Social Media & Gen Z: Navigating the influence of social media on Educational Attitudes of undergraduate Media students of Delhi NCR

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Abstract **-** This research investigates the usage patterns of social media among Generation Z undergraduate students in Delhi NCR, focusing on their engagement with platforms for educational and social purposes. Using a quantitative approach, a survey was conducted among 120 students enrolled at Indraprasth University. The study explores the relationship between social media usage and attitudes toward education, self-confidence, and social interactions. Findings reveal that YouTube is the most frequently used platform for educational purposes, while others like Instagram and Snapchat are less favored for academic tasks. Social media is seen as a valuable tool for virtual learning but is also perceived as a distraction, raising concerns about its impact on academic achievements and privacy. The study highlights the mixed influence of social media on students' learning behaviors and suggests further exploration into its broader educational and social implications.

Keywords: *Social Media, Generation Z, Education, Student attitudes, virtual learning*

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become a significant source of gratification among Generation Z, with an increasing dependency that has seamlessly integrated into the lifestyle of those with internet access. Scholars have taken note of this trend, investigating the intentions and attitudes of young individuals toward various social media platforms (Chang et al., 2015). While existing research has explored the influence of social media usage on the socio-demographic characteristics of users, scant attention has been paid to understanding how social media fosters positive attitudes among youth and their motivations for engaging with these platforms.

Some studies (Hui et al., 2024), (Tripathi & Farooqi, 2023), (Pastor et al., 2024) suggest that social media usage encourages socialization among users with similar interests, fostering prosocial attitudes and behaviours such as compassion and empathy. Engaging with others on these platforms, through actions like posting content, commenting, and reacting to posts, facilitates connections with like-minded individuals. Social media platforms offer opportunities for connection and information sharing, they may also contribute

to a disconnect between online behaviours and offline experiences. Existing literature lacks a strong connection between social media engagement and behavioral changes in real-life settings. In this study, we aim to explore the relationship between social media usage and attitudes toward key areas such as education, social life, and self-confidence among college students. Our research questions are two fold:

RQ1: To what extent does social media usage impact students' commitment to virtual learning and their pursuit of academic achievements?

RQ2: Does social media usage encourage positive attitudes toward education, and collaborative learning among college students?

To investigate these questions empirically, a survey of students enrolled at Indraprastha University (n = 120), focusing on their attitudes toward various social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube) and their utilization for educational purposes and social interactions was undertaken. Delhi, as the capital city, serves as an ideal setting for this study due to its prominence in education, social dynamics availability of technology. This study explores the nuanced relationship between social media usage, and the attitudes and behaviors of Generation Z (Gen Z) students, in terms of their learning outcomes.

The structure of the article is as follows. In section ''review of literature,'' we provide the literature related of the study. Section ''Methodology'' describes the methodology. In section ''Results,'' the results of the empirical analysis are presented. In section ''Discussion,'' the results are discussed. Section ''Conclusion and Future scope'' provides gist of the study and possibilities for future research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dimitriou and Abou Elgheit (2019) suggest that social media serves as a smart channel for disseminating information, aiding students when used effectively. Similarly, Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) argue that social media followers' values influence individuals' approaches to work. Social media's rise is fueled by social sharing and credibility, while Palupi, Meifilina, and Harumike (2020) link students' desire for exploration to cost-effective communication patterns. Sharma (2019) warns, however, of undisclosed information within social media operations.

Collaborative learning has gained prominence, with Sobaih, Hasanein, and Abu Elnasr (2020) noting the surge in social media usage for collaboration due to COVID-19. Qureshi et al. (2021) highlight online course sharing and YouTube classes as growing trends. Social media fosters a conducive learning environment through student engagement and interaction (Palupi et al., 2020). However, the question remains whether online peer knowledge sharing truly enhances student engagement and self-monitoring.

