

Students' Perceptions of Social Media as a Learning Tool among Undergraduate Students

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 13

Special Issue: 3

Month: March

Year: 2026

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Citation:

Subramanian, P.
"Students' Perceptions of Social Media as a Learning Tool among Undergraduate Students." *Shanlax Interantional Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 13, no. S3, 2026, pp. 81–86.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v13iS3-Mar.10491>

Dr. P. Subramanian

Assistant Professor

Department of Educational Planning and Administration,

Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Karapakkam, Chennai

Abstract

Communication, sharing information, and learning with peers have been popular among students through the use of social media platforms. These platforms offer possibilities to access educational resources, to participate in an academic discourse and to communicate with peers and mentors outside the conventional classroom setting. The issue under study is the views of undergraduate students about the importance of using social media to learn. The study has taken a descriptive survey approach. This sample was composed of 220 undergraduate students that were chosen in arts and science colleges through simple random sampling method. The researchers used a Social Media Learning Opinion Scale that was created by the researcher to collect data. Data analysis was done through percentages, t test and ANOVA. The results show that the majority of students visit social media most often, including YouTube, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp, to study academic content. Another finding of the study was that there is a strong disparity between arts and science students in terms of their views on social media learning, whereas no significant differences were found in terms of gender and locality. The results point to the increased use of social media as an auxiliary learning tool in higher education.

Keywords: Social Media Learning, Undergraduate Students, Digital Education, Collaborative Learning, Online Platforms.

Introduction

The accelerated development of digital technologies has changed the mode of education and brought new possibilities of learning. The social media has become a strong communication medium that enables individuals to exchange information, cooperate and interact with other individuals in real time. These platforms have also been more popular in the learning institutions in the past few years to facilitate learning and teaching. Social media gives the learners access to a variety of educational materials in the form of videos, forums, digital documents, and interactive education materials. Learners are able to engage in discussions, post academic materials, and cooperate with others via YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and Zoom. Such technologies allow learners to get access to knowledge outside the walls of the classroom and develop fluid learning settings (Cherry and Azam, 2021).

Social media application in education promotes interaction among students in learning and sharing of knowledge. Students are able to communicate and share ideas and problems regarding the course online through communication tools and help each other come up with solutions to academic problems. These interactions have the potential to develop the critical thinking skills of the students and increase their knowledge of academic concepts (Jamal, Ansari, and Khan, 2020). Although this is the case, there are some fears about over using social media and how this might affect students to forget about their studies. Thus, the perception of social media as one of the tools of learning among students should be known. The views of students can be examined to assist teachers to determine effective methods of implementing social media in educational and learning processes. The objective of the current study is to determine the perception of undergraduate students about using social media to learn and also to examine how demographic factors affect their perception.

Review of Related Studies

Hussain and Irshad (2020) examined the extent to which social media technology can be used as an instrument of learning among university learners. The research observed that social networking sites offer possibilities of accessing various learning materials and participating in group learning. The results indicated that proper utilisation of social media encourages critical thinking, problem solving competence and academic communication amongst students.

Mese and Aydin (2021) examined the patterns of use of social networking sites by students in universities. The study was conducted through a survey and established that students regularly use social media in communication, sharing of information, and academic cooperation. The findings also revealed diversity of communication behavior and patterns of content sharing in the students.

Jamal, Ansari, and Khan (2023) examined how social media can be used in collaborative learning by university students. Their study has found that social media sites can improve the communication between students and teachers and facilitate the exchange of knowledge. It was also reported by the study that these kinds of interactions have a positive impact on the engagement and academic performance of students.

The article by Cherry and Azam (2025) is concerned with the usage of social media as pedagogical means in higher education. Their overview pointed out the fact that social networks like Facebook, youtube, and WhatsApp are increasingly becoming the means of academic interaction and sharing of content. The research highlighted that interactive learning environments could be facilitated by the social media when they are incorporated into the instructional practices.

Research Methodology

Research Method

A descriptive survey design was used in the study to investigate the views of students towards social media learning.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised of undergraduate students in the arts and science colleges. Simple random sampling technique was used to choose a sample of 220 undergraduate students.

