



PATTERN OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Arjun Bhowmik¹, Bikash Ghanta²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kalyani, Pin-741235, West Bengal, India

²Student, Department of Education, University of Kalyani, Pin-741235, West Bengal, India

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2377-3148>

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a web-based online tool that enables users to create content, share information and access various resources. The present study aims to examine the use of social media among undergraduate students in Uttar Dinajpur District, West Bengal. A descriptive survey method was employed, and using a purposive sampling technique, a sample of 76 undergraduate students was selected for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection, and the data were analysed using frequency and percentage techniques. The findings revealed that the majority of respondents used social media for educational purposes, such as solving academic problems, participating in group discussions, engaging in collaborative learning, seeking help from teachers, and understanding curriculum content. A moderate proportion of respondents used social media to build social identity, promote social values, and spread awareness. The study also found that most students used social media for entertainment purposes, including listening to music and watching movies. Additionally, social media was used for accessing information such as news, employment opportunities, and political and economic updates. However, a moderate percentage of students reported difficulty in concentrating on their work due to excessive use of social media. The study highlights the dual role of social media as both an educational resource and a source of distraction. It suggests the need for balanced and mindful use of social media among students to enhance academic performance and overall development.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Use, Undergraduate Students, Information Access, Social Media And Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is an online web-based technology, and it facilitates the sharing and creation of ideas and information. Nowadays, social media has become an important part of one's life, from shopping to electronic mail, education and business tools (Siddique & Singh, 2016). Nearly 4.65 billion people around the world now use social media (Kessy & Pessa, 2022). Social media is the fastest-growing web application in the 21st century (Nazir, 2014). It is a raw term consisting of blogs, microblogs, forums, dialogues, images, sound, video, network, social web profiles, and other social networks (David, 2021). Social media, the fast-triggers the means of virtual communication, internet-based technologies changed the life pattern of the young generation (Dhawal et al., 2022). Social networking exists to facilitate connections between individuals regardless of distance, opening it up to people so they can easily exchange information, files, images, and videos, establish blogs, send messages, and have in-person conversations (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013). It gives people the power to share, making the world more open and connected with each other (Raut & Patil, 2016). Social media is a great place for pupils to express themselves because it encourages distinctiveness (Wil et al., 2019). The dynamic nature of this technology enables users to have open access to knowledge and contribute local content on the social network space (Ebele & Oghenetega, 2014).

Kaplan and Haenlin (2010) define social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and

technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan, 2015). Social media (sometimes referred to as "social networking") are online services and tools used for publishing, sharing and discussing information (Kumari, 2019).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The new generation of web-based technologies, tools, and services provided by social media has drawn more attention during the last few years. Web 2.0, or social media, is quickly taking centre stage in our information world (Shafique et al., 2010). Social networking allows people to communicate with each other regardless of distance, making it simple for them to share files, images, videos, and information. They can also create blogs, send messages, and engage in real-time discussions (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013). Social networking platforms like Facebook, Messenger, Imo, WhatsApp, and Viber provide young people with a communication and entertainment platform that enables customers to change their daily lives and stay in touch with others (Saha & Guha, 2019).

Indians use social media on a daily basis for an average of 2.36 hours. Due to widespread internet availability, the number of social media users in India increased steadily to 467 million in 2025. India has reached a stunning 692 million Internet users, or around 48.7% of the country's population. Social media has become one of the most crucial components of Indians' daily internet usage (The Global Statistics, 2026).



Compared to other age groups, college students are generally more interested in utilising advanced technologies in every subject (Manjunatha, 2013). Students use social media for learning purposes, for entertainment, and for innovation (Jeesmitha & Com, 2019). Use of social media for educational purposes is essential for the academic excellence of the students (Thimmaraju, 2022). Most students spend around 20% of their time using social media (Talaue et al., 2018). They spend a lot of time sitting in front of computers or having mobile phones in their hands and using social media (Shaheen et al., 2021). Scholarly research from decades ago has shown that students' use of social media has many advantages and its adverse effects in the social and cognitive domains (Atteh et al., 2020). Uttar Dinajpur is one of the districts of the state of West Bengal in India. In terms of literacy rate, Uttar Dinajpur District is the least literate district in the state and ranked at 518 out of 593 districts in India (Basak & Mukharjee, 2014). In the 2011 census, Uttar Dinajpur had traditionally been a low-literacy district in West Bengal, recording an overall literacy rate of 59.10 per cent compared to the other districts of the state, and it lies significantly below the poverty line (Verma & Roy, 2019). Hence, the study attempts to find out how the undergraduate students of Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal, use social media for the purposes of education and other activities.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the use of social media among undergraduate students for educational purposes.
2. To study the use of social media among undergraduate students for socialisation.
3. To study the use of social media among undergraduate students for entertainment purposes.
4. To study the use of social media among undergraduate students for accessing information.
5. To identify the challenges faced by the undergraduate students in using social media.