This study is grounded in the Constructivist Learning Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences, making social media a valuable tool for virtual learning, as it promotes collaboration and experiential learning. Through social media, students can engage in knowledge-sharing, which fosters their commitment to learning (Phillips, 1995). For RQ1, this theory helps explain how students use social media to actively engage in virtual learning, influencing their academic achievements. For RQ2, constructivism supports the idea that social media encourages collaborative learning and positive attitudes toward education.TAM, on the other hand, highlights the importance of perceived usefulness and ease of use in technology adoption (Davis, 1993). For RQ1, TAM helps understand how students perceive social media's utility in virtual learning, shaping their commitment. In RQ2, TAM explores whether social media enhances positive attitudes and collaboration among students.
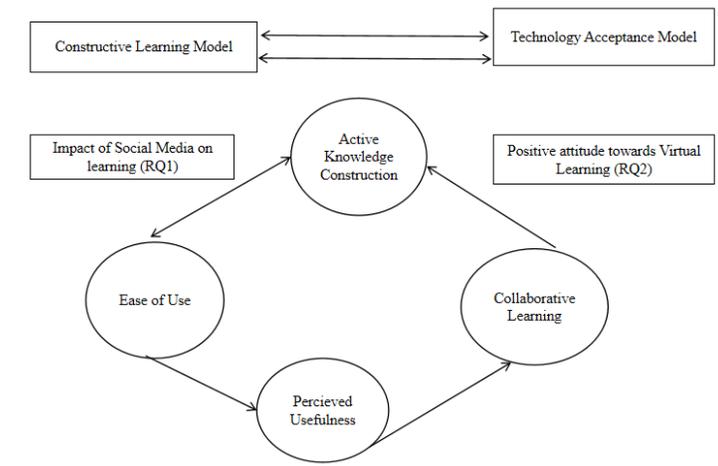
Social Media platforms provide virtual educational settings influencing the perspectives and behaviors of learners (Akbari and Sahibzada 2020). The platform's impact on students' attitudes, both positive and negative, warrants further study. Social media fosters connections, yet its on learning is complex in terms of building self-esteem. Ahmed et al. (2021) suggest that social media boosts self-esteem by allowing individuals to share achievements and receive feedback. Cheng et al. (2022) and Blanco et al. (2020) reinforce the positive effects of social media on confidence, especially for university students facing challenges. However, Calderón, Ortí, and Kuric (2022) caution that social media can also lower self-confidence, as individuals may feel inadequate when comparing themselves to others. Excessive social media use can further contribute to feelings of isolation and loneliness, complicating its overall impact on self-confidence. Thus, there is a gap in terms of exploring the usage pattern of social media and its influence on the educational and learning behaviours of students, which requires further exploration.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative approach to examine the impact of social media evolution on Generation Z. The study is conducted using a questionnaire distributed online, among the undergraduate college students aged between 17 to 2 years. The questionnaire is designed based on the guidelines by (Chang et al., 2022), measuring social media usage patterns, platform preferences, time spent on these platforms, and perceived influences on lifestyle. Then, some questions were adopted from Bal and Bicen (2017)'s which measured the respondents' social media usage of students and their perspectives on education. The questionnaire was modified from the original questionnaire to be usable in media education. The modified questionnaire consisted of 20 items, divided into three parts. The first part consisted of demographic profile of students. The second part asked about students' preference for social media platforms, perceived benefit for social media. The third part consisted of their application of social media for academic purposes. Then last section measures the drawback of the social media for academic purposes. The quantitative data is then analyzed using excel, applying descriptive statistics to interpret the findings (Kübler et al., 2020). The study explores the social media usage patterns among undergraduate students at Indraprastha University focusing on various aspects of social media usage including frequency, preferred platforms, and perceived benefits and drawbacks.

3.1. Sampling Procedure

The sampling frame comprises undergraduate students enrolled at Indraprastha University. A total of 886 undergraduate media students were invited to participate in the study however, the final sample consisted of 120 students according to the inclusion criterion were age less than or equal to 22 years and more than 17 years old. Also only those respondents were selected who consented to fill the questionnaire 120 students were selected. This selection method ensured unbiased representation, in terms of gender, native place and economic background. However, the participants meeting specific criteria, including enrollment in a full-time undergraduate program, regular use of social media platforms, and willingness to participate in the study.

3.2. Data Collection
Data collection is facilitated through online means, utilizing Google Forms. Participants receive the survey link via personal email and other social media platforms such as WhatsApp. The communication includes a brief study introduction, the survey link, and instructions for completion. Respondents' identities remain anonymous to encourage honest responses. The survey comprises closed-ended questions, expected to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, covering demographics, social media usage patterns, perceived benefits and drawbacks, and the impact on academic performance.

