

Impact of Social Media on Student's Academic Preparation of the Government Business College in Bhutan: The Students' Insight

Abstract

Aim: This study was carried out to explore the impact of social media from the students' perspective.

Methodology: 318 quantitative-based questionnaires were distributed to the first-year students, second-year students, and final-year students of Gedu College of Business Studies, the only government business college in Bhutan. The students were asked to rate on the Likert scale to determine how social media assisted them in academic preparations. The students also rated the challenges faced while using social media and for what other purposes social media was used besides academic preparation. Descriptive statistics was used to draw results.

Results: The study found out that there was a positive impact of social media on students. It was mainly used to hold discussions with peers for exam preparations, research purposes, interaction with teachers, and solving academic problems. Students also used social media as a platform for socialization and entertainment purposes. Despite the positive effects of social media, students also faced some restrictions to access social media. Thus, the use of social media assisted the students in their academic preparation.

Conclusion: The study revealed that the use of social media helps student in their academic preparation providing the facility to communicate and converse with their friends and teachers to prepare for exams and enhancing collaborative learning.

Keywords: *Social media, College students, Academic preparation, Constraints.*

Introduction

1.1 Background

With the launch of technological advancement, it was natural that youths were introduced to various social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media wherein their behavior and actions were guided by what they see on social media. Social media is used by everyone in every walk of life. The main purpose of social media is to give access to its clients and users. Social media enables individuals to have conversations with each other and create social relations on the web. Social media has the power to spread information and share ideas with people from places around the world and at all times. Social media has changed numerous businesses; however, the most striking impact of it is in the classrooms and the overall education system. Alsaif (2016) found out that the major factors on which social media impact students' lives include their academic performance, social behavior, and health and privacy issues.

The highest percentage of people using social media was found to be students. It includes 96% of students who have internet access. Every 3 in five students were observed to be using social media for discussing academic activities and topics. In a study conducted by Martin (2015), he says that almost 96% of all university students use Facebook in their daily routine. Similarly, according to a recent study conducted by Bhutan Media Foundation (BMF), over 90% of respondents spend nearly 3 hours on social media every day which is more than the global average of over 2 hours. It was extremely alarming to find that Bhutanese people spent a very high amount of time on social media and such actions could lead to negative consequences.

Studying the various impacts of social media would bring awareness to the public and support utilizing social media for the greater benefit. As the most affected population consisted of youths and especially students, proper research can assist in positive interaction among teachers and students, higher academic performance, and collaborative learning among peers. The study can also implore different areas for which social media is used by people such as engaging in constructive socialization and entertainment purposes instead of being involved in harmful activities. Therefore, a study concerning the impact of social media on students in Bhutan is encouraging research to be undertaken.

1.2 Problem Statement

Social media usage is one of the most popular online activities across the world 3.6 billion people were found to be using social media worldwide by 2020 (Tankovska, 2021). Further, as per Digital Bhutan (2020), there were 430,000 Bhutanese on social media which accounted for 58% of the total population of Bhutan in 2018. There was a rapid rise in the number of social media users by 11% between April 2019 and January 2020 (Zangpo, 2020). In addition, Dr. Karma Tenzin, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Postgraduate Medicine at Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan stated that there is the highest social media addiction rate in Bhutan in the Southeast Asian region (Lhamo, 2018). Therefore, social media addiction prevails in our community which needs to be thoroughly studied to create awareness as well as possible prevention. Furthermore, a recent study conducted by Bhutan Media Foundation found that 90% of the respondents spent nearly 3 hours on social media daily which is more than the global average of over 2 hours. Moreover, among the respondents, university graduates were found to spend most of their time on social media for almost 5 hours daily (Dhendup, 2021). It is a common sight today to find youths glued to their phones; some must be doing useful work, but many are trapped, in a cycle of activities as varied and endless as the Samsara (Rinzin, 2018). Thus, rampant usage of social media among university students had been found but for what purpose and how it is helping them or its impact has been seen as an important field and a continuous study required currently. Hence, this issue has become our priority to be properly studied to study the usage of social media in helping them for academic purposes, entertainment, and socialization purposes.

1.3 Research Objective

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of social media that are essential from the students' perspective. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the influence of social media on academic preparation among students of Gedu College of Business Studies, the only government Business college in Bhutan.
2. To identify the challenges faced by the students with the use of social media

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do social media assist students in the academic preparation?
2. What are the challenges faced by the students while using social media?
3. Do students use social media for other purposes (apart from academic preparation)?

