

Exploring Students' Perceptions of Social Media in Higher Education of South 24 Parganas of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Finding out how many college students utilise social media for coursework and comparing students' attitudes on the matter by gender and geographic location were the two main goals of the present study. The study team employed a descriptive survey approach and polled 400 students from several universities in the South 24 Parganas area to compile their findings. The research instrument that was used was a structured questionnaire. Higher education students' modest and consistent use of social media for academic reasons was shown by the findings. Perceptions of social media usage by students did not vary significantly by gender. Urban students, in contrast to their rural counterparts, had a more favourable outlook on the use of social media in higher education, suggesting a substantial variation according to location. According to the research, students' perceptions will be heavily influenced by contextual factors such as their location. Consequently, there is a pressing need for more digital assistance and equitable access to technology, even if social media is increasingly integrated into academic work practices.

Keywords: Social Media, Higher Education, Students' Perceptions, Academic Use, Gender, Locality.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Young people nowadays can't fathom a world without social media and the dramatic changes it has brought to information sharing, consumption, and involvement. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube are as integral to modern classroom instruction as more traditional forms of student-teacher dialogue. In recent years, students' usage of social media has grown, and not only for academic purposes. They use it for conversing, collaborating, and learning. Social media has the potential to revolutionise higher education in many ways. For example, it might facilitate more effective forms of cooperative learning, increase the quality of teacher-student discussions, and make course materials more accessible. It is possible that bachelor's degrees will be accessible to everybody if these ideas come to fruition. Using social media may help college students improve their communication and teamwork skills, according to researchers. Despite its widespread usage, the subject of whether social media really improves education is still debated among experts.

Studies show that these digital tools may make kids more active participants in their individual learning, better collaborators in groups, and ultimately more successful graduates of high school. The positive reactions children have when social media is used in the classroom are a perfect illustration of this. Students that possess this competency outperform their peers in class debates and collaborative projects, according to Alshalawi (2022) and Alshehri and Lally (2007). Students' inability to concentrate in class due to harassment, data overload, or other disturbances is a concern for some. A loss of concentration in the classroom has been linked to pupils' heavy social media usage, according to recent research (Lukose & Agbeyangi, 2025).

It is vital to understand college students' perspectives on social media in this setting since students may face institutional, cultural, and technical barriers that limit their ability to fully use digital technologies. Students' perspectives reflect both their own development as learners and members of society, reflecting changes in educational practices and technological advancements. Caramihai, Severin, and Chiş (2022) found that students' favourable perceptions of social media increased the likelihood that they would utilise it for academic objectives. Things like building academic networks, studying on one's own, and exchanging and receiving educational resources are all part of this. Understanding the social media behaviours of college students live in South 24 Parganas is vital due to the distinct educational contexts and highly-connected student population. To better understand whether students see digital platforms as helpful resources, potential sources of distraction, or instruments with pros and cons for their academic

path, it might be instructive to gather their thoughts on these topics. Our classroom social media practices, as well as future institutional choices, may be better informed by the data collected here. Students in the Indian state of South 24 Parganas are the focus of this research, which seeks to add to the literature on technology-mediated education in India by exploring their perceptions on the influence of social media on their participation in class and final grades.

1.2. The Statement of the Problem

The proliferation of social media has had far-reaching effects on the fields of higher learning, communication, and knowledge exchange. As more and more students and educators use social media for academic objectives, such as talking with classmates, collaborating on projects, and accessing learning materials, the issue of whether these platforms are beneficial to education remains unanswered. In different regions like South 24 Parganas, academics' views towards social media usage are influenced by gender, locality, and institutional environment. There is a lack of data on how college faculty and students see and utilise social media for scholastic reasons, despite the growing use of digital technology in the classroom. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the views of academics and students from South 24 Parganas on the utilisation of social media for scholastic objectives, using certain demographic parameters. Finding commonalities and distinguishing between them is the goal.

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

O1: Determine how many college students utilise social media for schoolwork.

O2: Examine the ways in which male and female college students see the use of social media on campus.

O3: Examine the ways in which students' localities influence their views on the use of social media in higher education.

1.4. The Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁: There is no significant extent of use of social media for academic purposes among students in higher education.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in students' perceptions of social media use in higher education with respect to gender.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in students' perceptions of social media use in higher education with respect to locality of students.

1.5. The Delimitations of the Study

- The study was confined to students pursuing higher education in selected colleges and institutions of South 24 Parganas district only.
- The investigation focused exclusively on students' perceptions and use of social media for academic purposes, and did not include faculty perceptions.
- Only selected variables, namely gender and locality of students, were considered for comparison in the study.

