

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A LEARNING TOOL: BALANCING BENEFITS AND DISTRACTIONS

Submitted by

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Redg No.: 9-2-214-63-2020

This research report is submitted to **Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University** in a partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Bachelor in Information, Communication and Technology Education (BICTE)

At the

Sukuna Multiple Campus

Sundarhariancha-12, Morang

Tribhuvan University Board

March 05, 2025

DECLARATION

I, Sarjan Rai, declare that this research report titled "Social Media as a Learning Tool: Balancing Benefits and Distractions" is my original work. It has been conducted under the guidance of Mr. Nil Kantha Dahal and is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Education in Information Communication Technology, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University.

I confirm that this work has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification. All sources of information used in this report have been properly cited and acknowledged.

Name: Sarjan Rai

Date: March 05, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing this research has been a rewarding journey, and I am deeply grateful to the individuals and institutions who made it possible.

My foremost thanks go to Mr. Nil Kantha Dahal, my research supervisor, for his unwavering guidance, constructive feedback, and encouragement. His expertise and patience have been invaluable in shaping this study.

A special note of gratitude goes to the participants of this study. Their willingness to share their experiences and insights has been the foundation of this research. Without their cooperation, this project would not have been possible.

I acknowledge the contributions of the scholars and researchers whose works I referenced. Their insights have enriched my understanding and provided a strong theoretical framework for this study.

This research report, "Social Media as a Learning Tool: Balancing Benefits and Distractions", is a reflection of the collective efforts of everyone who supported me. I am truly grateful for their contributions.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the dual role of social media as a learning tool, balancing its benefits and distractions among Bachelor in Information and Communication Technology Education (BICTE) students at Sukuna Multiple Campus. The study focuses on students stratified across semesters 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7, exploring how platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook are utilized for academic activities, including accessing educational resources, collaborative learning, and peer interaction. Data was collected through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews, offering a detailed understanding of students' experiences, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to balance the benefits and distractions of social media in their academic lives.

The findings reveal that students primarily use social media for watching educational videos and discussing coursework, while activities like reading academic posts or participating in online study groups are less common. This suggests that while social media is effective for certain types of learning, its potential for fostering deeper academic engagement, such as through forums or professional networking, remains underutilized. Key benefits of social media as a learning tool include access to educational resources, collaborative learning, peer interaction, visual and interactive learning, self-paced learning, and resource sharing. However, challenges such as distractions from entertainment content, social interactions, notifications, time management issues, and the addictive design of social media platforms were also identified.

To address these challenges, students adopt strategies such as practicing mindfulness and self-discipline, keeping devices away during study time, using productivity tools to block distracting apps, studying in quiet environments, turning off notifications, and following structured study schedules. The study emphasizes the need for institutional support, including digital literacy training and guidelines for responsible social media use, to help students maximize its educational potential while minimizing distractions.

This research provides actionable insights for educators and institutions to integrate social media into formal learning environments effectively. By fostering a balanced approach, students can leverage social media as a powerful tool for learning while mitigating its disruptive effects.

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Chapter I INTRODUCTION

Social Media definition: “Social media refers to internet-based communication platforms that enable users to interact, create, and share information, ideas, interests, and various forms of expression. These interactive technologies facilitate engagement within virtual communities and networks, fostering connectivity and collaboration on a global scale.” (Perumal et al., 2022)

Background of Study

Learning has always been an essential part of human life (Leng, 2020), serving as the cornerstone of progress. It enables the acquisition of knowledge and skills that drive adaptation and innovation. Over time, learning has continuously evolved, reflecting the ever-changing needs of society and technology.

Over the past few decades, educational approaches have evolved from traditional classroom settings to include online learning, e-learning, interactive methods, and various hybrid models. This shift is largely driven by the increasing comfort of the newer generation with digital technologies, making convenience and accessibility central to the learning experience (Kumar & Sharma, 2016). In this context, social media has emerged as both a tool for learning and a potential source of distraction, prompting a need to balance its benefits with its challenges in modern education. The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (Kumar, 2022) has started to transform educational practices, allowing platforms like Facebook, originally designed for socializing, to be repurposed as alternative learning tools. This shift highlights how social media can be utilized for educational purposes, despite its initial intent for personal interaction (Milošević I. et al., 2015).

Social media is a vital learning tool, enabling young learners to access educational resources, engage in discussions, and enhance skills. It includes text-based communication, social networking, mobile apps, and conferencing tools, each serving distinct educational purposes (Perumal et al., 2022). One significant trend in educational social media is the rise of online communities and discussion forums, where students engage in peer learning and receive instant feedback from educators.

Additionally, video-based learning, facilitated by platforms like YouTube and TikTok, has gained popularity by providing visual and interactive methods to simplify complex topics. Another emerging trend is micro learning, where bite-sized educational content is shared through short videos or posts, catering to modern learners' fast-paced lifestyles (Perez et al., 2023).

Despite its numerous advantages, social media presents challenges as a learning tool, particularly in accessing the necessary technologies. Reliable internet access, essential for using social media, remains an issue in many countries. (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Also social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged through addictive features, such as notifications and personalized content. This design caters to users' needs for social connection and self-presentation, leading to increased dependency on these platforms, often at the cost of other educational or personal activities (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012; Addictive Features of Social Media, 2019).

