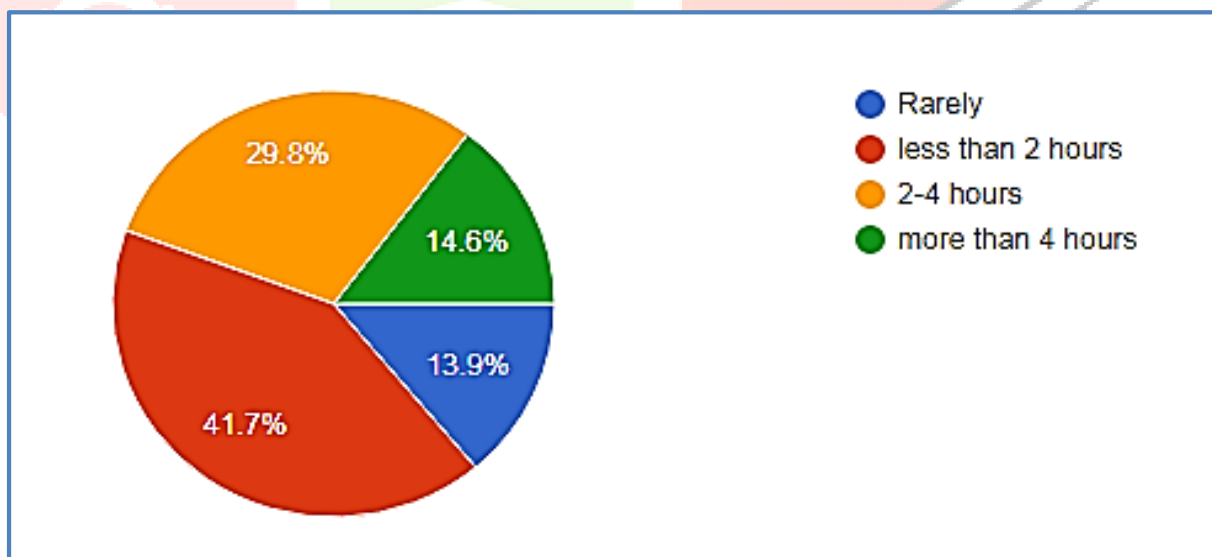

Figure 2: Duration of social media usage per day

Social media can be categorized into four groups: common projects (e.g., Wikipedia), blogs or microblogs (e.g., Blogger, Twitter), content communities (e.g., YouTube, Instagarm), social network sites (e.g., Facebook,Whatsapp)

Whatsapp is the most favorable app with 95.8% students use it, followed by You tube with 86.6% then Wikipedia with 73.2% followed by face book with 70% and then Instagram

with 55.3%. Twitter (9.2%) and Blogger (4.5%) are less likely favored sites by UG medical students of Vidarbha region.

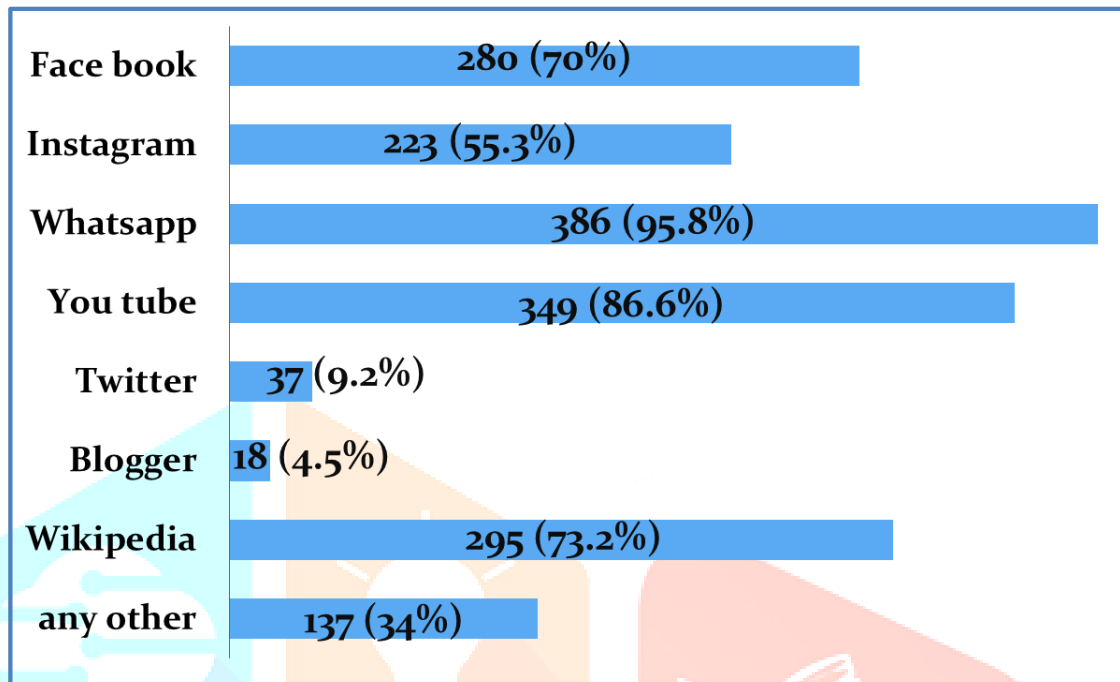Various categories of social networking sites used are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Categories of social media sites used

