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A STUDY ON OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, transforming the way we communicate, share information, and connect with others. Social media refers to online platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and exchange content in the form of text, images, videos, and other multimedia. Initially, Social media platforms allowed people to connect online. Indian Education stands at the nexus of evolution and opportunity; foremost among the hallmarks of this transformative journey is the anticipated Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.46% projected between 2024 and 2032. This growth narrative crystallizes into a formidable market size of US\$225 billion by the fiscal year 2024–25, marking a monumental expansion according to insights from IMARC Group and Invest India. Today, we can see education institutions adapting these developments into their systems and relying on group resources and mechanisms to improve student life. The use of social media in education helps students, teachers and parents to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. Social network tools afford students and institutions with multiple opportunities to improve learning methods.

Keywords: Social Media Platforms, University Grants Commission, Facebook, GogoYoko and Compound Annual Growth Rate

Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, transforming the way we communicate, share information, and connect with others. The impact of social media has extended into the realm of higher education, presenting both opportunities and challenges for students, faculty, and institutions. As digital natives, today's students are immersed in social media platforms from an early age, shaping their learning preferences and expectations. The integration of social media into higher education has been a gradual yet significant shift, driven by the ubiquity of these platforms and their potential to enhance educational experiences. Universities and colleges have recognized the need to adapt to these changes, exploring ways to leverage social media for teaching, learning, and fostering a sense of community among their student populations. Andrew Weinreich is the first person who invented the first social media site SIX Degrees in 1997.

What is Social Media?

Social media refers to online platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and exchange content in the form of text, images, videos, and other multimedia. Initially, Social media platforms allowed people to connect online. However, these platforms have gradually evolved into reliable sources of information. Thus, these online networking sites are no longer just informal spaces for people to connect, share content, or simply engage with others, but a forum where students find access to content that can be used in their academics. Being a part of social media also allows students to stay updated about current events.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To trace the origin and introduction of the Social Media in Education
- 2) To know the tools used in the Social Media in Education
- 3) To study the opportunities and challenges of Social Media in Education

Review of Literature

Dr. Vijay Kumar Grover (2014), the paper is about advocating usefulness of the social media as educational tool at the same time warns against the dangers of unguided and unsupervised access of learners to the social networking sites. Social media can't be ignored as it has become part of daily routine of more than ninety percent young students. These sites have some unique characteristics like quick, economic, secure, creative, social and multimedia besides huge capacity of data uploading and sharing. The impact is such that no teacher affords to ignore, rather it would be better to accommodate in the teaching-learning process. Author includes number of references to demonstrate integration of some SNS's like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube etc. At the same time author cautions about some concerns like privacy, wastage of time, distractions and mechanical nature of these SNS's. In the final lines, author refers some implications for teacher in context of SNS are which also hints future direction for teacher education program.

Martins & Ungerer (2015) used this Virtual Teaching Dispositions Scale with distance education teachers (n = 314) in South Africa (UNISA) and found that the lowest scores were found at the virtual/tech disposition, leading them to argue that the focus of professional development and policy should be on exposure and competence development using online tools. Many distance education teachers are not disposed to making extensive use of social media in education, partially due to lack of exposure to the technology, the learning activities afforded and the benefits of use. In addition, some are drawn to the teaching profession in order to engage with students face-to-face, or at least in real time and do not experience this same connection when the interaction is mediated.

Aurora Denial (2016), in her article explained that internet has created the opportunity for social media to thrive. Participating in social media forums, known collectively as “Web 2.0,” allows communication and information-sharing with large groups of people instantaneously. Social media can fall into one of six primary categories. In 2013, the American College of Physicians published a position paper that states “Consideration should be given to how patients and the public would perceive the material ... Therefore, clinicians and healthcare students should ask themselves before posting: Would my patient or his or her family want me to post about them on Facebook? The American Medical Association (AMA) has added the following to its Code of Ethics. “Physicians must recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputation among patients and colleagues, may have consequences for their medical careers (particularly for physicians-in-training and medical students), and can undermine public trust in the medical profession.”

Harari (2018) in his third book in a series on Homo sapiens evolution describes the increasing value of data collected from social media tools and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) based tools to analyze and act upon this data. Harari contends that the day is fast approaching when algorithms will know more about the factors that guide our decision making (our health, our wealth, our aspirations and our limitations) than we know ourselves. The increasing complexity of these algorithms coupled with the aggregation of data into large central repositories places us as both beneficiaries and victims of decision-making by forces outside of individual control – a challenge that strikes at the very foundation of our liberal democracies.