Problem statement

The widespread use of social media has transformed the way student's access educational resources, collaborate with peers, and engage with learning materials. Platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp have emerged as valuable tools for academic purposes, allowing students to participate in virtual discussions, share educational content, and access diverse learning opportunities (Milošević et al., 2015). However, the increasing use of social media in education brings about a significant challenge: the risk of distraction. Social media platforms are designed to capture users' attention through engaging content, notifications, and personalized feeds, often leading students to spend time on non-academic activities, such as entertainment or social interaction, during study sessions.

Despite its potential, the dual nature of social media, its ability to enhance learning while also serving as a source of distraction, remains underexplored in current research (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). While numerous studies have acknowledged the benefits of social media in education, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding about how students balance the academic and non-academic aspects of social media use (Milošević et al., 2015). Additionally, existing literature offers limited insights into the strategies that students can employ to minimize distractions while maximizing the educational benefits of social media

This research aims to address these gaps by investigating how social media can be effectively utilized as a learning tool while minimizing its disruptive effects. By exploring the extent to which social media impacts academic performance, engagement, and focus, this study will provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by students in using social media for educational purposes. Furthermore, the research will propose practical strategies for balancing social media's benefits and distractions, offering recommendations for educators, institutions, and students on how to optimize social media use for learning. Addressing these issues is crucial, as it can inform the development of guidelines, tools, and policies that will enable students to use social media more effectively, ensuring that it serves as an asset rather than a hindrance to their academic success (Kumar, 2022; Perumal et al., 2022).

Objectives

This study aims to examine the advantages of social media as a learning tool by analyzing its role in knowledge acquisition, collaboration, and engagement. Additionally, it seeks to identify key distractions that arise when using social media for academic purposes, such as excessive engagement with non-educational content. Finally, this research will develop actionable strategies to help students balance the benefits of social media with its potential distractions, ensuring that it remains an effective learning aid.

Research questions

To achieve the aim of the research, the following research questions have been set:

Set 1:

How often do you use social media for academic purposes?

What types of academic activities do you engage in using social media?

How helpful do you find social media in improving your learning experience?

Which social media platform do you find most effective for academic purposes?

Do you believe social media enhances collaborative learning with peers?

Have you experienced an improvement in academic performance due to social media use?

Can you describe specific ways social media has helped you in learning?

What academic benefits do you get from using platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn, or WhatsApp?

In what ways does social media support interactive and collaborative learning?

Have you ever received valuable academic advice or resources through social media?

Set 2:

How often do you get distracted by non-academic content while using social media for learning?

What percentage of your social media time is spent on academic vs. non-academic activities?

Which type of distractions do you encounter the most while using social media for learning?

Do you feel that social media negatively impacts your focus during study sessions?

Have you ever missed deadlines due to social media distractions?

Can you describe a time when social media distracted you from academic work?

What are the biggest challenges you face when using social media for educational purposes?

How do social media notifications affect your ability to concentrate on studies?

What strategies do you use to reduce distractions while studying online?

Do you think social media addiction is a problem in academic learning? Why or why not?

Set 3:

How effective do you think time management strategies are in controlling social media distractions?

Would you prefer academic institutions to formally integrate social media into learning?

What tools or apps do you use to manage your social media time?

Would setting daily limits on social media use improve your focus on academics?

Do you think digital literacy programs can help students use social media more effectively for education?

What methods have you found effective in balancing social media use and academic responsibilities?

How can universities or educators help students use social media more productively for learning?

Do you think setting screen-time limits can improve academic productivity? Why or why not?

What policies or guidelines do you think schools should implement for social media in education?

What advice would you give to students struggling with social media distractions in learning?

Scope and Limitations

This study explores the role of social media as a learning tool, emphasizing its benefits, potential distractions, and strategies for optimizing its educational use. It investigates how students engage with platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok for academic purposes, including resource sharing, peer collaboration, and interactive learning. The research is conducted among students of the BICTE faculty at Sukuna Multiple Campus, offering a focused examination of their experiences with social media in an academic context.

To gather relevant data, the study employs a combination of questionnaires, surveys, and semi-structured interviews. These methods allow for a well-rounded understanding of students' patterns, behaviors, possible distraction factor, strategy and challenges related to social media use in education.

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of social media in education, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations that may affect the interpretation and applicability of the findings.

One limitation is the restricted scope of participants and limited sample size. This study focuses solely on students from the BICTE faculty at Sukuna Multiple Campus, which may not represent the experiences of students from other institutions or academic disciplines. Additionally, the sample size may not be large enough to draw conclusions that are statistically generalizable. Future research could include a more diverse and extensive sample across multiple institutions to enhance the study's external validity.

Another concern is the generalizability of findings. Since the study is based on a specific academic context, the results may not fully reflect the experiences of students in different educational settings, such as universities with distinct teaching methodologies, varying levels of technological accessibility, or alternative modes of social media integration in learning. Expanding the research to include students from different faculties and geographical regions could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

The evolving nature of social media also presents a limitation. Social media platforms continuously introduce new features, algorithms, and trends that shape how users interact with digital content. What is considered an effective learning tool today may become obsolete or significantly altered in the near future.

This rapid evolution makes it challenging to establish long-term conclusions, necessitating ongoing research to track changes in how social media influences learning outcomes.

Additionally, time constraints affected the depth of data collection. Given the fixed research duration, it was not feasible to conduct extensive longitudinal studies that could capture how students' engagement with social media for learning changes over time. A longer study period might provide richer insights into behavioral patterns, the persistence of distractions, and the sustained benefits of social media use.

The study also relies on self-reported data, which introduces potential bias. Participants may unintentionally provide socially desirable responses rather than fully accurate accounts of their social media use. Some may exaggerate its benefits or underreport distractions, affecting the reliability of the findings. While confidentiality measures were implemented to encourage honest responses, the inherent limitations of self-reported data remain.

