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Patterns of Social Media Use and Academic Achievement among Undergraduate Students in Murshidabad District, West Bengal

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Abstract

This paper has explored the trends in the use of social media and academic performance of undergraduate students in Murshidabad district, West Bengal. The descriptive survey design was chosen and a purposely selected sample of 50 undergraduate students was used. A researcher-constructed questionnaire with 15 close-ended statements on platform use, purpose, academic support, distraction, concentration, time management, and self-regulation was used to collect data. The indicator of academic achievement was recent examination performance, and the data available were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and descriptive cross-tabulation. The most popular platforms were WhatsApp (92%), YouTube (88%), Instagram (70%), Facebook (56%), Telegram (44%), and other platforms (24%). The results show a complex trend: students communicate with the help of social media, share academic resources, watch educational videos, and interact with peers, but non-academic use and multitasking are also frequently related to distraction, less time spent studying, and poor concentration, which are also described. The research finds that the learning potential of social media is not as much about access as purpose, time, and self-control. Online groups that are teacher-directed and purposeful, as well as time-management practices, are thus suggested.

Keywords: Social Media, Academic Achievement, Undergraduate Students, Murshidabad, Digital Literacy, Self-Regulation

1. Introduction

Social media has integrated into the life of undergraduate students as a communication tool, source of information, entertainment, academic cooperation, and learning resources. Sustained attention, however, can be competed with by the same digital environment when social interaction, entertainment, notifications, and multitasking disrupt study routines. Studies have thus shifted their focus beyond the question of whether students use social media to a greater extent of how much they use it, why, and in what circumstances it facilitates or hinders academic work (Junco, 2012; Lau, 2017) [2, 4].

The current research is based on undergraduate students in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. In this regard, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Telegram can be used both academically and non-academically.

Messaging groups can be used to quickly share notes and notices, and video platforms can be used to explain and give tutorials. Meanwhile, recreational use can interfere with study time and attention when used over a long period. Previous studies have found reduced academic performance when spending more time on social networking (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010; Paul *et al.*, 2012) [3, 5], and other studies have found that certain academic and collaborative uses may facilitate engagement and knowledge sharing (Ansari and Khan, 2020) [1].

This is why social media cannot be considered as something good or bad. Its educational value is based on the interaction between the length of use, purpose, platform selection, self-regulation, and the overall study habit of the student. The current paper thus employs a descriptive methodology to investigate platform preferences, frequency and duration,

use purposes, academic achievement patterns, and descriptive relationship between social media habits and academic performance in a small local sample.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) ^[3].

Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) ^[3] conducted a descriptive and exploratory study of Facebook use and academic performance. Using self-reported GPA and weekly study hours, they found that Facebook users reported lower GPAs and fewer hours of study than non-users. The study highlighted the possibility that social networking and concurrent media use can displace focused study time. Its relevance to the present study lies in the emphasis on duration, attention, and the need to distinguish routine use from academically productive use.

2.2 Junco (2012) ^[2]

Junco (2012) ^[2] studied 1,839 college students with a variety of measures of Facebook frequency, activities, preparation time, and actual overall GPA. Facebook time was strongly negatively correlated with GPA, but the relationship depended on the type of activity: Facebook use to gather and disseminate information was positively predictive of academic performance, and socializing was negatively predictive. This difference directly justifies the current study which focuses on purpose of use and not total use alone.

2.3 Paul, Baker, and Cochran (2012) ^[5]

Paul *et al.* (2012) ^[5] examined the online social networking among business students using a structural equation modelling framework. They found that there was a strong negative correlation between the amount of time spent on online social networks and academic performance and highlighted the importance of attention span and time-management skills. The work is applicable since the current questionnaire has distraction, focus, time management, and self-regulation as the major dimensions.

2.4 Lau (2017) ^[4]

Lau (2017) ^[4] examined 348 undergraduate students and distinguished between academic and non-academic social media use and social media multitasking. Academic use did not have a significant predictive value of cumulative GPA, but non-academic use and multitasking had a negative predictive value. The research shows that the use of platforms should be viewed in conjunction with purpose and multitasking behaviour, which is the focus of the current analysis.