2. The Review of Related Literature

Social media's stratospheric ascent has had far-reaching effects on communication, knowledge transmission, and higher education. An increasing number of students and teachers are utilising social networking sites for academic purposes, such as communicating with peers, working on group projects, and accessing course materials. However, the question of whether these sites are beneficial for education remains unanswered. Including South 24 Parganas, academics' views on social media use differ by region, gender, and institutional context. There is a lack of data on how college instructors and students see and use social media for scholastic goals, despite the prevalence of digital tools in the classroom. Professors and students in South 24 Parganas are surveyed to have a better understanding of their perspectives on the usage of social media in the classroom. Finding out where the discrepancies are coming from is the objective.

2.1. The Research Gap of the Study

Academic leadership, teacher attitudes, and student accomplishment relative to national or international norms have been the primary foci of the many studies that have examined the ways in which colleges are using digital platforms such as social media to enhance student learning. The views of students in regional socio-educational contexts about the possible educational applications of social media are mostly unexplored. South 24 Parganas among the few locations where studies comparing gender and geography have been scarce, South 24 Parganas stands out. This research addresses a gap in the literature by examining the social media use and perceptions of college students from varied backgrounds.

3. The Methodology of Study

Many studies have looked at how colleges are utilising social media and other digital platforms to improve student learning, but the main focus has been on academic leadership, instructor attitudes, and student success compared to national or worldwide standards. Very little is known about how students in different regional socio-educational settings feel about the potential educational uses of social media. South 24 Parganas is one of a handful of places where studies comparing gender and location are lacking. By looking at how college students from different backgrounds use and perceive social media, this study fills a need in the existing literature.

4. The Analysis and Interpretation

H₀₁: There is no significant extent of use of social media for academic purposes among students in higher education.

Table 4.1: The Degree of Use of Students Utilise Social Media for Schoolwork among Students in Higher Education

Group	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	F Value	Result
Low Academic Use of Social Media	200	42.36	6.84	0.43	0.482	0.482
High Academic Use of Social Media	200	43.12	6.91	0.44		

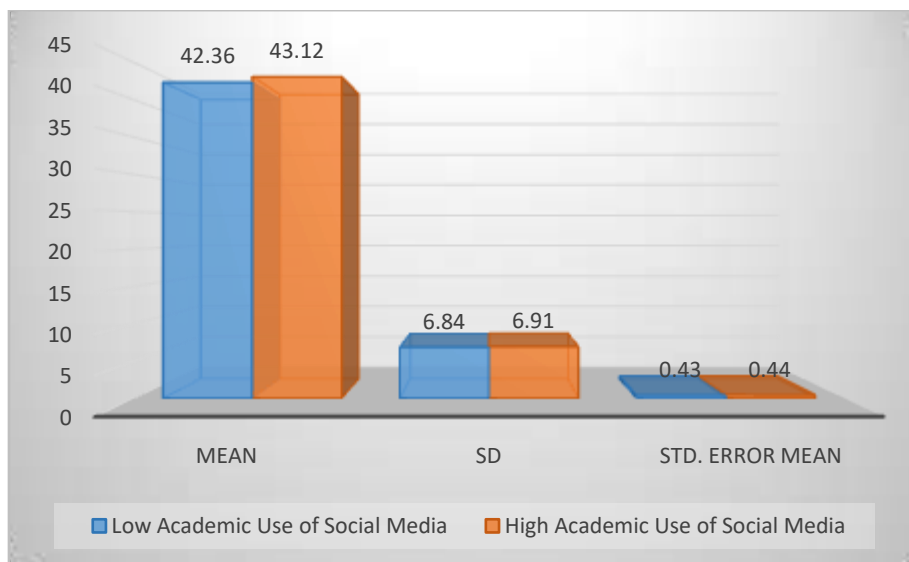


Figure 4.1: The Degree of Use of Students Utilise Social Media for Schoolwork among Students in Higher Education

Based on the data in Table 4.1, there were two groups of college students identified by the level of social media use for academic objectives. The other group made heavy use of it, whereas the first group utilised it sparingly. Among the 200 students who participated in the study on improper academic usage, the average score was 42.36, with a standard deviation of 6.84 and a standard error of 43. With a standard deviation of 6.91 and a standard error of 0.44, the 200 students in the strong academic usage group had an average score of 43.12 on the scale. We may infer that the criterion of equal variances was met since the F-value (0.482) is not statistically significant. Based on the low means, the quantity of social media used for homework by students in both groups was about equal. College students consistently and moderately utilise these platforms for academic reasons, since there doesn't seem to be much of a distinction between heavy and light academic users of social media.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in students' perceptions of social media use in higher education with respect to gender.