Another limitation concerns the length of the questionnaire, which includes 30 questions, both qualitative and quantitative. Given the length and the complexity of the questions, participants may experience fatigue, which could discourage them from providing thoughtful and accurate responses, potentially leading to incomplete or biased data. This is a common issue in studies involving lengthy surveys, and it highlights the need for careful consideration of participant engagement during data collection.

Lastly, the study primarily relies on student perspectives and does not incorporate faculty viewpoints, academic performance records, or institutional policies related to social media in education. A broader study integrating perspectives from educators, administrators, and academic data could offer a more holistic understanding of how social media affects learning outcomes.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes meaningful insights into the role of social media in education. It highlights areas where students can leverage digital platforms for learning while minimizing their distractions. The findings provide a foundation for further studies and offer practical recommendations for students, educators, and academic institutions aiming to optimize social media for educational purposes.

Chapter II Literature Review

Social media has become a fundamental part of students' everyday lives, impacting numerous areas of their activities, including their academic journeys. In recent years, the role of social media in education has gained significant attention, as platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram present distinctive opportunities to enrich learning both within and beyond the classroom (Nkhoma et al., 2015). These platforms provide tools for collaboration, information-sharing, and peer engagement, which can potentially facilitate learning and foster a sense of community among students. However, the growing integration of social media in academic settings also raises concerns regarding its impact on students' attention, focus, and overall academic performance (Junco, 2012). This literature review examines existing studies on the use of social media in education, exploring its perceived benefits as a learning tool while addressing the challenges and distractions it may introduce.

Several theoretical models have been used to explore the integration of social media in education. One prominent theory is Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of social interactions in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky proposed that learning is inherently social and that knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Social media platforms support this theory by enabling students to collaborate and share knowledge in both formal and informal contexts. Additionally, the "Theory of Planned Behavior" by Ajzen help to understand students' intentions to use social media for educational purposes. This theory suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence students' decisions to engage with social media in their academic activities. These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insight into the mechanisms through which social media can enhance or hinder learning (Ajzen, 1991).

Existing knowledge

Benefits of Social Media in Education

Existing research highlights the positive impact of social media on student engagement and collaboration. Manca and Ranieri found that Facebook groups, in particular, facilitate collaborative learning by providing a virtual space where students can share resources, discuss academic topics, and engage in peer learning. Similarly, Mihret and fellow researcher demonstrated that platforms like YouTube are effective in providing students with visual and interactive content that simplifies complex topics. These platforms promote not only academic discussions but also the development of critical thinking and communication skills through online interactions (Mihret & Joshi, 2024). As social media allows students to access educational materials anytime and anywhere, it fosters a flexible and inclusive learning environment (Milošević I. et al., 2015).

Challenges and Distractions

While the benefits of social media in education are well-documented, several studies have raised concerns about its potential to distract students from their academic goals. Junco conducted a study that revealed a negative correlation between Facebook usage and academic performance, noting that excessive time spent on social media is linked to lower grades (Junco, 2012).

Furthermore, Nadkarni and Hofmann highlighted how the design features of social media, such as push notifications and tailored content keep users engaged, often leading to decreased focus and productivity. These distractions can lead to delays in studying, as students may prioritize non-academic content over their studies, ultimately affecting their learning outcomes (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Thus, while social media platforms offer substantial educational value, they also present significant challenges in terms of managing time and maintaining focus.

Strategies to Distractions

To address the challenges posed by social media, various strategies have been proposed. Digital literacy programs that educate students on how to use social media responsibly for academic purposes have been found to be effective in improving focus and reducing distractions. Institutions can adopt time management tools and apps to help students track and limit their social media usage during study hours (Perumal et al., 2022). Self-regulation techniques, such as setting specific times for social media engagement or using apps to block notifications during study sessions, have also been found to help students balance their academic and personal use of social media (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021).

Research gap

While much of the existing literature focuses on the benefits and challenges of social media in education, there remains a significant gap in understanding how to balance the advantages of social media with its potential for distraction. Few studies have explored the combination of various social media platforms and their cumulative effect on student learning. Most research has been limited to individual platforms, such as Facebook or YouTube, without considering how students use multiple platforms simultaneously (Nadkarni & Hofmann, Why do people use Facebook?, 2012). Moreover, there is limited research on the long-term impact of social media use on academic achievement, with most studies focusing on short-term effects. Future research could investigate the role of social media over extended periods and examine how its use evolves in the context of changing technological trends.

Additionally, while many studies focus on students' perceptions, there is a lack of research integrating the perspectives of educators and administrators on the effective use of social media in educational settings. Incorporating these viewpoints could offer a more holistic understanding of how social media can be optimized for academic purposes. Finally, more research is needed to understand how different academic disciplines utilize social media and whether there are discipline-specific strategies that could enhance its effectiveness as a learning tool.

Chapter III Research Methodology

This research methodology aims to examine students' perspectives on social media as a learning tool, focusing on both its advantages and potential distractions, as well as strategies to balance these effects. The study targets students enrolled in the Bachelor in Information and Communication Technology Education (BICTE) program at Sukuna Multiple Campus. By examining students' perspectives and behaviors, the research aims to identify how social media can enhance academic engagement while minimizing its disruptive effects.

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The study is exploratory and descriptive, as it seeks to analyze students' social media usage patterns, their impact on learning, and strategies for effective utilization.