2.5 Ansari and Khan (2020) ^[1]

In a survey of 360 Indian university students, Ansari and Khan (2020) ^[1] discovered that collaborative learning via social media played a significant role in facilitating interaction with peers and teachers, sharing of knowledge online, student engagement, and, indirectly, academic performance. Their results offer a valuable Indian higher-education viewpoint and demonstrate that organized academic use can yield different results compared to unregulated recreational use.

3. Research Gap

The majority of the past research was not done within the local Murshidabad setting and tended to focus on one platform or on the overall population of the university. There is little descriptive data on the combination of academic and non-academic social media use by undergraduate students in Murshidabad and how these patterns of use are in coexistence with recent academic success.

4. Objectives of the Study

To examine the social media platforms used by undergraduate students in Murshidabad district.

To describe the frequency and duration of social media use among the students.

To identify the major academic and non-academic purposes of social media use.

To describe the academic achievement pattern of the sampled undergraduate students.

To examine the descriptive association between social media usage patterns and academic achievement.

To suggest measures for balanced and academically productive social media use.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

5.2 Population, Sample, and Sampling

The population of the study included undergraduate students in the selected colleges of Murshidabad district, West Bengal. Random selection was used to select a sample of 50 undergraduate students.

5.3 Tool for Data Collection

The structured questionnaire that was developed by the researcher and comprised of 15 close-ended statements was employed. The items covered frequency and purpose of social media use, academic support, distraction, concentration, time management, and self-regulation. Three options were used to record responses: Agree, Neutral, and Disagree. The source study indicates that the questionnaire was checked by teachers and research guides to be clear and relevant.

5.4 Academic Achievement Measure

Academic performance was measured by the most recent performance of the students in exams, which is self-reported or college records.

5.5 Variables of the Study

Social Media Usage & Academic achievement are the two variables of the study. Other descriptive dimensions related to it were concentration, task management, academic collaboration, communication, and self-regulation.

5.6 Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

The academic purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and participation was voluntary, and the responses were reported in aggregate form. The study states

that students' names were not disclosed. These steps were aimed at ensuring confidentiality and minimizing pressure on respondents.

5.7 Statistical Techniques

The analysis used frequency and percentage distributions and descriptive cross-tabulation.

6. Results and Interpretation

6.1 Overall Questionnaire Response Pattern

In the 15 items of the questionnaire that were responded to by 50 students, the source analysis had 750 total responses; 250 Agree, 260 Neutral, and 240 Disagree. The three categories of responses were thus fairly balanced meaning that no one response option dominated the entire questionnaire. Since the items cover both positive and negative sides of using social media, these totals are not considered as a single composite attitude measure but as a general descriptive trend.

Table 1: Response distribution across 15 questionnaire items

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	250	33.3%
Neutral	260	34.7%
Disagree	240	32.0%
Total	750	100.0%

6.2 Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

The most popular platforms in the sample were WhatsApp and YouTube, with 92% and 88% of students using them respectively. The percentage of Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, and other platforms was 70, 56, 44, and 24, respectively. The total percentages are over 100% since students might have used more than one platform.

Table 2: Social media platforms used by the respondents

Platform	Number of students	Percentage
WhatsApp	46	92%
YouTube	44	88%
Instagram	35	70%
Facebook	28	56%
Telegram	22	44%
Other platforms	12	24%

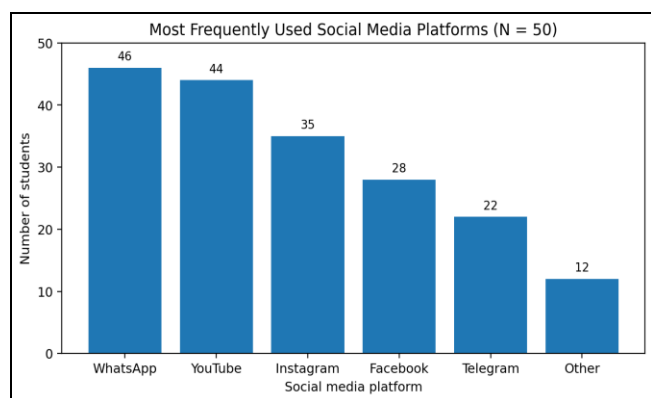


Fig 1: Most frequently used social media platforms among the sampled students

6.3 Frequency and Duration of Use

The analysis reveals that the use of social media was a daily

routine of many respondents and that a significant proportion of respondents said that they used social media two or more hours a day; some students said they used social media more than four hours a day.