4. METHOD OF THE STUDY

4.1 Research approach and design

The present study adopted a quantitative approach and employed a descriptive survey method to examine the use of social media among undergraduate students.

4.2 Population of the study

The population of the study comprised all undergraduate students studying in degree colleges of Uttar Dinajpur District, West Bengal.

4.3 Sample and sampling technique

A sample of 76 undergraduate students was selected for the study. The sample was chosen using the purposive sampling technique in terms of accessibility and availability of respondents.

4.4 Tool for data collection

A self-developed questionnaire, named usage of social media was used by the researcher for the current investigation. The questionnaire, which is based on a summative rating scale with two responses, provides the options of yes and no. The questionnaire had 16 items and measured five different areas, including education, socialisation, entertainment, accessing information and challenges.

4.5 Procedure of data collection

Data were collected by administering the questionnaire to the selected undergraduate students. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were requested to provide honest responses.

4.6 Techniques of data analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, specifically frequency and percentage calculations. The results were presented in a systematic manner to interpret patterns of social media use among undergraduate students.

5. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is confined only to undergraduate students from degree colleges in Uttar Dinajpur District, West Bengal, and does not cover other districts or states.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Objective 1: To study the use of social media among undergraduate students for educational purposes.

Table 1

Responses of undergraduate students to the use of social media for educational purposes.

Sl. No.	Item	Yes	No
1.	I take the help of social media to solve educational problems.	98.7%	1.03%
2.	I use social media for group discussions and collaborative learning.	86.7%	13.3%
3.	I use social media to get help from teachers.	82.7%	17.3%
4.	I use social media to understand the curriculum content.	93.3%	6.7%

Analysis

The table above presents undergraduate students' responses on the use of social media for educational purposes. A very high percentage of students (98.7%) reported that they use social media to solve educational problems. Similarly, 93.3% of respondents indicated that they use social media to understand curriculum content. Further, 86.7% of students use social media for group discussion and collaborative learning, while 82.7% of students reported they use social media to seek help from

teachers. A comparatively smaller percentage of students responded negatively to these items.

Interpretation

The findings clearly indicate that social media plays a significant role in supporting the educational activities of undergraduate students. The extremely high percentage of students using social media for solving academic problems suggests that it has become an essential learning resource. The



use of social media for understanding curriculum content and participating in collaborative learning reflects its importance in interactive and peer-assisted learning environments. Additionally, a large proportion of students seeking help from teachers through social media highlights its role in enhancing student-teacher communication beyond the classroom. Overall, it can be interpreted that social media is widely utilised as an

effective educational tool which promotes learning, communication, and academic support among undergraduate students.

Objective 2: To study the use of social media among undergraduate students for socialisation.

Table 2
Responses of undergraduate students to the use of social media for socialisation.

Sl. No.	Item	Yes	No
5.	I use social media to build my social identity.	71.1%	28.9%
6.	I use social media to make myself useful to society.	68.4%	31.6%
7.	I use social media to spread awareness and social values.	81.6%	18.4%

Analysis

The data reveal patterns in the use of social media for social identity formation, social contribution, and awareness-building. A majority of respondents (71.1%) use social media to build their social identity, while 28.9% do not. Similarly, 68.4% of respondents report using social media to make themselves useful to society, whereas 31.6% do not engage in such activities. The highest level of agreement is observed in the use of social media for spreading awareness and social values, with 81.6% of respondents indicating 'Yes' and only 18.4% indicating 'No'. This suggests that awareness-related activities are the most prominent use of social media among the respondents. Overall, the data shows that in all three areas, more than two-thirds of the respondents are positively motivated toward the constructive use of social media.

Interpretation

The findings indicate that social media plays a significant role beyond mere communication or entertainment. The high

percentage of respondents using social media to spread awareness and social values reflects its effectiveness as a platform for promoting social consciousness and influencing public opinion. The substantial use of social media for building social identity suggests that individuals increasingly rely on digital platforms for self-expression and identity formation. Additionally, the fact that a majority of respondents use social media to contribute to society highlights a growing sense of social responsibility among users. However, the presence of a considerable minority who do not engage in these activities indicates that not all users are equally aware of or interested in the constructive potential of social media. This points to the need for educational initiatives to promote more meaningful and responsible use of social media platforms.

Objective 3: To study the usage of social media among undergraduate students for entertainment purposes.

Table 3
Responses of undergraduate students to the use of social media for entertainment purposes.