Data presentation and analysis of Questionnaire

Questionnaire was divided under 4 aspects; education, collaborative learning, social and personal innovativeness. Responses were collected on the basis of views, actual practices and experiences of the students with the help of few open ended questions.

a) **Education Purpose**

Questions were included toascertain whether a reasonable number of the respondents use social media for educational purpose or not; so the items were framed to answer research questions in the form of 4 point Likert scale. The data provided for it are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses on Education Purpose

Sn.	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Do you think Innovation in Education should be encouraged?	249	153	1	0	3.64	Yes
2	Are you using Social Media for Teaching Learning activity?	115	242	43	3	3.16	Yes
3	Do you think, a video of lecture on You-Tube is better than real class?	74	154	126	49	2.62	Yes
4	Is it better for you if teacher send notes by email?	84	171	101	47	2.72	Yes
5	Are you using social media to communicate with teachers for asking your doubts?	34	148	159	62	2.38	NO

From table 1 above, the responses for item 1 have the mean of 3.64, which is above the mean cut-off point which is 2.5 for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'Innovation in Education should be encouraged'. Also, from same table, the responses for item 2 have the mean of 3.16, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'Social Media should be used for Teaching Learning activity. From the same table again, the responses for item 3 have the mean of 2.62, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'The Visual knowledge is better i.e. A video of lecture on You-Tube is better than real class. From the same table again, the responses for item 3 have the mean of 2.62, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement,' it's better if teacher send notes by email'. Moreover, from the table 1 above, the responses for item 5 have the mean of 2.38, which is less than the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'no' on the table; meaning that greater respondents rejected the statement, 'social media is used to communicate with teachers for asking your doubts', Students were less likely in favor of that.

b) **Collaborative Learning**

Questions were included to ascertain whether a reasonable number of the respondents use social media for Collaborative or peer to peer learning purpose or not; so the items were framed to answer research questions in the form of 4 point Likert scale. The data provided for it are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Responses on Collaborative Learning

Sn.	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Do social media support you in collaborative and peer to peer learning?	57	250	84	11	2.87	Yes
2	Have you experienced that members of the groups can exchange files, links, information, polls and videos very quickly and on a larger scale?	176	207	15	5	3.37	Yes
3	Are you using any e-learning module for students which is developed with the help of social media?	63	186	128	25	2.70	Yes
4	Do you think, you and your peers will achieve better results if social media is integrated into lectures?	75	238	66	23	2.90	Yes
5	Are you using social media for having virtual meeting with co-research scholars?	37	142	160	63	2.37	NO

From table 2 above, the responses for item 1 have the mean of 2.87, which is above the mean cut-off point which is 2.5 for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'social media supports in collaborative and peer to peer learning'. Also, from same table, the responses for item 2 have the mean of 3.37, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'Information can be exchanged quickly and on large scale with the help of Social Media'. From the same table again, the responses for item 3 have the mean of 2.62, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'Students are using any e-learning module which is developed with social media'. The responses for item 4 have the mean of 2.90, which is above the

mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'Better results can be achieved if social media is integrated into lectures'. Moreover, the responses for item 5 have the mean of 2.37, which is less than the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'no' on the table; meaning that greater respondents rejected the statement, 'Students are using social media for having virtual meeting with co-research scholars' they are less likely in favor of that.

c) **Social Purpose**

Questions were included toascertain whether a reasonable number of the respondents use social media for Social purpose or not; so the items were framed to answer research questions in the form of 4 point Likert scale.