Sampling

The sampling method for this study combines a mixed-method approach with stratified random sampling to ensure a representative sample of students from the Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology Education (BICTE) program at Sukuna Multiple Campus. The population for this research consists of all students currently enrolled in the BICTE program.

To select the sample, the entire student population is divided into strata based on academic levels (first-semester, third-semester, fifth-semester, sixth- semester, eighth- semester). This stratification ensures that students from various stages of the program are equally represented, offering a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences and behaviors. From each stratum, students are randomly selected to participate in the study, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives across the entire BICTE program. This approach reduces sampling bias and enhances the generalizability of the study's findings.

The sample size for this study is 30 students, who are randomly selected from these academic levels. The total population of students enrolled in the BICTE program is not very large, which makes this sample size sufficient to gather meaningful data while keeping

the study manageable. The selection process ensures proportional representation from students across different academic stages, allowing for diverse insights and experiences.

Data Collection Methods

To comprehensively examine students' perspectives on the role of social media in learning, this study employs multiple data collection methods, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This mixed-methods strategy is intended to provide a well-rounded understanding of how social media affects academic engagement and productivity, as well as the strategies students use to manage its distractions. The data collection methods for this study include structured survey. A closed-ended questionnaire is prepared and distributes using google form. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are conducted with a subset of participants to gather in-depth qualitative insights into their experiences, challenges, and strategies for balancing social media use in academic contexts.

Surveys:

The primary method for quantitative data collection will be surveys, which will be administered to all 30 selected participants. A closed-ended questionnaire is prepared and distributed using Google Forms to collect quantitative data on students' social media usage patterns, perceptions, and experiences. The survey includes a mix of multiple choice questions, checkboxes, and multiple choice grid, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of key variables. For example:

- “What tools or apps do you use to manage your social media time?” (Multiple Choice question)
- “What academic benefits do you get from using platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn, or WhatsApp?” (Checkboxes)

The survey begins with a consent message to inform participants about the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. The message reads:

"Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. This study aims to explore the role of social media in education, analyzing both its benefits as a learning tool

and its potential distractions. Your responses will help us understand how students utilize social media for academic purposes and how they manage its challenges.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and all responses will be kept confidential. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

We appreciate your valuable insights!

Best regards,

Sarjan Rai

BICTE, Sukuna Multiple Campus."

The survey is designed to be concise and user-friendly, with an estimated completion time of 10–15 minutes. This timeframe was determined through pilot testing with three students, which helped identify and address any ambiguities or technical issues. The pilot test ensured that the questions were clear, relevant, and easy to understand, while also confirming that the survey could be completed within the specified time without causing participant fatigue.

The survey aims to assess:

- Frequency and types of social media used by students.
- Perceived benefits and distractions associated with social media.
- Strategies that students use to balance the benefits and drawbacks of social media in their academic life.
- Common distractions encountered while using social media for academic tasks.

All responses are anonymized to protect participants' identities, and participation is entirely voluntary. Given the small sample size, the analysis will focus on identifying patterns and themes rather than making broad statistical generalizations.

Interview:

The quantitative data collected through the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with semester seventh a subset of participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences with social media as a learning tool. The interviews were designed to explore both the benefits and challenges of social media use in academic contexts, as well as the

strategies students employ to manage its distractions. The interview questions were divided into three main themes: the educational benefits of social media, the challenges and distractions it poses, and strategies for effective use.

Participants were asked questions such as:

“Can you describe specific ways social media has helped you in learning?”

“How do you balance your time between academic and non-academic activities on social media?”

“Can you describe how social media notifications impact your concentration while studying?”

“What advice would you give to students struggling with social media distractions in learning?”

These questions aimed to uncover how students leverage social media for educational purposes. Participants were encouraged to share specific examples and personal experiences to provide a richer understanding of their perspectives. The interviews provided valuable qualitative data, offering a nuanced understanding of the dual role of social media as both a learning tool and a potential source of distraction.

Data Analysis Method

The analysis of the collected data was conducted using a systematic and structured approach to ensure accuracy, reliability, and relevance to the research objectives. Given the mixed-methods design of this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately and then integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected through the Google Form survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns, trends, and frequencies in students' social media usage, perceptions, and experiences. The survey responses were organized into categories based on the research questions, such as the frequency of social media use for academic purposes, the types of platforms used, and the perceived benefits and distractions. Tools like Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets were used to calculate key statistical measures, such as percentages (e.g., the proportion of students who use YouTube for learning), averages (e.g., the average time spent on social media daily), and frequencies (e.g., how often students use social media for academic tasks). Charts and graphs, such as bar graphs and pie charts, were created to visualize the data, making it easier to interpret and draw meaningful conclusions about students' engagement with social media as a learning tool.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used method for identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns in qualitative data. This approach allowed for a systematic exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategies related to social media use in academic contexts.

First all interviews were transcribed word-for-word to ensure accuracy and completeness. During this process, I carefully reviewed each transcript multiple times to familiarize myself with the data. This process helped me gain a deeper understanding of the participants' responses and identify initial patterns or recurring ideas

After familiarization, I began the process of coding, which involved assigning labels or tags to specific parts of the text that were relevant to the research questions

For example on the question “Can you describe specific ways social media has helped you in learning?” one participant shared: “For me social media has been really helpful because I can find so many educational resources in one place. For example, I often use YouTube to watch tutorials on topics I’m struggling with, and I’ve found some great articles and research papers shared on Facebook groups” this response was coded as "educational benefits". Similarly, when participants described challenges, such as "I was distracted by entertainment content like videos or memes," these responses were coded as "distractions."