Terry Anderson(2019), Likely the most significant and life changing technologies of the 21st Century is the adoption of social media as major components of commercial, entertainment and educational activities. In this article, His overview the supposed benefits of the application of these tools within formal higher education programs. He then discusses the disadvantages and challenges, with a focus on the paradox that accompanies convenience and value in use, with loss of data control. It is likely that we will continue to see both authorized and unauthorized use of data that we have created for both personal and institutional use. He concludes by examining some of the solutions proposed and tested to resolve this challenge. He then overview two possible solutions - the first focused on institutions creating and managing their own social media and the second an emergent technical solution whereby users keep control of their data, while sharing and growing in multiple social contexts.

Milestones of Social Media in Higher Education

While there is no definitive date for the introduction of social media in higher education in India, its adoption and usage in academic institutions gained momentum in the late 2000s and early 2010s, coinciding with the rise in popularity of social media platforms globally. Some key developments and milestones in the integration of social media in Indian higher education include:

- 1. Early 2000s:** Social media platforms like Orkut, Facebook, and Twitter started gaining traction among Indian internet users, including students and faculty members in higher education institutions.
- 2. Mid-2000s:** Several Indian universities and colleges began experimenting with social media for purposes such as student engagement, event promotion, and online discussions.
- 3. 2008-2010:** Many Indian educational institutions, particularly those with a strong technology focus, started creating official presences on popular social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.
- 4. 2011:** The University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex regulatory body for higher education in India, recognized the potential of social media for academic purposes and encouraged universities to leverage these platforms for teaching, learning, and research.
- 5. 2012-2014:** Several Indian universities and colleges launched initiatives to integrate social media into their curriculum, teaching methods, and student communication strategies. This included setting up official social media accounts, using platforms for classroom discussions, and promoting digital literacy among students.
- 6. 2015 onwards:** With the increasing penetration of smartphones and internet connectivity in India, social media usage in higher education became more widespread. Many institutions adopted social media policies and guidelines to regulate and encourage responsible use among students and faculty.

Social Media Tools for Education

1. The Connected Educator, 2. Edmodo, 3. TedEd, 4. Google+, 5. Facebook, 6. Twitter, 7. Instagram, 8. Vimeo, 9. WordPress, 10. Blogger, 11. Skype, 12. Pinterest, , 13. YouTube, 14. TeacherTube, 15. Academia.edu, 16. LinkedIn, 17. LabRoots, 18. ResearchGate, 19. LabforCulture.org, 20. CultureInside, 21. GogoYoko, 22. Sgrouples, 23. DailyMotion 24. RebelMouse ,25. HootSuite etc.,

Growth and Market Size

Indian Education stands at the nexus of evolution and opportunity; foremost among the hallmarks of this transformative journey is the anticipated Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.46% projected between 2024 and 2032. This growth narrative crystallizes into a formidable market size of US\$225 billion by the fiscal year 2024–25, marking a monumental expansion according to insights from IMARC Group and Invest India. Simultaneously, our academic institutions bask in the glow of global recognition, with 101 Indian establishments securing positions in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024 and 10 institutions ascending to the top 500 echelons in the QS World University Rankings 2024 (Invest India). The imperative to bridge the skill gap, align curricula with industry needs, and provide hands-on experience to students underscore the importance of adaptability and relevance.



Source: Decoding the Higher Education Outlook 2024 for India's Academic Landscape
Students Benefit from Social Media

1. Promotes Active Learning

Classroom learning is a one-way transfer of knowledge, but educational content on social media facilitates active learning. It allows students to engage with others, have long discussions, and solve quizzes online. Social media exposes them to content and people which makes the process of learning more fun and interesting. Being able to move beyond traditional learning methods, and absorb information in a more relevant way ensures a better understanding of a particular subject.

2. Access to Educational Content

Social media is a vast platform that stores diversified content. Its relevance in education has increased manifold with the pandemic. Students find it more convenient to have access to their study materials from the comfort of their homes. Social media makes it possible because it is a storehouse for bulk information about many educational topics. Not only can students watch educational videos, interact, and hold discussions in the comments, but also communicate with people connected to their subject of interest. Thus, the popularity of social media in education has been possible because of how easily students can get access to educational content online.

3. Development of Communication Skills

Students may often feel hesitant to interact in a classroom. Moreover, there are other ways of effective communication than sitting in a classroom. There are other ways that students can feel more comfortable and confident. Social media comes as a savior for students who may feel a little shy in social situations.

4. Connecting Beyond Classrooms

When you are learning in a classroom, the information you are receiving and the people you are interacting with is very limited. Including social media in education allows you to attend online lectures, participate in discussions, have enlightening conversations, and gather knowledge. It allows you to connect

with people worldwide. Digital advancement has made it possible to attend video conferences from any corner of the world.