Sl. No.	Item	Yes	No
8.	I love listening to music on social media.	88.2%	11.8%
9.	I watch movies using social media.	76.3%	23.7%
10.	I play online games through social media.	36.8%	63.2%
11.	I use social media to relieve mental stress.	63.2%	36.8%

Analysis

The data highlights the use of social media for entertainment and stress relief among respondents. A very high percentage (88.2%) of respondents reported that they love listening to music on social media, while only 11.8% do not, making it the most preferred activity among the listed options. Similarly, 76.3% of respondents use social media to watch movies, whereas 23.7% do not, indicating that visual entertainment is also a major use of these platforms. In contrast, only 36.8% of respondents reported playing online games through social media, while a majority (63.2%) do not engage in gaming activities, making it the least preferred option. Additionally, 63.2% of respondents use social media to relieve mental stress, while 36.8% do not. This shows that a significant proportion of users rely on social media as a coping mechanism for relaxation and stress management. Overall, the data indicates that entertainment-related uses, particularly music and movies,

dominate social media engagement, while gaming is less common among respondents.

Interpretation

The findings suggest that social media serves as a major source of entertainment and psychological relaxation for undergraduate students. The overwhelming preference for listening to music indicates that social media platforms are highly effective in providing easy and instant access to audio content, making it a dominant leisure activity. The high percentage of respondents watching movies further reinforces the role of social media as a multimedia entertainment hub. However, the comparatively low engagement in online gaming suggests that either respondents prefer other gaming platforms or are less inclined toward gaming activities in general. The fact that a majority of respondents use social media to relieve mental stress highlights its role as a tool for emotional regulation and relaxation. It suggests that users turn to social media for



distraction, comfort, or enjoyment during stressful situations. At the same time, the presence of a notable proportion of respondents who do not use social media for stress relief or entertainment indicates differing user preferences and habits. This emphasises the diverse ways in which individuals interact

with social media, pointing to the need for balanced and mindful usage.

Objective 4: To study the use of social media among undergraduate students for accessing information.

Table 4

Responses of undergraduate students to the use of social media for accessing information.

Sl. No.	Item	Yes	No
12.	I use social media to get news.	93.4%	6.6%
13.	I use social media to find employment information.	94.7%	5.3%
14.	I am connected through social media to know about the political and economic situation of the country.	86.8%	13.2%

Analysis

The data clearly shows that most undergraduate students use social media as an important source of information. A very high percentage (93.4%) use it to get news, while only a small number (6.6%) do not. Even more respondents (94.7%) use social media to find employment-related information, and it is the highest among the three items. Additionally, 86.8% of respondents stay connected through social media to understand the political and economic situation of the country, whereas 13.2% do not. Overall, the results indicate that social media is widely used for staying informed and updated.

Interpretation

These findings suggest that social media has become a major and trusted source of information in students' daily lives. Most users depend on it not only for news but also for important opportunities like jobs and careers. The high percentage of users following political and economic updates indicates that social media also plays a key role in increasing awareness about national issues. However, a small group of users still does not rely on social media for such purposes, which may be due to a lack of trust or different preferences. Overall, social media is not just for entertainment—it has become an essential tool for information, awareness, and career opportunities.

Objective 5: To identify the challenges faced by undergraduate students in using social media.

Table 5

Responses of undergraduate students to the challenges they face in using social media.

Sl. No.	Item	Yes	No
15.	I can't concentrate on my studies because of spending extra time on social media.	64.5%	35.5%
16.	Due to excessive use of social media, I can't keep in direct contact with friends.	38.2%	61.8%