UNDER PEER REVIEW

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Social media has exploded as a category of online discourse where people create content, share it, and bookmark it and a network at a remarkable rate. According to Junco et al. (2010), social media are a collection of internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing. The growing dimension of the use of social media among the youths cannot be over-emphasized. Over the years, social networking among the student's cycle has become more and more popular. Social networking is playing a big role in boosting academics like in social sciences and in the education system as a whole. Many studies have addressed the different aspects of using social networking at various academic and social levels. The study conducted by Musa, Al-rahmi, and Othman (2014) stated that social media have infiltrated the 21st century generation of internet users and it is generally used regularly by millions of people across the globe for different purposes. A big portion of the social media users are youths where most of them are college students and several universities are using social media.

2.2 Academic Preparation

Social media is found to be incredibly visible in higher education settings as the teachers emphasize on technology to mediate and enhance their instructions for promoting active learning. Tess (2013) in the paper the role of social media in higher education classes (real and virtual) found that there is positive perception of students towards using social media in their learning as they felt using facebook is an effective learning tool. However, according to the Raut & Patil (2016) the prime bad effect of social media is addiction which leads to constant check of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media updates. Thus, this addiction could negatively affect other valued activities like concentrating on studies, taking active part in sports, real-life communication and ignoring the ground realities.

In the study conducted by Rahmi and Othman (2013), they concluded that social media facilitates the academic experience with the majority of the participants however with proper control and time management. Studies have proved that social media has had a positive effect and significant collaborative preparation with interaction among peers, interaction with the supervisor, engagement, perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness (Musa et al., 2014).

A study conducted by Mawdsley & Schafheutle (2015) found that students responded that social media like facebook could be a productive in self and peer-learning at undergraduate level. From the total respondents 69% agreeing that facebook as a useful source for their exam preparation. Similarly, Salmon, Ross, Pechenkina and Chase (2015) concluded that facebook is used by the users as it enhanced their learning process through interactive session with peers as well as moderators. Thus, social media had been benefiting the students in enhancing their learning with effective preparation.

On contrary, the extensive use of social media results in inability of the students to understand and comply with the instructions for completing their assignments and also decline in the online participation (Okoro, 2012). Therefore, there is benefit as well as constraints towards the students' learning with the involvement of social media. However, a study on the social media impact on academic progress of WIUT students by Khakimov (2020) also concluded that majority of the respondents stated that social media is beneficial for them in terms of acquiring useful information as well as for the discussion of projects and course works. In addition Safer and Awan (2021) found that 59% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that formation of groups through social media serves as a source of information and they can learn more about their projects. Therefore, the popularity of social media needs to be properly taken into consideration as it benefits the users if used in a proper manner that is for educational purposes.

Most students in higher institutions of learning wish to alter their means of communication to social networks for strengthen classroom interactions because it is where they spend most of their time and there is collaborative learning using social media such as facebook, E-mail, twitter which facilitates learning and knowledge sharing amongst students and teachers to context in real life (Bull et al., 2008, as cited in Musa, Al-rahmi, & Othman 2014). Further, the study proved that in educational setting, has been used primarily to receive instant feedback in face-to-face classes to enhance social presence in online classes to provide timely updates to course information which motivates students with new technology (Lin, Hoffman & Borrengasser, 2013 as cited in Munoz, Pellegrini & Crammer, 2014).

The accessible literature on social media provides useful suggestions of its application in higher institutions of education (Hamid et al., 2011). However, study revealed that the use of social

media had affected academic preparation of the respondents negatively and further confirmed that there was strong positive relationship between the use of social media and academic preparation at a significant of 0.01 levels. This indicates that more time spent on social media affects student's academic preparation. Hence, spending more time on social media contributes to low academic performance due to less time involved in academic preparation (Acheaw & Larson, 2015).

2.3 Constraints

There is a rising interest in studying the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) with the application of different social media platform in daily life styles of people. In investigating the potentials of social media, there are also hindrances involved in utilizing social media for various purposes. Constraints refer to "ways in which an individual or organization can be held back from accomplishing a particular goal when using a technology or system" (Majchrzak & Markus, 2013). Relative issues such as limited internet access and low rate of technology literacy may hamper the development of social media usage among users.