3.3 Data Analysis
The collected data undergoes analysis, involving tabulation and segregation according to the research objectives. Summarized data is then scrutinized to verify the established objectives. The results are presented using tables, graphs, and charts, accompanied by brief descriptions to aid readers' understanding and visualization.

3.4 Ethical Considerations
This study adheres to ethical guidelines governing research involving human participants. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, emphasizing their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Data confidentiality is maintained, with information used solely for research purposes and participants' identities protected in all reports or publications arising from this study.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The following table indicates the age group wise distribution of social media users from the selected sample.

Table 1 – Demographics

Age	Number	Percentage
17-18 Years old	31	25.8
19-20 years old	30	25
20-21 Years	35	29
21-22	24	20
Gender		
Male	54	45
Female	66	55
Educational Qualification		
1st year	32	26.6

2nd Year	41	34.1
3rd Year	47	39.1

The sample were aged between 19 and 22 years old (x = 2.77, SD = 1.57). The participants were 32 first-year (26.67%), 41 second-year (34.1%) and 47 third-year (39.1%), of whom 66 (55%) were female and 54 (45%) were male. They were aged between 17 and 22 years old (x = 19.5, SD = 1.87 & s2=3.5).The majority of the surveyed population is 17-19 years old or above (51%), followed by 20-21 years old. About 20% of the respondents fall within the age range of 21-22 years old, while only 2% are under 22 years old. In terms of gender distribution, females represent the majority, comprising 55% of the respondents, while males make up 45%.

Table 2: Frequencies of Participant Responses for Social Media Usage Patterns

Time spent (Hours	Personal purpose	Academic Purpose
1-2	14	48
2-4	42	36
4-6	30	14
>6	14	2

From the above table it is obvious that for academic purpose social media is used only for 1to 2 hours. However for personal reasons the time span increases from (2-4 hours or more), with 42% spending 2-4 hours and 30% spending 4-6 which is much less in case of academic purpose.

Table 3 : Participant Responses on selected Social Media Usage pattern for Education

Type of Social Media	Academic Purpose Education				
	never	Rarely	Sometimes	often	Always
Youtube	05	10	25	32	43
Instagram	68	28	10	14	0
Facebook	18	17	34	27	24
Twitter	14	30	24	34	18
Whatsapp	11	20	10	34	45
Snapchat	62	38	8	10	2

As per the above table the usage patterns of various social media platforms YouTube is the most frequently used for education purposes. On the other hand platforms like Instagram and Snapchat are used for rarely for educational purpose. Facebook and Twitter are used less frequently overall, with a notable decline in educational purposes. For social media platform like WhatsApp it is used in both categories, although its educational use remains limited.

Table 4: Students' Perceived Ease of social Media for learning

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Learning through social media is easy in terms of accessibly	9	20	45	27	19

Helps me in connecting with students with same interests	18	34	26	28	14
Helps me to Express my thoughts to my peers as compared to physical mode	4	10	45	37	20

The table reflects student perceptions of learning through social media. Regarding accessibility, 45 students are neutral, and 27 agree that it is easy to use, with fewer (9) strongly disagreeing. In terms of connecting with peers of similar interests, 34 disagree, and 28 agree, suggesting mixed opinions. For expressing thoughts compared to physical settings, the majority (45 neutral, 37 agree) feel social media helps, with only 4 students strongly disagreeing. Overall, social media is perceived as moderately effective for learning and communication.

Table 5: Students' application of social Media for Learning & education

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I use tutorials or videos posted on social media for use in media skills training	4	26	46	29	15
Reading material is more comprehensible than notes provided by subject teachers	4	14	41	29	8
Helps in understanding the application of concepts in my own subjects	13	48	36	19	4
Promotes Virtual group Learning	9	42	36	26	7
Provides answers to my queries related to my subject	10	32	24	34	20
Share content related to my course and clarify the course content	4	10	45	37	20
Helps me to complete my Course assignments	13	48	36	19	4
Social Media Platforms helps me to update my knowledge	3	21	54	31	11
Improves my ability to be creative and innovative					
Being on Social Media platforms is more distraction than providing learning experience	5	10	50	34	15

The table reveal that many students frequently use online tutorials and social media videos for learning skills and may promote Virtual learning experience. As per the students reading materials posted on these platforms are more comprehensible than notes provided by subject teachers. Majority of students use social media is a useful tool for knowledge updates, but is also perceived as distraction from physical mode of learning. Additionally, online platforms make it easier for students to express thoughts to peers, though the potential for distraction remains a concern.

