Impact Of Social Media On Information-Seeking Behaviour Of College Students At SVKT Arts, Science And Commerce College, Deolali Camp, Nashik.

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Abstract

Social media platforms have revolutionized how individuals, particularly college students, access and consume information. This paper explores the impact of social media on the information-seeking behaviour of college students, focusing on their preferences, challenges, and outcomes. By analysing recent literature and survey data, the study highlights the dual role of social media as a tool for academic growth and a source of misinformation. Recommendations to optimize social media for effective information-seeking are also discussed.

Keywords

Social media, information-seeking behaviour, college students, academic resources, digital literacy.

Introduction

The digital age has transformed how information is created, shared, and consumed. The advent of social media has significantly altered traditional methods of information access. They have become integral to the daily lives of college students Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn offer college students diverse avenues to gather, share, and validate information. While these platforms provide convenience and immediacy, they also raise concerns about reliability and information overload. These platforms are no longer restricted to social interactions but have also evolved into powerful tools for academic and professional purposes.

Research indicates that over 90% of college students use social media daily (Smith et al., 2023). Research by Kemp (2023) indicates that over 4.8 billion people worldwide use social media, with a significant proportion comprising students aged 18–25. This prevalence underscores its role in shaping their information-seeking behaviour. This paper seeks to examine how social media shapes the information-seeking behaviour of college students, the challenges associated with its use, and potential strategies for its effective utilization in academic contexts. A Structured questionnaire was distributed among the undergraduate students studying at S.V.K.T ASC college, Deolali Camp Nashik. Out of the questionnaire distributed among 200 students 176 students responded to it.

Literature Review

Definition of Information-Seeking Behaviour

Wilson (1999) defined information-seeking behaviour as the purposeful pursuit of information to satisfy a need. Social media has transformed this behaviour by offering a blend of formal and informal information sources. He gave a theoretical framework on information seeking behaviour which outlines the cognitive, emotional and social dimensions of searching social media.

Role of Social Media in Information Access

According to studies by Junco (2012) and Kapoor et al. (2018), social media platforms provide students with quick access to academic resources, peer advice, and expert opinions. For instance, hashtags on Twitter enable real-time updates on specific topics, while YouTube tutorials offer visual learning aids.

The Role of Social Media in Academic and Personal Information-Seeking

Studies by Ahmed et al. (2021) and Kapoor et al. (2018) highlight how social media platforms act as both formal and informal channels for information dissemination. For example:

YouTube serves as a repository for academic tutorials.

Twitter provides updates on scholarly conferences.

LinkedIn fosters professional connections and job-seeking.

Challenges in Using Social Media for Information-Seeking

Despite its benefits, social media poses challenges such as misinformation, lack of source credibility, and distraction (Kim et al., 2021). Students often struggle to differentiate between credible and unreliable sources, which affects their academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the social media platform used by the respondents
- Purpose of using Social Media
- To know how social media is used for enhancing academic performance
- Challenges faced by users while seeking information through social media

Methodology

The study employs a structured questionnaire method for gathering the information. Around 200 undergraduate students were selected randomly from Arts, Science and commerce Faculties. Out of 200 respondents 176 responses has received. The finding of which are discussed below.

Findings and Discussion

The researcher distributed the questionnaire among 200 students and on the basis of that following findings are drawn

A. Demographic Studies

1. Gender

The researcher received 176 responses out of 200 questionnaire distributed, table 1 shows 70.5% (124) were female and 29.5% (52) were male.

Gender	Response	Percentage
Male	52	29.5%
Female	124	70.5%

Table 1. Gender-wise Responses

2. Age

The responses received on the basis of Age were shown in Table -2.

60.2% (106) responses were from the age group of 19-20 years, 20.4% (36) responses were from the age group of 17-18 years, followed by 14.8% (26) responses from age group of 21-22 and 4.4% from 23-24 age group only.

Age	Response	Percentage
17-18	36	20.4
19-20	106	60.2
21-22	26	14.8
23-24	8	4.4

Table 2. Age-wise responses

3. Class

The responses received on the basis of class are shown in Table 3. Around 38.6% (68) respondents were from S.Y.; 30.7% (54) respondents were from F.Y. and T.Y each.