5. Building Wide Networks

Social media is no longer a storehouse of memories, but can also be used as a credible source of information on various subjects. Many people advertise their skills and services to find career opportunities there. Businesses may also hire employees through social media.

6. Convenient Mode of Discourse

The traditional mode of informing students about any news or changes in the school curriculum is by issuing notices or flyers. But, educational institutions are gradually moving online and building a strong community there.

7. Efficient Parent-Teacher Correspondence

Instead of writing in a student's diary or notebook, social media allows the institution to have separate groups or online discussion forums with the parents and guardians. This facilitates conversations about news, events, and assignments that may have been overlooked. The process is more quick and efficient because the teachers can directly correspond with the parents about their ward.

8. Serves as an Effective Marketing Tool

Last, but not least, social media can serve as an effective tool for the educational institution to advertise its facilities to the rest of the world. This proves effective in attracting potential students, while also giving the institution a credible presence among the other reputable institutions on social media.

Challenges of Social Media of Students in Higher Education

- 1. Distraction and Procrastination:** Social media can be highly addictive and can lead to excessive time spent on these platforms, distracting students from their studies, assignments, and academic responsibilities.
- 2. Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:** Students may face cyberbullying, online harassment, or negative comments from their peers, which can have a detrimental impact on their mental health and well-being.
- 3. Privacy and Security Concerns:** Sharing personal information and content on social media can raise privacy and security concerns, as students may inadvertently expose themselves to online predators, identity theft, or other risks.
- 4. Misinformation and Fake News:** Social media platforms are often breeding grounds for the spread of misinformation, fake news, and unreliable sources, which can be challenging for students to navigate and discern accurate information.
- 5. Academic Integrity:** Social media can facilitate academic misconduct, such as cheating on assignments or plagiarizing content, which can undermine the principles of academic integrity.
- 6. Reputation Management:** Students' online presence and activity on social media can potentially impact their future career prospects, as employers and admission committees may scrutinize their digital footprint.

7. Digital Divide: Not all students have equal access to technology and the internet, which can create a digital divide and exacerbate existing inequalities in education.

8. Lack of Digital Literacy Skills: Some students may lack the necessary digital literacy skills to effectively navigate and critically evaluate social media content, which can impact their learning and research abilities.

The American Medical Association (AMA) has added the following to its Code of Ethics. “Physicians must recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputation among patients and colleagues, may have consequences for their medical careers (particularly for physicians-in-training and medical students), and can undermine public trust in the medical profession.” Social media is an incredible tool. Optometric educators should reflect on the formal training offered to students regarding the use of social media in the educational and professional settings.

Opportunities of Social Media to Students in Higher Education

Social media can present several opportunities for students in higher education when used effectively:

1. Collaborative learning: Social media platforms facilitate collaboration, communication, and knowledge sharing among students and faculty. They can create virtual study groups, discuss course materials, and engage in peer-to-peer learning.

2. Access to educational resources: Students can access a wealth of educational resources, such as online lectures, tutorials, academic articles, and open educational resources (OERs) through social media channels and online communities.

3. Networking and professional development: Social media allows students to connect with professionals, researchers, and experts in their field of study, enabling them to expand their professional networks and explore career opportunities.

4. Enhancing digital literacy: Engaging with social media can help students develop essential digital literacy skills, such as curating and evaluating information, creating and sharing content, and building an online presence.

5. Global connections: Social media platforms enable students to connect with peers and institutions from around the world, fostering cross-cultural exchanges, international collaborations, and exposure to diverse perspectives.

6. Promoting student engagement: When integrated into the curriculum, social media can increase student engagement, encourage active participation, and facilitate discussions beyond the traditional classroom setting.

7. Showcasing work and portfolios: Students can use social media platforms to showcase their academic projects, creative works, and portfolios, which can be beneficial for their future careers and personal branding.

8. Instant feedback and support: Social media provides instant access to feedback, support, and guidance from instructors, peers, and online communities, which can be valuable for learning and problem-solving.

Conclusion

Social media platforms have become an undeniable force in the lives of students. It's shaping their experiences and interactions in profound ways. While it presents both benefits and challenges, it is essential to foster responsible and mindful social media usage among students. Today, we can see education institutions adapting these developments into their systems and relying on group resources and mechanisms to improve student life. The use of social media in education helps students, teachers and parents to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. Social network tools afford students and institutions with multiple opportunities to improve learning methods. Through these networks, you can incorporate social media plugins that enable sharing and interaction. Students can benefit from online tutorials through YouTube, online courses delivered by universities abroad through Skype and a wide array of resources that are shared through social networks.

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