As Digital media has drastically altered social and communication landscapes; all the statements under social aspect are accepted as mean score for individual statements is higher than mean cut off point which is 2.5. The data provided for it are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Responses on Social Purpose

Sn.	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Do you think, there is no ethical issues involved in use of social media for learning activities?	59	224	92	28	2.77	Yes
2	Is excessive use of social media increasing communication barrier in your case?	58	146	148	51	2.52	Yes
3	Are you using social media for maintaining contacts with peers?	104	258	34	7	3.13	Yes
4	Do social networking sites help you in increasing your self esteem and well being?	56	232	77	37	2.75	Yes
5	Are you worried about the potential abuse of social media?	104	204	72	23	2.91	Yes

From Table 3 Students accepted that social media helps in maintaining contacts with family and friends. They think that, there is no ethical issues involved in use of social media for learning activities. Students accepted that social networking sites helps in increasing self-esteem and wellbeing. But on the other hand students are also worried about potential abused of social media and excessive use of social media increases communication barrier that means it decreases actual live communication.

d) **Personal Innovativeness**

Questions were included toascertain whether a reasonable number of the respondents use social media for personal innovativeness purpose or not; so the items were framed to answer research questions in the form of 4 point Likert scale. The data provided for it are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Responses on Personal Innovativeness

SN.	QUESTION	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Are you using Social Media for knowing updates or upcoming trends?	158	229	11	5	3.33	Yes
2	Are you using social media for exploring or learning new things?	156	228	17	2	3.33	Yes
3	Are you using social networking sites for increasing your popularity?	28	114	175	85	2.20	NO
4	Do you think, use of smartphones will increase the 'ease' of using social media?	143	223	19	7	3.19	Yes
5	Do social media promote read and write Web-Skills?	68	234	80	20	2.86	Yes

From table 4 above, the responses for item 1 have the mean of 3.33, which is above the mean cut-off point which is 2.5 for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'Social Media is useful for knowing updates or upcoming trends'.

Also, from same table, the responses for item 2 have the mean of 3.33, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'social media helps exploring or learning new things'. Moreover, the responses for item 3 have the mean of 2.20, which is less than the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'no' on the table; meaning that greater respondents rejected the statement, 'Students are using social media for increasing their popularity' they are less likely in favor of that.

From the same table again, the responses for item 4 have the mean of 4.19, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'use of smartphones increases the ease of using social media and it's access'.

From the same table again, the responses for item 5 have the mean of 2.86, which is above the mean cut-off point for the study, thus, the decision 'yes' on the table; meaning that greater respondents accepted the statement, 'social media promotes read and write Web-Skills'
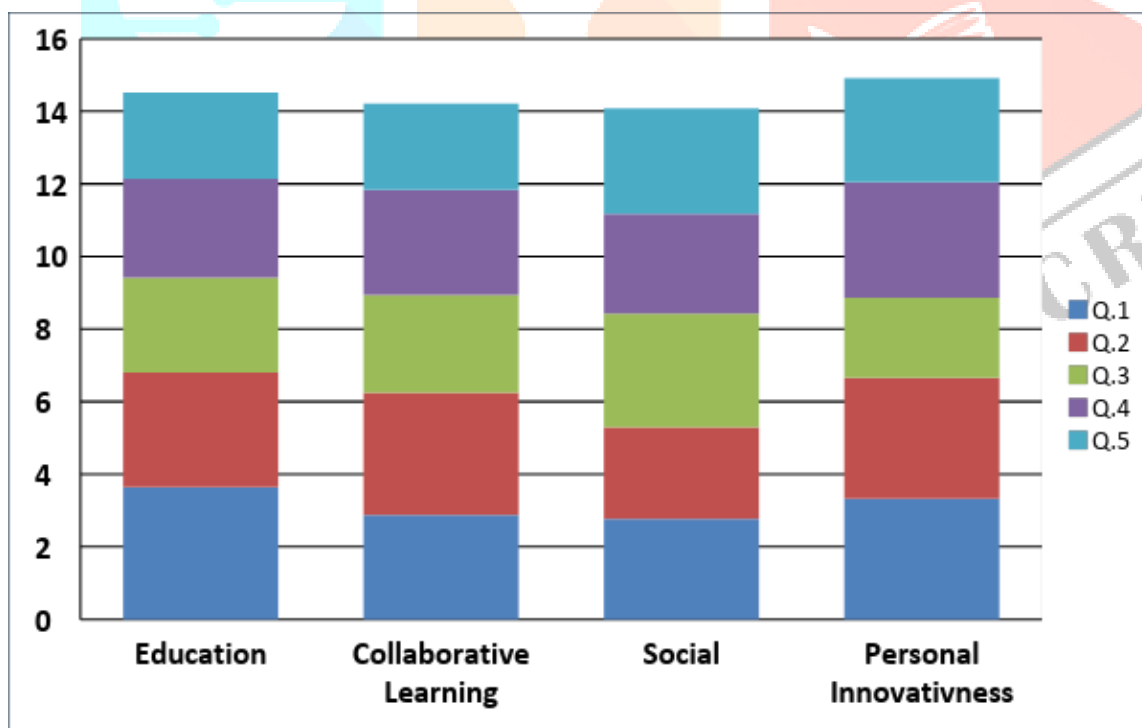

Figure 4:Comparative account of Perception of students on Social Media Usage

As shown in Figure 4, on the basis of comparative account of students' purpose of using social media, Personal Innovativeness stands on rank I, followed by Education on rank II, it means it's 2nd most purpose of social media usage by Undergraduate medical students in Vidarbha. Collaborative Learning is on rank III followed by Social purpose on IV rank with negligible difference between the two of them.