Tool Used

The data were collected with the help of a Social Media Learning Opinion Scale created by the researcher. The scale had 30 statements that were concerned with the perception of students on using social media as a source of academic work.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Age Distribution of Students Using Social Media for Learning

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–20	152	69.1
21–23	51	23.2
Above 23	17	7.7
Total	220	100

According to the table, most students (69.1) are within the age bracket between 18-20, which gives the impression that younger undergraduate students are actively involved in social media based learning.

Table 2: Time Spent on Social Media for Learning per Day

Time Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	62	28.2
1–3 hours	96	43.6
More than 3 hours	62	28.2
Total	220	100

The results reveal that most students spend 1–3 hours daily using social media for academic purposes.

Table 3: Number of Social Media Platforms Used

Platforms Used	Frequency	Percentage
One	35	15.9
Two	81	36.8
Three or more	104	47.3
Total	220	100

Nearly half of the students use three or more social media platforms for educational activities.

Table 4: Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms for Learning

Platform	Frequency	Percentage
YouTube	70	31.8
Google Classroom	54	24.5
WhatsApp	41	18.6
Zoom	25	11.4
Telegram	16	7.3
Others	14	6.4
Total	220	100

The results show that YouTube and Google Classroom are the most widely used platforms for academic learning.

Testing of Hypotheses

Table 5: Difference in Opinion based on Course

Course	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Arts	95	124.68	11.32	2.41	Significant
Science	125	128.94	10.86		

The results indicate a significant difference between arts and science students in their opinions on social media learning.

Table 6: Difference in Opinion based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Male	102	126.14	11.78	1.12	Not Significant
Female	118	127.81	10.97		

There is no significant difference between male and female students regarding their opinions on social media learning.

Table 7: Difference in Opinion based on Locality

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Rural	128	126.73	11.40	0.84	Not Significant
Urban	92	127.90	11.06		

The results indicate no significant difference between rural and urban students.

Discussion

The current research provided an insight on the perceptions of undergraduate students regarding the use of social media as a learning tool. The results show that a majority of students are active users of social media networks to seek academic materials, network with others, and take part in group learning processes. The findings indicate that most students access the social media as a source of education between one to three hours in a day. This result confirms the research findings of Hussain and Irshad (2018), who stated that learning materials are readily available to students on the social media platforms, and that they facilitate learning discussions. The researchers also discovered that the most used platforms of learning are YouTube and Google Classroom. Such platforms offer multimedia learning resources like video tutorials, recorded lectures, and instructional demonstrations, which make students learn complex matters better. The same result was presented by Jamal, Ansari, and Khan (2020), who noted that social media platforms allow students to learn and share knowledge, resulting in better collaboration.

The other significant study result is that there is a great disparity between the learning of social media between arts and science students in the perceptions. The positive views regarding the applicability of social media in learning were expressed to a larger extent by the students of science. This might be because they have been more active on digital materials like teaching videos, virtual demonstrations, as well as technical tutorials. Nonetheless, it was concluded that there were no significant differences depending on gender and locality. This implies that learners of various demographic backgrounds tend to view social media as a viable learning method. The same results were mentioned in research by Mese and Aydin (2019), who reported that the use of

social networking platforms as an academic communication and collaboration tool was popular among students. On the whole, the results indicate that social media tools can facilitate learning in case they are used in an effective learning setting.

Findings of the Study

1. Majority of the undergraduate learners use social media to learn.
2. Most of the students use social media to learn one to three hours a day.
3. The most common platforms of academic learning are YouTube and Google Classroom.
4. The difference between the opinion of students in the arts and science is huge regarding social media learning.
5. There were no major differences depending on gender and locality.

Educational Implications

- The results of the research indicate that social media may be incorporated in the teaching and learning process in tertiary education. Teachers can use the social media to exchange learning materials, hold discussions, and facilitate learning.
- Video platforms, discussion forums and online communication tools can also be used by teachers to make students more engaged with the content of the course. They should also organize training programs in which the students are taught how to be digitally literate as well as responsible social media users in their academic life.
- Educational institutions must also offer instructions on how to use social media in the learning setting to gain the maximum benefit of the media as well as minimize the possible distractions.

Conclusion

The social media has become a significant part of the contemporary learning. The conclusions made by the study show that the undergraduate students often rely on the social media platforms to gain access to educational materials, interact with peers, and improve their learning experience. Social media can facilitate cooperative learning, enhance access to learning materials and encourage student engagement when used in a proper way. Learning institutions should thus promote the reasonable use of social media as an auxiliary learning media in higher learning.

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