Once the initial coding was complete, I grouped similar codes into broader themes. For instance:

Codes such as "access to educational resources," "joining academic groups," and "engaging in real-time discussions" were grouped under the theme of "educational benefits."

Codes like "entertainment content distractions," "notification interruptions," and "time management issues" were grouped under the theme of "challenges and distractions."

Interpreting the Themes

Educational Benefits: The theme of "educational benefits" revealed that platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp are highly valued for their ability to provide accessible, flexible, and collaborative learning opportunities. Also visual representation of complex explanation make platform like YouTube first choice for students. Participants' responses highlight how social media enables self-paced learning and fosters peer collaboration, making it a valuable and practical tool for academic success.

Challenges and Distractions:

The theme of "challenges and distractions" highlighted the struggles students face in managing their time and staying focused, largely due to the addictive nature of social media. Many participants shared how non-academic content often pulls them away from their studies. Many participants share notifications were another major issues which distract their focus from study.

Chapter IV Results

The findings of this study, drawn from a combination of survey responses and semi-structured interviews, provide a multifaceted understanding of how students perceive and engage with social media as a learning tool. The survey data, collected from 30 participants, highlights the dual role of social media in education

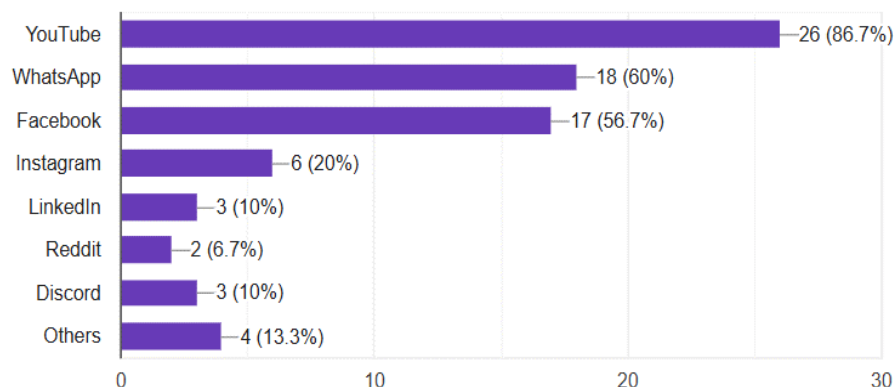


Figure 1: Most used social media platform for academic purpose

The survey results show that YouTube (86.7%) and WhatsApp (60%) are the most popular platforms for academic purposes, used for tutorials and group discussions. Facebook (56.7%) is also widely used for academic groups, while platforms like Instagram (20%), LinkedIn (10%), and Discord (10%) serve niche roles. These findings highlight how students leverage social media for learning, with YouTube and WhatsApp being the most effective tools for academic support.

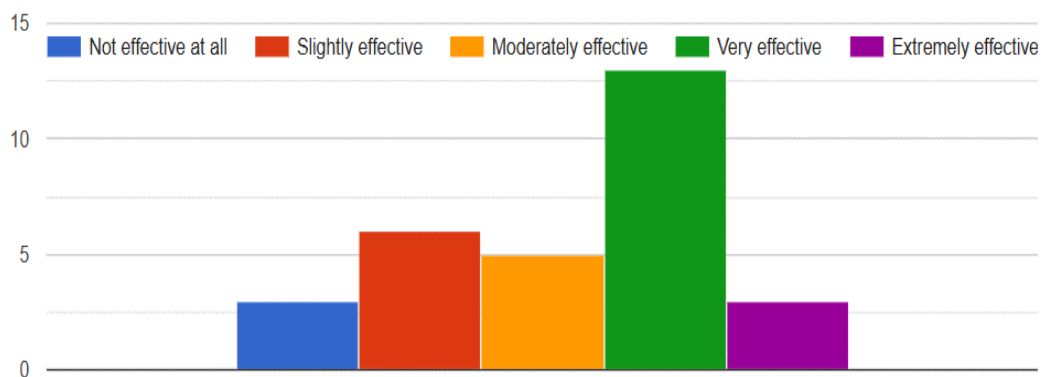


Figure 2: Effectiveness of time management for preventing social media distractions

According to the survey, 53.3% (16 students) view time management strategies as very or extremely effective in reducing social media distractions. However, 30% (9 students) find them only slightly or not effective at all, highlighting that while many students benefit from these strategies, others still face challenges in managing distractions.

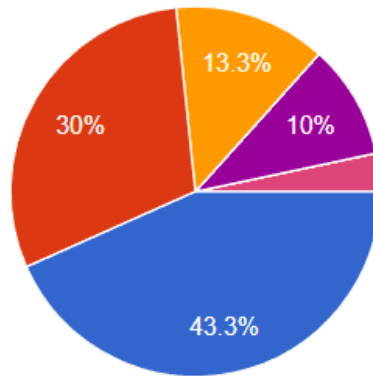


Figure 3: Challenges faced during using social media for educational purposes

A significant 43.3% (13 students) identified difficulty in finding relevant academic content as their main challenge when using social media for education. Meanwhile, 30% (9 students) pointed to overwhelming distractions from non-academic content, and 13.3% (4 students) struggled with managing time spent on social media. Smaller groups mentioned issues like inconsistent or unreliable information (10%) and lack of interaction with academic groups (3.3%). These results underscore the balance students must strike between leveraging social media for learning and avoiding its distractions.