Dini, Wahid & Seabo (2016) identified seven constraints from social media which includes poor internet connection, limited capability, unreliable information, a distraction of focus, short-lived information, security issues, and unsupportive regulation. Correspondingly, a study conducted on problems of students with internet usage stated that even though the internet provides various benefits to its users, they face network issues while accessing social media like connection breaks, inconsistent speed, fail to load and spam mails products (Peter & Saraswathy, 2017).

A study on problems and prospects of using social networking sites by students and research scholars of Alagappa University concludes that 48% of the respondents have strongly agreed that creation of false and fake ID is the most harmful effects while using social media (Angeline, 2019). Social media brings difficulties to students in evaluating the information since the message send through social media may be short, which can make the credibility assessment hard (Keshavarz, 2020).

A study on challenges and perceptions towards use of social media in higher education in Zimbabwe revealed that the major issues faced by students in higher education while using social media are that of privacy and security (Ngonidzashe, 2013). Similar results were found by Brady, Holcomb & Smith (2012, as cited in Ngonidzashe, 2013), concludes that privacy and safety issues are faced by the students when using social media.

Kasturi & Vardhan (2014) stressed the importance of the need for the formulation and implementation of proper guidelines to remove the barriers for differently able people and such an issue should be taken up for the better implementation so that different people can gain access to social media. Comunello, Mulargia & Parisi (2016) in their study found people involved in political activism addressed the issue of having to refrain and restricted from posting and sharing information regarding sensitive issues. Although social media provides the platform to speak out and share opinions on the matter of current issues and political subjects, it was observed people misused the power to create fake news and hoax among society creating chaos and disharmony (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017).

2.4 Other Purposes

Integrating social media for both entertainment and learning is common among the students in the higher level of education. College students use various social media applications to extent that it is now an essential part of their everyday life for entertainment and socialization purposes (Cao & Hong, 2011; Dahlstrom, 2012). Tess (2013) stated that social media technology had become an essential part of personal life as the users generate content, share photos, like or interact in a game. Social media users and influence are evolving depending on context and the notion that social media could be effective tool for one's enjoyment purposes.

Research Methodology

This section explains the research methodology used to undertake the study. The overall design or strategy that helped in acquiring the desired research objectives is referred to as research methodology (Alsaif, 2016). It includes research design, method of data collection, and analysis of data.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed the quantitative method of research. The sources of data collection were the students of the first year, second year, and final year of Gedu College of Business Studies. Hence, this research is purely based on the subjective assessment of attitudes, perspectives, and behavior of the students towards the use of social media. This study also concentrated on obtaining the information required, and what can be measured. Furthermore, it involved data collection and analysis in the statistical or numerical descriptive format. Hence, quantitative research was adopted in this research because this study focuses on determining the impact of social media on the students and becomes suitable for it. Therefore, we had interpreted the data accumulated from the respondents quantitatively with the help of the mathematical and statistical tool that is SPSS software.

3.2 Study Area/Site

This study focused on the students of Gedu College of Business Studies which included the first years, the second year, and the final year students, intending to understand the impact of using social media on their academic preparation, entertainment, socialization, and the challenges faced while accessing the social media.

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size and Techniques

The probability sampling method was used where every student had equal chances of being chosen as the respondents to ensure fairness and bias-free findings. The team targeted the students of Gedu College of Business Studies, the first year, the second year, and the third-year students, bearing in mind the accessibility and cost-effectiveness while collecting the data. From the probability sampling technique, the group decided to conduct stratified random sampling by dividing the population into three strata grounded on years. There are in total 1533 students as our population. So, taking confidence level as 95% and 5% margin error, we got a sample size of 318 from 1533 students. The above sample size was based on Slovin's formula (Solvin's 1960).

This study relied on primary data which were collected by distributing questionnaires to students who were chosen as the respondents for this study. The link of questionnaires was shared with those selected respondents through WhatsApp and messenger. To generate accurate and reliable data for the analysis, we had provided enough time to the respondents to read and analyze the questionnaires. The respondents were guided by a set of standard questions to ensure accuracy in the data collection. The Likert scale was used to answer the questionnaires and the respondents were asked to self-rate the Likert items as; strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The questionnaire for this study broadly comprised of two sections: one for generating demographic information and the other for acquiring data about the social media impact on academic preparation, socialization, entertainment, and constraints.