Table 6: Drawbacks of social media learning

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly agree
Being on Social Media platforms is more distraction than providing learning experience	6	29	14	42	29

Increase chances of addictive potential	6	24	20	38	32
Be more me consuming than that topic is worth	7	28	13	39	33
Cause intrusion on my privacy	11	38	12	30	29

A significant portion of respondents view social media as a distraction rather than a learning tool. Also, respondents agreed that social media increases the risk of addiction. Students also perceived social media platform consumes more time than providing educational value. Another major issue is the privacy concerns that social media intrudes on their privacy.

DISCUSSION

Based on the comprehensive analysis conducted, the findings underscore a profound shift in societal dynamics, particularly among Generation Z, towards the pervasive adoption and extensive utilization of social media platforms. This cultural phenomenon reflects not only a means of communication but also serves as a gateway for information dissemination, entertainment, and even educational pursuits. Our study delves into the relationship between social media usage and the attitudes of Generation Z (Gen Z) students, building upon previous research to offer a deeper understanding of digital consumption habits within this demographic. We observe a significant societal shift towards the widespread adoption and extensive utilization of social media platforms among Gen Z, reflecting a fundamental change in communication patterns and cultural norms. This aligns with existing literature highlighting the pervasive role of social media in modern-day interactions and information dissemination (Sobaih et al., 2020).

Our findings reveal a pronounced inclination towards social media engagement among individuals aged 19 years and above, particularly in seeking value and entertainment within online networks. This trend resonates with studies exploring the impact of social media on communication habits and preferences among young adults (Cheng et al., 2022). Moreover, the higher prevalence of female participation in social media consumption, spanning both educational and entertainment domains, underscores the need for deeper inquiries into gender-based preferences and behaviors online (Blanco et al., 2020).

In line with previous research (Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020), we find a concentration of respondents in the final year of journalism courses, suggesting a unique perspective shaped by academic exposure and media-related experiences. This enriches our understanding of social media usage within an academic context and highlights the role of educational background in shaping digital consumption habits.

Media students are often required to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, such as internships or capstone projects. Hands on practice with social media platforms could facilitate them to utilize these resources as tools to gather information, or build professional networks and share their content effectively. This exposure can foster a more nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by social media, informing their usage patterns and behaviors.

Additionally, students in their final year may be preparing to transition into the workforce or pursue further education, making them more attuned to industry trends and professional standards in media-related fields. As such, their engagement with social media platforms may reflect a balance between personal use, professional networking, and skill development, driven by their academic and career aspirations.

6. CONCLUSION

From this study it is evident that usage of social media platforms usage influences on the attitudes the learning attitude, social interactions, and self-confidence of undergraduate students. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, the study explored the motivation of social media platforms for learning, perceived benefits and drawbacks that undergraduate students, pursuing a Bachelor of Journalism at Indraprastha University. The findings revealed YouTube as the preferred platform for consuming educational content,

highlighting its effectiveness in facilitating learning. The study also revealed role of social media platforms to bring closer the students of same interest thus shaping collaborative virtual learning, helping students to keep up latest trends in media education and express freely. However, the drawbacks such as distractions, data privacy and time consuming search on social media platforms were also emerging points from the present research.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Looking ahead, future research could delve into the impact of different types of content and levels of engagement on learning outcomes for Gen Z students across various academic disciplines. Furthermore, exploring the long-term effects of social media usage on professional development and career readiness within the media industry could provide valuable insights into how these platforms shape confidence levels and educational experiences. A longitudinal study can reveal interesting results and contribute towards better understanding of role of social media and learning outcomes of students. Extended sample size from other states can be included and then results can be tested using structural equation modelling (SEM) to derive relationships the variables

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