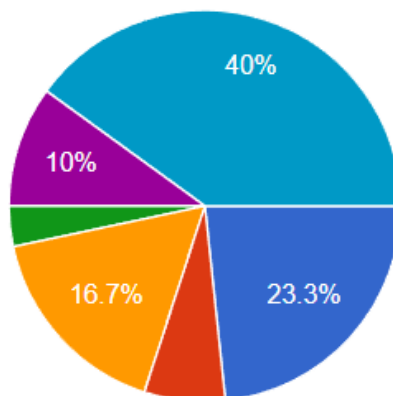


Figure 4: Managing distraction of social media while studying

According to the responses, 40% (12 students) find studying in a quiet, distraction-free environment the most effective way to reduce interruptions. Another 23.3% (7 students) turn off social media notifications, while 16.7% (5 students) set specific time limits for social media use. Fewer students use methods like website blockers (6.7% or 2 students) or keeping their devices out of reach (10% or 3 students). These strategies reflect students' efforts to create a focused study routine and minimize digital distractions.

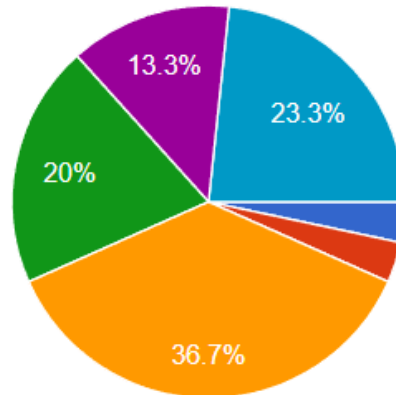


Figure 5: Method for effectively balancing social media use and academic responsibilities

Out of the total respondents, 36.7% (11 students) prioritize adhering to a study schedule to balance their academic workload and social media use. Meanwhile, 23.3% (7 students) depend on self-discipline and conscious social media usage, and 20% (6 students) opt to disable notifications while studying. Only a small fraction, 3.3% (1 student), employs strategies like setting time limits or using productivity apps. These findings underscore the significance of structured planning and self-control in juggling academic and social media demands.

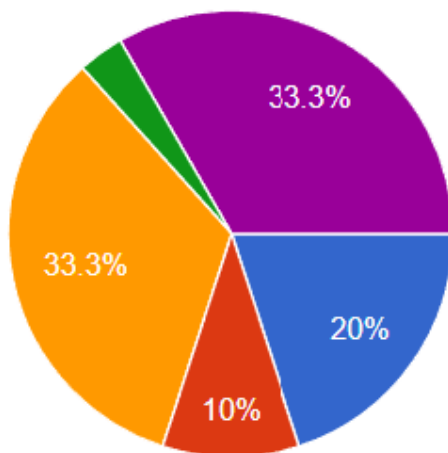


Figure 6: Policies or guidelines for effective implement of social media

Among the 30 responses, 33.3% (10 students) believe institutions should implement training programs on digital literacy and social media ethics, while an equal percentage (33.3% or 10 students) recommend monitoring or restricting access to non-academic content during class. Additionally, 20% (6 students) think institutions should encourage responsible social media use for learning, and 10% (3 students) propose setting time restrictions on social media during study hours. Only 3.3% (1 student) suggest creating official academic groups for discussions. These responses indicate a strong preference for policies that promote ethical usage and controlled access in educational environments.

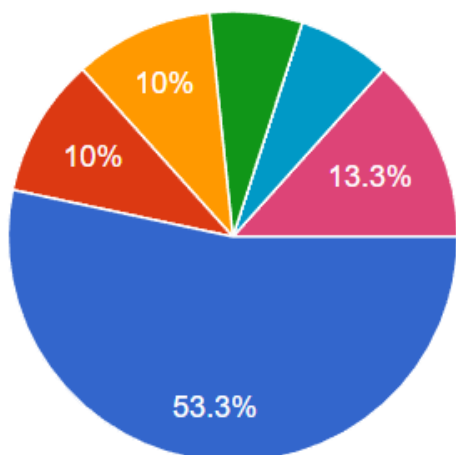


Figure 7: Benefit of social media in learning

The pie chart highlights how students benefit from social media in their learning. The largest segment, 53.3% (16 students), represents access to a wide range of educational resources, such as articles, videos, and papers. Smaller segments include joining academic groups or communities (10% or 3 students) and engaging in real-time discussions or Q&A sessions (10% or 3 students). Other benefits, like discovering new learning materials (6.7% or 2 students) and staying updated on academic trends (13.3% or 4 students), make up the remaining portions.