3.5 Data Analysis

For this research, most of the data collected were in numerical form and all the data were the primary data thus, the quantitative approach was used. The software program statistical product and service solutions (SPSS) was employed to draw correct conclusions for the gathered data. One of the important tools utilized was descriptive statistics which had simplified our data and enable us to present and evaluate our results in an easier manner. It provided an overall assessment of our data which described characteristics of our sample or the data set.

4.1 Reliability test

The instrument reliability test was run before the analysis of the data. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The alpha coefficient for the 24 items was 0.925, suggesting that all the items chosen in this survey have relatively high internal consistency. The generally accepted rule is that the Cronbach Alpha value which is more than 0.8 is considered a very good level but values higher than 0.95 indicate that it is not necessarily good (Hulin, Netemeyer & Cudeck, 2001).

4.2 Descriptive mean

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics on Academic Preparation

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Through social media I am able to have conversations with my friends to prepare for exam		4.00	1.034
Social media facilitate me for collaborative learning		3.93	.891
Through the use of social media I can seek help from my teachers		3.92	.976
I am able to solve academic problems easily with the help of social media		3.84	.947
I feel group discussion for academic purpose is effective with the use of social media		3.82	.989
I can do research work within no time by using social media		3.63	1.030
Valid N (listwise)	318		

To find out the impact of social media on the academic preparation of students, descriptive mean was used to determine in what areas social media had been used the most to prepare students for academic purposes. Students agreed that social media was mostly used to have conversations with friends to prepare for the exam with a mean of 4.00 which indicates a high level of impact on academic preparations. Meanwhile, the figure showed that students used social media for research the least however with a mean of 3.63 which also shows a high level of impact of social media use for research work. Accordingly, students used social media for collaborative learning (M=3.93), to seek help from teachers (M= 3.92), to solve the academic problem (M=3.84), and for effective group discussion (M= 3.82).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics on Socialization

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can keep in touch with my relatives by means of social media		4.10	.987
I get information regarding current social events from the social media that I use		4.10	.970
I become more friendly with the use of social media		3.71	.958
My interpersonal relationship has strengthen through social media		3.66	.955
I am able to attend social gathering through social media		3.62	.984
I get more friends as I post in social media		3.57	.995
Valid N (listwise)	318		

To find out besides academic preparation how social media has impact socialization and for those purposes descriptive mean was used to determine in what areas social media had been used the most for the socialization purposes. Students agreed that social media was mainly used to keep in touch with their relatives and to get current information with the mean of 4.1 respectively which indicates a high level of impact on socialization. On the other hand, the figure showed that students used social media to get more friends, however, with the mean of 3.57 which also displays a high level of impact of social media for making more friends. Consequently, students used social media to become more friendly (M=3.71), to attend social gatherings (M=3.62), and to strengthen their interpersonal relationships (M= 3.66).

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics on Entertainment

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Engaging myself in social media overcome my boredom		3.95	1.045
Social media provides me audio-visual entertainment all the time		3.92	1.001
Seeing funny post on social media gives me pleasure		3.81	1.045
I use social media to get up to date news on celebrities		3.69	1.143
I enjoy playing games on social media		3.60	1.184
I get satisfaction from getting more likes and impressive comments on social media		3.12	1.160
Valid N (listwise)	318		

The rating for strongly disagree lies in the range between 1.00-1.79 which indicates the lowest level of entertainment while using social media. The rating for disagreeing falls in the range between 1.80-2.59 which shows a low level of entertainment while using social media. Rating for a neutral or medium level of entertainment while using social media falls in the range between 2.60-3.39. Further rating for agreeing with fall in the range between 3.40-4.19, showing the high level of entertainment while using social media. Lastly, the highest level of entertainment while using social media lies in the range between 4.20-5.00. Hence, the high level of entertainment received by GCBS students while using social media is engaging themselves in social media to overcome their boredom with the mean score of 3.95. On the other hand, the students get a medium level of entertainment when they receive more likes and impressive comments on social media with a mean score of 3.12.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics on Constraints

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internet charges are expensive for me		3.83	1.034
Network connectivity and coverage is hindering me from getting uninterrupted social media access		3.69	1.033
Excess use of social media slows down my phone		3.59	1.016
I find it difficult to locate the exact source of information posted in social media		3.32	1.044
I face difficulty in finding exact information for academic purpose using social media		3.29	1.020
My social media device do not support most social media application and software		2.95	1.176
Valid N (listwise)	318		

The ratings for strongly disagree lie in the range between 1.00-1.79 which indicates the lowest level of constraint faced while using social media. Then, the ratings for disagreeing fall in the range between 1.80-2.59 indicates a low level of constraint faced when using social media. Rating of neutral falls between ranges of 2.60-3.39 showing the medium level. Ratings for agreeing to lies in the range between 3.40-4.19 which shows a high level of constraints faced while accessing social media. Lastly, the highest level of constraints faced while using social media lies within the range of 4.20-5.00. Therefore, internet charge is found to be one of the higher levels of challenges among various challenges faced by the students with the mean scores of 3.83. On the other hand, the capacity of the students' devices to support the social media application software was not a crucial issue with the students.