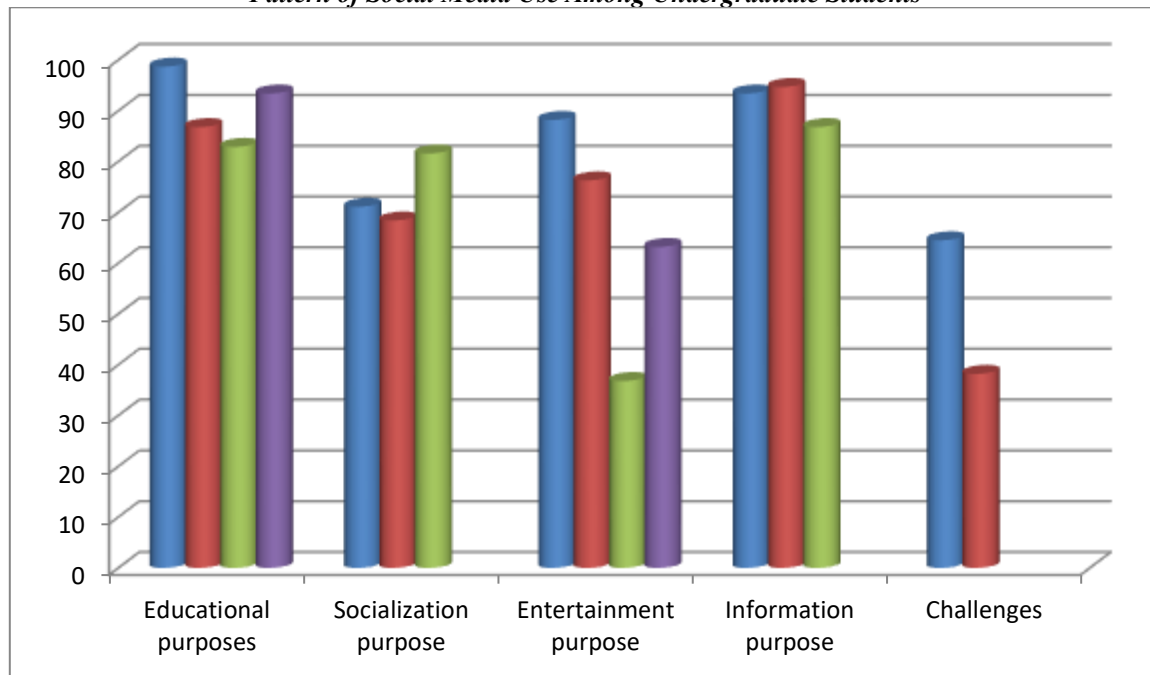
Analysis

The data show that a significant number of undergraduate students face challenges due to social media use. About 64.5% of students reported that they cannot concentrate on their studies because they spend extra time on social media, while 35.5% do not face this issue. On the other hand, only 38.2% of students feel that excessive use of social media affects their direct contact with friends, whereas a majority (61.8%) do not experience this problem.

Interpretation

These findings suggest that distraction from studies is one of the major challenges of social media use among students. Many students struggle to manage their time effectively, which affects their academic focus. However, most students do not feel that social media reduces their real-life social interactions, and that they are still able to maintain personal relationships outside the digital world. Overall, while social media impacts academic concentration, its effect on direct social relationships appears to be less significant.

Figure 1
Pattern of Social Media Use Among Undergraduate Students



7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study revealed that the majority of respondents used social media to solve educational problems, group discussions, collaborative learning, help from teachers and the curriculum content. It is also similar to Sutarno (2019), who reported that most of the university students used social media for academic-related purposes like sharing information peer to peer, creating social media groups for some of the courses, and even communicating with their lecturer through social media. Othman et al. (2017) reported that there is a positive relationship between the number of active friends on social media and academic performance. The finding also reported that moderate percentages of respondent used social media to build their social identity, to make them useful to society, to spread awareness and social values. The study found that the majority of undergraduate students used social media for listening to music and watching movies. But lower percentages of respondents used social media for playing online games. The study reported that 63.2% respondent used social media to relieve mental stress. It is also similar to the Hearty Soul assertion, which reported that usage of social networking applications like Facebook and Twitter is less helpful to students in remaining more focused and less stressed (Bashir & Bhat, 2017). Mathewson (2020) reported that there was a weak positive correlation between social media usage and both anxiety and depression. Deepa and Priya (2020) reported that more usage of social media, the number of social networking sites and too much time spent on social networking sites are affecting the students' mental health, such as depression and anxiety. Siddhartha et al. (2020) reported that the maximum percentage of undergraduate students said that social media helps to release stress. The study also revealed that higher percentages of respondents used social media for information, such as getting news, employment information, to know political and economic information of the country. The findings

are also similar to Dhanwal et al. (2022), who reported that stay informed of the most recent information, the majority of students used television, mobile devices with internet, and newspapers. The study found that moderate percentages of respondents could not concentrate on studies due to spending extra time on social media. It is contradicted by Shantahmurthy and Venkataraman (2021), who reported that there is a significant positive association between academic achievement and social media use among higher secondary students. The study also revealed that 38.2% respondent could not keep in direct contact with their friends due to excessive use of social media. But 61.8% respondent keeps in direct contact with their friends.

8. CONCLUSION

At the end of the study, it is concluded that social media is an online web-based technology, and it facilitates the sharing and creation of ideas and information. The use of social media among undergraduate students of Uttar Dinajpur district is not only academic related purposes but also as a means of communication among peers and students with teachers. Use of these social media has become a routine habit for the student. They spend the major part of their time on social media for entertainment purposes, to release mental stress and also concentrate on their studies. The present study revealed that most of the undergraduate students use social media for academic activities, socialisation, entertainment and information-related purposes. There are so many benefits of social media for academic entities. Use of social media is very helpful among undergraduate students, but it should be used in a limited way without getting addicted.



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