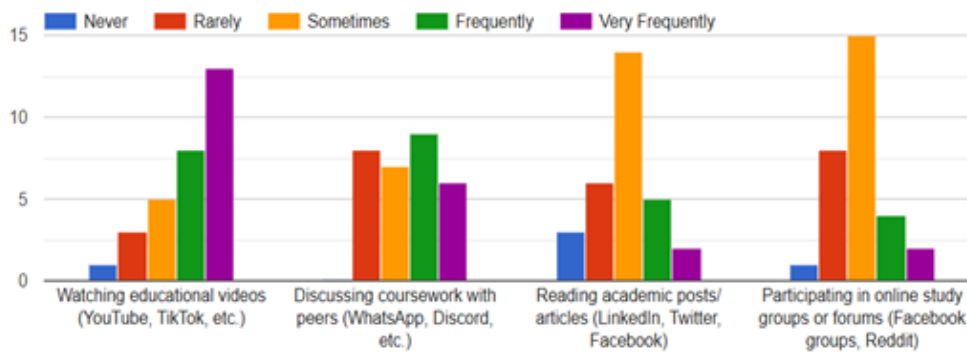


Figure 8: Social media and its use for academic activities

The survey results show how often students use social media for various academic activities. Watching educational videos (e.g., on YouTube or TikTok) is the most common activity, with 13 out of 30 students (43.3%) doing so very frequently and 8 students (26.7%) doing so frequently. For discussing coursework with peers (e.g., on WhatsApp or Discord), 9 students (30%) reported doing so frequently, while 6 students (20%) do so very frequently. In contrast, reading academic posts/articles (e.g., on LinkedIn or Twitter) is less common, with 14 students (46.7%) doing so only sometimes. Similarly, participating in online study groups or forums (e.g., on Facebook or Reddit) is less frequent, with 15 students (50%) doing so sometimes and only 4 students (13.3%) doing so frequently. These findings highlight that students primarily use social media for watching educational content and peer discussions, while activities like reading academic posts or joining study groups are less common.

Table 1:
Specific use of social media

| Theme | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Access to a wide range of educational resources | 4 | 50.00% |
| Joining academic groups or communities | 1 | 13% |
| Engaging in real-time discussions or Q&A | 1 | 12.50% |
| Discovering new learning materials | 1 | 12.50% |
| Staying updated on academic trends | 1 | 12.50% |

The interview responses reveal that students find social media particularly helpful for accessing educational resources, with 50% (4 out of 8) mentioning articles, videos, and tutorials as key tools for learning. Other benefits include joining academic groups or communities (12.5%) and engaging in real-time discussions (12.5%), which facilitate collaborative learning. A smaller number of students highlighted staying updated on academic trends (12.5%) and discovering new learning materials (12.5%).

Table 2:
Possible advice for preventing social media distraction

| Advice | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Practice mindfulness and self-discipline | 3 | 37.50% |
| Keep devices away during study time | 2 | 25% |
| Set daily limits on social media usage | 1 | 12.50% |
| Use productivity tools to block distracting apps | 1 | 12.50% |
| Use social media for educational purposes and set fixed time limits for other use | 1 | 12.50% |

The interview responses revealed key strategies students use to manage social media distractions while studying. The most frequently mentioned advice was to practice mindfulness and self-discipline, recommended by 3 out of 8 students (37.5%), emphasizing the importance of self-regulation. Additionally, 2 students (25%) suggested keeping devices away during study time to create a distraction-free environment. Other strategies included setting daily limits on social media usage (12.5%), using productivity tools to block distracting apps (12.5%), and using social media intentionally for educational purposes while setting fixed time limits for other use (12.5%). These findings highlight the importance of self-discipline, physical boundaries, and structured time management in minimizing distractions and enhancing focus during study sessions.

Summary

These results highlight the dual role of social media as both a valuable learning tool and a source of distraction among BICTE students. Students widely use social media to access educational materials, collaborate with peers, and engage in interactive learning, which enhances academic performance and fosters a sense of community.

However, challenges such as distractions from non-academic content, frequent notifications, and time management issues were commonly reported, often disrupting focus and reducing productivity. To address these challenges, students adopt strategies like studying in quiet environments, turning off notifications, and setting daily limits on social media use.

The findings emphasize the need for structured integration of social media into education, alongside digital literacy programs and institutional guidelines, to help students balance its benefits and distractions effectively.

Chapter V Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how students use social media as a learning tool, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to balance its benefits and distractions. The results highlight the dual role of social media in education—it's potential to enhance learning and its tendency to distract—while offering practical recommendations for students, educators, and institutions.

Social Media as a Learning Tool

The survey results reveal that YouTube and WhatsApp are the most widely used platforms for academic purposes, with 86.7% and 60% of students utilizing them, respectively. YouTube is primarily used for accessing educational videos and tutorials, while WhatsApp facilitates group discussions and resource sharing. These findings align with existing literature, which emphasizes the role of social media in providing accessible and flexible learning resources (Milošević I. et al., 2015). Additionally, 90% of students reported that social media enhances collaborative learning, and 90% experienced an improvement in academic performance due to its use. This shows the importance of social media as a tool for peer interaction, knowledge sharing, and skill development.

However, the data also shows that students primarily use social media for watching educational videos and discussing coursework, while activities like reading academic posts or participating in online study groups are less common. This suggests that while social media is effective for certain types of learning, its potential for fostering deeper academic engagement, such as through forums or professional networking, remains underutilized.

Benefits of Social Media as a Learning Tool:

- Access to Educational Resources
- Facilitates Collaborative Learning
- Enhances Peer Interaction and Support
- Provides Visual and Interactive Learning
- Encourages Self-Paced Learning
- Keeps Students Updated on Academic Trends
- Supports Resource Sharing
- Promotes Micro-learning
- Provides Access to Diverse Perspectives

Challenges and Distractions

Despite its benefits, social media poses significant challenges. A majority of students (63.3%) reported that social media negatively impacts their focus during study sessions, and 56.7% admitted to missing deadlines due to distractions. The most common distractions include entertainment content (43.3%), social interactions (30%), and notifications (23.3%). These findings are consistent with studies that highlight the addictive design of social media platforms, which often prioritize user engagement over productivity (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012).

Moreover, 30% of students spend 26–50% of their social media time on academic activities, while 60% spend 51–75% on non-academic content. This imbalance highlights the difficulty students face in managing their time effectively and staying focused on academic tasks.