Class	Response	Percentage
F.Y.	54	30.7
S.Y.	68	38.6
T.Y.	54	30.7

Table-3 Class wise Responses

B. **General Use of Social Media**

These questions were asked to the respondents to know the use of social media by the students

4. **Social Media Platform used frequently**

The students were asked about the various social media platforms available do they use it and how frequently they use it. The responses received are shown in the Table 4. The findings depicts that 95% (168) respondents frequently use YouTube; 92% (162) respondents use WhatsApp ; 90%(159) use Instagram ; 87% (154) use Facebook; 59% (104) prefer LinkedIn, followed by 52% (92) Twitter.

Social Media Platform	Response	Percentage
WhatsApp	162	92
Instagram	159	90
Facebook	154	87
LinkedIn	104	59
Twitter	92	52
YouTube	168	95

Table-4 Social Media Platform Frequently Used

5. **Time spends on Social Media**

The Table 5 shows that 46.6% (82) respondents use social media more than 5 hours; 38.6% (68) respondents use it between 3 to 5 hours; 8 % (14) respondents said they use it for 1 to 3 hours and 6.8% (12) use it less than 1 hour.

Time Spend on Social Media	Response	Percentage
>Less than 1 hour	12	6.8
1 to 3 Hour	14	8.0
3 to 5 Hour	68	38.6
More than 5 Hours	82	46.6

Table 5 Time Spend on Social Media

C. Social Media and Information-Seeking Behaviour

6. **Use Social Media for Academic and Educational Purpose**
   Table 6 shows 96.6% (170) respondents use social media for educational purposes such as completion of assignments, project, searching of information etc. Only 3.4% (6) users doesn't use it for academic purposes.

Use Social Media for Academic and Educational Purpose	Response	Percentage
Yes	170	96.6
No	6	3.4

Table 6 Use of Social media for academic and educational purposes

7. **Social Media platform most useful for academic purposes**

   This question was asked to know which platform students found most useful for academic purposes. The Table 7 shows that 59.1% (104) respondents find WhatsApp Group created by the college as mentor mentee groups are more used by them; 26.1% (46) users prefer You Tube for Academic purposes followed by Facebook (8.3%) and LinkedIn (6.5%).

Platform useful for Academic Purpose	Response	Percentage
Facebook	15	8.3
WhatsApp Group	104	59.1
LinkedIn	11	6.5
YouTube	46	26.1

Table 7 Social Media Platform Most used for Academic Purposes

8. **Information do you search for on Social Media**
   The respondents mostly search th social media for gathering study material (80.7%), Some search for updating their general knowledge (67%), some for searching job opportunities(65.9; some for having carrier guidance (59.1%) followed by updated about seminars and workshops(31.8%)

Information Search on social Media	Response	Percentage
Study Material	142	80.7
Job Opportunities	116	65.9
Event Updates (Seminar, workshops etc.)	56	31.8
Career Guidance	104	59.1
General Knowledge	118	67

Table 8. Purpose of Information Search

9. **Reliability of Information on social Media**
   The question was asked to know that whether students found reliable information from the social media. The findings were 48.9%(86) respondents said the information is reliable , whereas 45.6%(80) said Somewhat reliable , only a few respondents said not reliable 5.5% (10).

Reliability of Information on social Media	Response	Percentage
Reliable	86	48.9
Somewhat Reliable	80	45.6
Not Reliable	10	5.5

Table 9. Reliability of information on Social Media

D. Advantages and Challenges

These questions were asked to know the advantages and challenges faced by the respondents.

10. Advantages of using social media for Information Seeking

The table 10 depicts that respondents find information seeking through social media advantageous in comparison to print and other media. Around 86.7%(153) respondents feels its easy to access the information, 76.75(135) feel it provides quick updates, 43.3%(76) find it provides networking opportunities; 38.9(68) respondents feel it provides diversity of content and 24.4% said it provides opportunities for interactive learning.