Perception of students regarding Social Media Usage

On the basis of open ended questions in questionnaire, following perceptions of students pertaining to 'Advantages' to social behavior were,

- To access academic information or new updates in health, fashion and technology.
- Sharing of information and to Connect with others and communities.
- Improve ability to be open minded and to learn about people's different thinking style.
- for Entertainment or to Alleviate feelings of routine and boredom.

Whereas below are the perceptions of students pertaining to 'Disadvantages' on social behavior;

- Wastage of much time, unproductivity and distraction from everyday life activity.
- Become less sociable due to decrease in actual live communication.
- Decrease in concentration and willingness to study.
- Exposure to negative ideas, inappropriate contents.

Students were also aware about associated challenges with social media usage like reliablityor trustworthiness of information present on social media, privacy issues, cyberbullying or trolling issues.

Though we received both positive and negative perceptions, but among them positive responses were relatively more than negative ones.

Overall, study results indicate that Social media usage is beneficial for UG medical students in improving their academic performance and for their personal and professional betterment.

Discussion

As of 31 December 2018, India had a population of 1.3 billion, 560 million internet users (35% of the country's total population)[10]. More than 50% of college students go on a social networking site several times a day [11, 12] However in our study, 29.8% of students use social media for 2-4 hours.

Khan [13]studied the effect of Social Networking Websites on students. His analysis showed that 67% people use Social media due to influenced by their friends. We did not attempt to find such correlation.

Sei-ChingJonna Sin and Kyung Sun Kim in their study at U.S. evaluated the impact of social media usage on outcomes of students for seeking everyday life Information [14]. As

per our findings, 89.21% students welcomed the use of social media in teaching learning activity.

In a comparative study by L. Al-sharqi, between Arts and Science Students regarding Perceptions of Social Media Impact on Students' Social Behavior, 'Entertainment' was rated as the highest category for both college groups with about 79 percent followed by 'Information searching' and the third highest category was 'Learning' for both groups. As our study participants were 'Medical UG students' the 'Personal innovativeness' was on first priority, then 'Educational purpose' on rank II followed by 'Collaborative learning' and ultimately 'social purpose'[15].

In one of the studies, use of social media sites have followed facebook, Youtube, hike and lastly twitter whereas in our study the order was Whatsapp, youtube, Wikipedia and facebook [16].

In an exploratory study by Ali and Yaacob58% students were using social media for 2-4 hrs; while in our study 55.6% students use social media for less than 2 hrs followed by 29.8% students for 2-4 hrs [17]

Kuppuswamy and Narayan, studied the role of Social Networking sites on education of youth and concluded that social media have both positive and negative impact on education, depending on one's interest [18]. In response to our open ended question about their view on the impact of social media, we also obtained dual opinions.

According to results of our study, students show positive attitude in use of social media for academic purpose. They were also well aware about positive and negative effects of social media and challenges associated with its usage.

Practical implications and Usefulness of the study

It is expected that the output of this research will benefit the students as it shows the level of the students' use of social media. This helps them to understand how best to sustain the students attention on using the same. It also adds to the available academic literature on use of social media. Also this work is of immense benefit to the field of Library and information sciences as it will be on addition to existing literature. Also the findings could be used by academic advisers and counselors proffer professional advice to the university authorities on how to regulate the social network usage among undergraduate students. Again, the findings of this study provides facts that will enable the authorities dealing with communication technology to know what arises from students' use of the social media. This helps them to know how to control social network usage. From this research, it may

be implicated that the social media are seen as a source of direct response to the need to offering adequate information, Communication, disseminate, discussing and mobilizing vast quality of information. It also provides substantial framework on which to base any desire intervention or for further future research to rectify difficulties and challenges associated with social media usage.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the students' perspective towards the use of social media and examine the relationship between students' beliefs and attitude towards social media usage in UG medical students in Vidarbha. The study results states that most of the students are using social media for less than two hours in a day and Whatsapp is most favorable site. Students are using social media for various purposes like social, educational, collaborative learning and personal innovativeness. The findings suggest that social media tools can be very useful for being used as educational tool. Students' beliefs and attitudes towards social media tools and its use in education are positive. Students welcomed using social media tools for providing supplementary information related to their curriculum. Most students depicted a positive opinion towards the efficacy and utility of social media tools and their use in education. Moreover, the beliefs and attitude of students towards social media tools was found to be positively affecting their academic performance. Thus, one of the key implications of this study is for the medical institutions and educators who need to consider the academic use of social media tools and explore the various strategies and possibilities for reaching students with learning materials via social media.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None declared

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