Table 4.2: Examining the Gender Gap in College Students' Views on Social Media Use

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	F Value	Result
Male Students	200	58.42	7.36	0.50	0.317	0.317
Female Students	200	59.08	7.21	0.43		

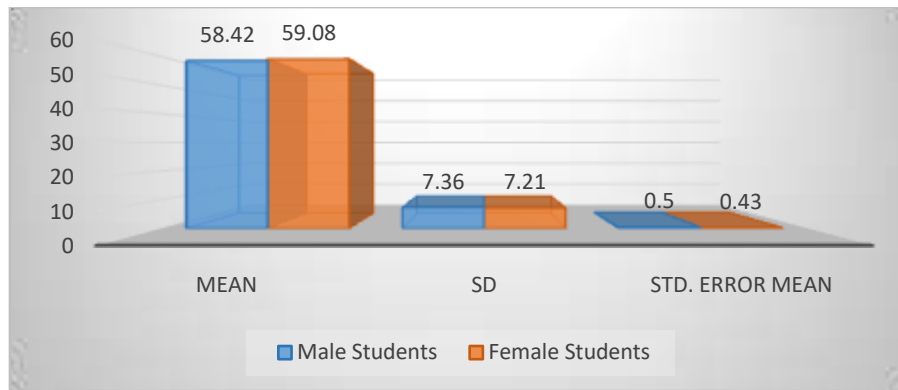


Figure 4.2: Examining the Gender Gap in College Students' Views on Social Media Use

Table 4.2 shows the results of an independent samples t-test that this study used to determine if male and female college students had different opinions on the usage of social media. An average of 200 male students took out the survey, yielding a perception score of 58.42 with a standard deviation of 7.36 and a margin of error of 0.50. Two hundred female students participated in the study, and their average score was 59.08. The results showed a standard deviation of 7.21 and a standard error of 0.43. With an estimated F value of 0.317 that was not statistically significant, the assumption of variance homogeneity was satisfied. Given the little gender gap in the average scores, it's evident that students had similar views on the role of social media at universities. It seems that gender did not play a significant role in influencing students' assessments of social media's educational usefulness, as both male and female students had similar opinions on the matter.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in students' perceptions of social media use in higher education with respect to locality of students.

Table 4.3: The Mean score of Students' Perceptions of Social Media Use in Higher Education with respect to Locality of Students

Locality	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	F Value	Result
Urban Students	220	64.50	6.80	0.42	0.527	0.527
Rural Students	180	58.30	7.05	0.46		

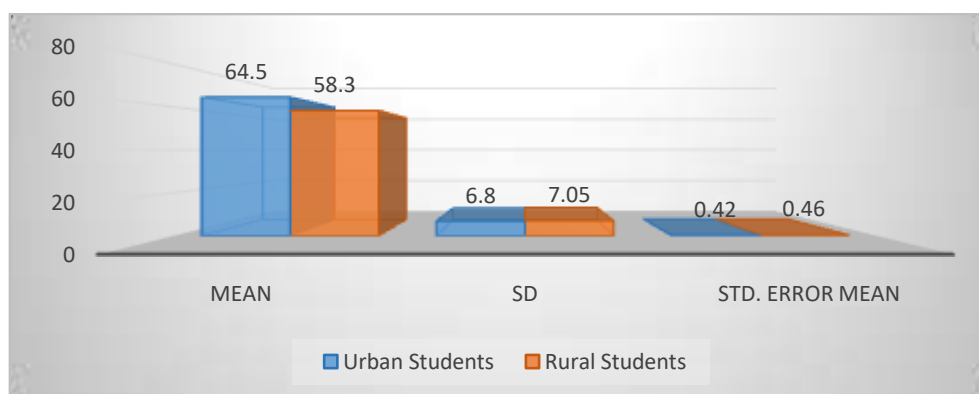


Figure 4.3: The Mean score of Students' Perceptions of Social Media Use in Higher Education with respect to Locality of Students

In Table 4.3, we can observe the average opinions about the use of social media on college campuses from various regions. With a mean score of 64.50, standard deviation of 6.80, and standard error of the mean of 0.42, the vast majority of the 220 urban students polled were optimistic about the possible advantages of social media in the classroom. Participating students from rural regions tended to have less positive views on the whole, as shown by their lower average score (58.30), standard deviation (7.05), and margin of error (0.46). There was no statistically significant difference between the two variances (F=0.527), hence we can say that they were equal. A statistically significant disparity existed between rural and urban students' mean evaluations, indicating that university social media use was more positively perceived by the former. The results highlight how much of an impact students' immediate surroundings have on shaping their worldviews; this effect may be even more noticeable in rural regions where children may have less access to resources like computers, the internet, and schools than in more metropolitan locations.

CONCLUSION

There is evidence to support the idea that college students do in fact use social media for academic objectives. In support with H_{01} assertions, the results demonstrated that there was no statistically significant difference in the views of male and female students on the use of social media while attending college. A significant disparity in the students' views of LN according to their location, however, was the cause of the rejection. It seems that gender is less influential than location when it comes to determining how students perceive and use social media. This is supported by the fact that students' favourable views towards these platforms were more common in urban areas than rural ones. The results indicate that college students' social media use is affected by variables such as location and other contextual considerations. This highlights the importance of assisting and improving internet connection in rural places.

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