4.3 Discussion

Social media was used as a tool for learning by the students. Students use social media for collaborative learning (m=3.93), interaction with their teachers (m=3.92) and peers (4.00), research purposes (m=3.63), group discussion (3.82), and in solving academic-related problems (m=3.84). A similar conclusion was drawn by Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013) who found a strong positive relationship between academic performance with interactivity among peers, interaction with teachers, and collaborative learning which illustrated how social media contributed towards academic success of students. On the other hand, the study conducted by Yeboah & Ewur (2014) found that social media has impacted students negatively on the performance of tertiary students in Ghana. Their study among other things unveiled the following; WhatsApp takes much of the students' study time, results in procrastination-related problems, destroys students' spellings and grammatical construction of sentences, leads to lack of concentration during lectures. Thus, resulting in complexity in balancing online activities and academic preparation and hence, distracts students to carry out their assignments and adhering to their private studies timetable.

The inconsistent impact of using social media on academic preparation may be due to the difference in the level of social media advancement in various countries, different methods/ways preferred by students for academic preparation, individual's perception of social media purpose, and moderation of student's access to social media.

The study revealed that social media had a significant influence on the entertainment of the students of Gedu College of Business Studies where all items range in high level. This means that social media provides an entertainment platform to the students where it is helping in reducing their boredom ($m=3.95$). Similarly, Naqvi (2020) concluded that social media are significant providers of entertainment and this has a substantial impact on the social media users' sustainable intention to continue using social media. Ifinedo (2016) reported a similar result that one key reason for using social media is to have fun and pleasantly spend time. Further, a study conducted by Sveningsson (2015) found that social media not only serve as a platform to acquire news but also a source of pleasure and past time. Therefore, several studies show that social media keeps students entertained.

Upon studying the level of impact of using social media on the socialization of the students, the group came to the conclusion that there is a high level of impact as all the items used to determine the impact has a mean score above 3.4 indicating that the excessive use of social media helps them in socialization. Similarly, a study conducted by Tuhinet et al. (2019) found a weak negative correlation between the excessive use of social media on socialization indicating that increasing use of social media may not lead to a reduction in socialization. However, Hill & Zheng (2017) concluded that people who spend more time on social media desire to work in isolation indicating a decline in socialization due to social media. Thus, there is a contradiction in the findings which may be because of differences in the perception of respondents upon examining the impact of social media on socialization. In addition, it may differ with the time spent on social media where it is found that the majority of the respondent (54.6%) spent only 3-5 hours and do not have a negative impact on socialization.

5.1 Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine how the use of social media impacted the students in academic preparation and other areas. The study also highlights some of the challenges faced while using social media. This study revealed that the use of social media facilitated students in academic preparation providing the facility to communicate and converse with friends and teachers to prepare for exams and enhancing collaborative learning. Further, it also shows that there is a high level of impact of social media enabling them in socializing as students could keep in touch with their friends and relatives. Similarly, the study also reveals that social media keeps the students entertained and helped overcome boredom. Further, upon studying some of the challenges faced by students while accessing social media, expensive internet charges was found to be the major issue faced by the students. Therefore, ranking based on mean score proved social media has a positive impact on academic preparation, socialization, and entertainment.

5.2 Recommendations

Since the mean value for all the items is high, students are found to derive advantages from social media for academic preparation. Nevertheless, the study provides the following recommendations:

1. Teachers can initiate higher academic performance in students by creating groups in Messengers, Whatsapp, Wechat, etc to facilitate active discussion between students and teachers to clear doubts and keep students engaged in academic activities.
2. Social media was seen to aid students in academic preparations therefore, we propose students to use social media for further academic purposes.
3. Institutions and universities should guide students to join educational pages on Facebook and other social media sites so students can get necessary information on relative topics.

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