Challenges and Distractions of Social Media as a Learning Tool:

- Entertainment Content Distractions
- Social Interactions and Notifications
- Time Management Issues
- Difficulty Finding Relevant Academic Content
- Addictive Design of Social Media Platforms
- Missed Deadlines and Reduced Focus
- Information Overload
- Inconsistent or Unreliable Information
- Peer Pressure and Comparison

Strategies for Balancing Social Media Use

To reduce distractions, students employ various strategies. The most effective methods include studying in a quiet, distraction-free environment (40%), turning off notifications (23.3%), and setting daily limits on social media use (16.7%). Additionally, 36.7% of students prioritize following a structured study schedule, while 23.3% rely on self-discipline and mindful usage. These findings suggest that while students recognize the importance of time management and self-regulation, many still struggle to implement these strategies consistently.

Interestingly, 56.7% of students do not use any tools or apps to manage their social media time, indicating a gap in awareness or access to productivity tools. This presents an opportunity for institutions to introduce digital literacy programs and provide resources to help students manage their social media use more effectively.

Listing out the strategies for balancing Social Media benefits and distractions:

- Practice Mindfulness and Self-Discipline
- Keep Devices Away During Study Time
- Use Productivity Tools to Block Distracting Apps (e.g., StayFocusd, Cold Turkey) or focus apps (e.g., Forest)
- Use Social Media Intentionally for Educational Purposes
- Study in a Quiet, Distraction-Free Environment
- Turn Off Notifications
- Follow a Structured Study Schedule
- Allocate Separate Time Slots for Social Media and Academics
- Seek Institutional Support and Digital Literacy Training

Implications for Future Research and Practice

The findings of this study have grate implications for educators and institutions aiming to optimize the use of social media in education. The results demonstrate that social media offers numerous benefits, such as enhanced access to educational resources, collaborative learning opportunities, and interactive content, but only if it is integrated into formal learning environments in a structured and purposeful manner. Without clear rules and careful use, social media can distract students and reduce its value as a learning tool. Educators and institutions need to create plans to help students use social media in ways that support learning and reduce distractions. For example, educators can create official academic groups on platforms like WhatsApp or Facebook to encourage discussions, resource sharing, and peer collaboration. This structured approach maximizes the benefits of social media while reducing distractions. Additionally, institutions should focus on digital literacy programs to teach students responsible social media use, time management, and critical evaluation of online content. These programs help students use social media effectively for learning while avoiding its downsides.

Future research should study how social media affects academic performance over time and find ways to use it better in different subjects, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) or humanities. It should also include teachers and administrators to get a full picture of how social media can be used in education. Academic institutions should create rules for using social media responsibly, like setting time limits or blocking non-academic content during study hours. By doing this, academic institutions can help students use social media for learning while reducing distractions, making education more effective and engaging.

Conclusion

Social media plays a complex role in education, offering valuable opportunities for learning while also presenting challenges that can hinder academic focus. To address this, students and educators can adopt effective strategies such as time management techniques, digital literacy training, and clear institutional policies. These measures can help balance the benefits and distractions of social media, creating the way for a more productive and engaging educational experience. The findings of this study provide a roadmap for future research and actionable steps to optimize the use of social media in education.

Chapter VI Conclusion

The study explored the role of social media as a learning tool, focusing on its benefits, challenges, and strategies for balancing its use. The findings reveal that YouTube (86.7%) and WhatsApp (60%) are the most widely used platforms for academic purposes, primarily for accessing educational videos and facilitating peer discussions. A majority of students (90%) reported that social media enhances collaborative learning and improves academic performance. However, the study also identified significant challenges, such as distractions from entertainment content (43.3%), time management issues (30%), and notification interruptions (23.3%). To address these challenges, students employ strategies like studying in a quiet environment, turning off notifications, and setting daily limits on social media use.

Patterns and Behaviors of Participants

The study uncovered several key patterns and behaviors among participants:

- 1 Frequent Use of Social Media for Learning:
 - Students spend 1-2 hours (56.7%) or 3-4 hours (33.3%) daily on social media for academic purposes, with YouTube and WhatsApp being the most popular platforms.
- 2 Perceived Benefits of Social Media:
 - 90% of students believe social media enhances collaborative learning and improves academic performance.
 - 53.3% find social media very helpful for learning, while 20% consider it extremely helpful.
- 3 Attitudes Toward Social Media Use:
 - Most of participants believe setting daily limits on social media use would improve their focus on academics.
 - 43.3% think social media addiction is a problem in academic learning, while 30% believe it can be helpful if used responsibly.
- 4 Institutional Support:
 - 33.3% of students recommend training on digital literacy and social media ethics, while 26.7% suggest setting guidelines for responsible use.

Key Insights

- Students heavily rely on platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp for academic purposes but struggle with distractions from entertainment and social interactions.
- Effective strategies to manage distractions include studying in a quiet environment, turning off notifications, and setting time limits.
- There is a strong demand for institutional support, such as digital literacy programs and guidelines for responsible social media use.

Recommendations for Future Research or Applications

1. **Integration into Formal Learning:** Educators should integrate social media into formal learning environments in a structured way, such as creating official academic groups on platforms like WhatsApp or Facebook.
2. **Digital Literacy Programs:** Institutions should prioritize digital literacy training to teach students how to use social media responsibly, manage their time effectively, and critically evaluate online content.
3. **Discipline-Specific Strategies:** Future research should explore how students in different fields, such as STEM or humanities, use social media and identify discipline-specific strategies for optimizing its use.
4. **Institutional Guidelines:** Schools and universities should implement guidelines for responsible social media use, such as setting time restrictions during study hours or monitoring access to non-academic content.
5. **Long-Term Impact Studies:** Researchers should investigate the long-term effects of social media on academic performance and behavior to provide deeper insights into its role in education.

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