6.4 Purposes of Social Media Use

Students communicated, entertained, accessed academic information, shared resources, news, and career information through social media. Entertainment and communication were also reported as the predominant uses, with academic use also evident with activities like receiving notes, watching educational videos, joining study groups, and communicating with peers. This ambivalent pattern justifies the necessity to distinguish between academic and recreational use in the interpretation of academic consequences.

6.5 Academic Achievement Pattern

Most students were reported in the moderate academic achievement category, with smaller groups in the high and low categories.

6.6 Social Media Use and Academic Achievement

The descriptive results suggest a conditional pattern. Purposeful academic use was associated with access to learning materials, peer communication, and academic support, whereas excessive non-academic use was associated with distraction, poor time management, and reduced concentration.

7. Discussion

The results are generally in line with the previous studies that indicate that time and nature of social media use are important. The issue of long or uncontrolled use is similar to Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) [3], Paul *et al.* (2012) [5], and Lau (2017) [4], who all found negative academic relationships with increased non-academic use, time spent on social networking, or multitasking. The current research is also similar to Junco (2012) [2] who showed that various Facebook activities may possess varying academic relationships as opposed to a consistent impact.

Meanwhile, the academic use as reported by the students of Murshidabad is in line with Ansari and Khan (2020) [1], whose sample of Indian university students indicated the positive effects of social media on collaborative learning, peer and teacher interaction, knowledge sharing, and engagement. Combined, the literature and the current results suggest a moderate viewpoint: social media can be viewed as a learning environment, the outcomes of which are determined by the way it is incorporated into the academic routine of students.

The educationally relevant high reported use of WhatsApp and YouTube is also educationally relevant. Messaging platforms may be used to disseminate course information and peer support quickly, and video platforms may increase access to explanations outside of the classroom. Their usefulness, however, depends on purposeful selection of content and control of interruptions. In the case of institutions, the real problem is not merely to cut down on screen time, but to assist students in differentiating between academically productive digital activity and attention-disruptive use.

8. Major Findings

The two most popular platforms among the sampled students were WhatsApp (92%), and YouTube (88%). Social media was utilized both academically and non-academically, particularly in communication, entertainment, sharing of resources, educational videos, news and career information.

A significant percentage of the sample was reported to spend two or more hours daily on social media, with some students spending over four hours.

Moderate academic achievement was reported to be the majority of the respondents.

Overuse or inadequately controlled use is linked to distraction and poor time management, but intentional academic use can facilitate learning and collaboration.

9. Conclusion

The research finds that social media plays an important role in the academic and social life of the sampled undergraduate students in Murshidabad. It does not have a consistently positive or negative relationship with academic achievement. Learning can be facilitated by academic communication, sharing of resources and learning content, whereas overindulgence in recreational activities and multitasking can be counterproductive to concentration and study time. The main educational problem is thus balanced, intentional, and self-regulated use. The results within the confines of the current descriptive design justify digital-literacy interventions that assist students in controlling attention, time, and academic utilization of online platforms.

10. Recommendations

Colleges ought to encourage digital-literacy and digital-well-being workshops that emphasize purposeful use, credibility of online information, privacy, and screen-time management.

Teachers can utilize controlled WhatsApp, Telegram, or similar academic groups to send notices, notes, discuss, and share resources and establish strict limits on participation.

Students are to embrace predetermined study time, turn off unnecessary notifications when studying, and not to multitask on social media when reading or doing homework. Curated playlists, credible sources, and clear learning objectives should guide the academic use of YouTube and other content platforms.

Parents and institutions must differentiate between productive and recreational screen time instead of considering all screen time to be the same.

11. References

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