Advantages	Response	Percentage
Easy Access to Information	153	86.7
Quick Updates	135	76.7
Networking Opportunities	76	43.3
Diversity of Content	68	38.9
Interactive Learning	43	24.4

Table 10. Advantages of Using Social Media for Information seeking

11. Challenges faced while using social media for information seeking

This question was asked to know what challenges respondents face while seeking information on social media. Around 65.2% (115) respondents find misinformation and fake news spreads quickly making it difficult to verify accuracy. 51.1% (90) respondents feels it distracts from academic goals; 35.9% (63) respondents think lack of privacy may expose user personal information to risks.

Challenges	Response	Percentage
Misinformation & Fake News	115	65.2
Distraction from Academic Goals	90	51.1
Lack of Privacy	63	35.9
Over-reliance on non -verified resources	56	31.5
Information overload	44	25

Table 11. Challenges faced while Seeking Information

12. Social media positively influence academic performance

This question was asked to know the positive influence of social media on academic performance. Around 63% (111) respondents said 'Yes', that Social media has positive impact on their academic performance. 30.4% (53) responded 'Neutral' that neither it has positive nor negative impact on their academic performance. Only 6.6% (12) responded to 'No', that is they feel it has negatively influenced their academic performance.

Academic Performance influenced by Social media	Response	Percentage
Yes	111	63
No	12	6.6
Neutral	53	30.4

Table 12. Positive Influence of social Media on academic performance

13. Positive Impact of Social Media usage on academic performance

This question was asked to know what sort of positive impact has social media made on their academic performance. The findings were 96%(170) respondents said it gives improved access to resources; 89.7% said through social media their understanding of concepts has enhanced; 78.4%(138) respondents said it has enhanced the communication with peers and mentors; 67 % (118) said it gives flexible learning opportunities; 61.3% (108) said it develops digital and research skills; and 28.4% (50) said it gives real time updates.

	Response	Percentage
Improved access to resources	170	96
Enhanced understanding of concepts	158	89.7
Better communication with peers and mentors	138	78.4
Flexible Learning Opportunities	118	67
Development of Digital and Research Skills	108	61.3
Real -Time Updates and Awareness	50	28.4

Table 13. Positive impact of Social Media on Academic Performance

14. Negative Impact of social media usage on academic performance

This question was asked to find the negative impact of social media on academic performance of the respondents. The findings were as follows 85.2% (150) said time mismanagement negatively influence their performance; 76.7% (135) excessive use may bring distraction and reduces focus; 71.5% feels irrelevant information is more retrieved; 59.6% think it also reduces the academic writing skills; 42.6% falls pray to plagiarism and academic dishonesty; 39.7% (70) said it reduces face to face interaction.

Table 14. Negative impact of Social Media usage on academic performance

	Response	Percentage
Time Mismanagement	150	85.2
Distraction and Reduced Focus	135	76.7
Exposure to Misinformation	126	71.5
Reduced Academic Writing and Reading Skills	105	59.6
Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty	75	42.6
Reduced face to face Interaction	70	39.7

Findings:

Major findings of the study are:

1. Students are aware of Social Media
2. Students mostly utilize YouTube and WhatsApp for academic purposes as their mentor mentee groups are created by faculty members.
3. They find social media is powerful tool for their academic performances as they they get updated ,24x7 access to information, provide flexible learning opportunities.
4. The negative impact of social media on students was found time mismanagement and reduced focus due to information overload.

Recommendations

Digital Literacy Training: Colleges should offer workshops on fact-checking, research skills and evaluating online sources.

Promoting Credible Platforms: Encourage students to use academic databases alongside social media.

Time Management Tools: Educate students on tools that limit distractions on social media.

Host Virtual Events and Interactive Sessions: Conduct live Q&A sessions, webinars and author talks to engage users.

Collaborate with Academics and Institutions: Partners with universities, publishers and research organizations for content sharing.

Conclusion

Social media has undeniably influenced the information-seeking behaviour of college students. While it provides unique opportunities for learning and collaboration, the challenges of misinformation and distraction cannot be ignored. Fostering digital literacy and promoting responsible usage can help students leverage social media effectively for academic and personal growth.

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