



Research Article

College Students' Perception and Attitude Towards Social Media for Enhancing Learning

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ABSTRACT



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Integrating social media into education has revolutionized traditional pedagogical practices, facilitating interactive, student-centered learning environments. This study investigates the attitudes and perceptions of students regarding Facebook, YouTube, and Messenger as learning instruments. However, challenges such as distractions, misinformation, and the digital divide remain significant concerns. The study employs a descriptive research design, collecting data from 60 sociology students through structured questionnaires. Findings indicate a very positive sentiment towards social media being utilized to support learning. Facebook is primarily used for communications, interactive learning, and sharing learning materials, but less to receive immediate feedback. Messenger is viewed positively in communications, collaboration, and quick feedback, but negatively for sharing learning materials. YouTube is highly appreciated for independent learning, learning support, and acquiring educational resources, with comparatively lower enthusiasm to share content. Students tend to have high adoption of social media, particularly YouTube and Messenger, in supporting various aspects of learning.

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Introduction

The integration of digital technology into educational systems has marked a paradigm shift from traditional classroom-based learning to more dynamic, technology-driven methods. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Google, and Messenger have become pivotal tools for students, enabling collaborative engagement, content creation, and access to vast online resources. In an era where technology permeates every aspect of life, the role of social media in education has gained significant attention, especially in developing countries like Nepal, where the internet's reach and digital literacy vary considerably.

Social media platforms introduce a series of challenges while enhancing flexibility and providing opportunities for increased engagement. These include potential distractions, the spread of misinformation, and digital inequality. This study investigates how sociology students in Kathmandu, Nepal, utilize these platforms in their learning processes.

Functionalist Theory sees education as a social institution designed to contribute to the stability and functioning of society. According to Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, education serves multiple roles, including knowledge transmission, socialization, and skill development. In this context, social media plays an increasingly important role in expanding access to educational resources, facilitating communication, and fostering collaborative learning. It supports the function of education by making learning more accessible and inclusive, particularly for students in remote or underserved areas (Durkheim, 1897).


Social media platforms provide students with a space for exchanging ideas, engaging in academic discussions, and collaborating on projects, all of which contribute to the broader goal of societal stability through the dissemination of knowledge. By allowing students to access learning materials, resources, and peer networks, social media aligns with the functionalist view of education as an institution that adapts to meet the needs of society in the digital age.

Positivism, as articulated by Auguste Comte, emphasizes the use of empirical, scientific methods to study and understand social phenomena. In the context of this research, positivism informs the study's quantitative approach, using structured questionnaires and statistical analysis to assess the role of social media in education. By collecting data on student attitudes, behaviors, and usage patterns, this study adopts a data-driven methodology that provides insights into the practical implications of social media use in educational settings (Comte, 1855). Positivism also calls for objective, measurable observations, providing a comprehensive understanding of how social media impacts the learning experiences of sociology students in Kathmandu.

Constructionism, as proposed by Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget, suggests that learning is an active, social process through which students construct knowledge by interacting with their environment and peers. Social media platforms offer unique opportunities for this type of collaborative, self-directed learning. By enabling students to engage with a wide range of digital content

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and collaborate with others online, social media fosters an interactive and dynamic learning environment (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's concept of the "zone of proximal development" is particularly relevant here, as it suggests that students benefit from interacting with peers and more knowledgeable individuals. Social media provides a platform for such interactions, allowing students to seek guidance, participate in online discussions, and share resources. Through these interactions, students construct knowledge in a social context, expanding their learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom (Vygotsky, 1978).

How social media affects their engagement, knowledge acquisition, and the overall pedagogy within their academic environments. The growing presence of social media in educational settings necessitates a closer examination, particularly in countries where access to technology is still evolving. The findings of this research contribute to a better understanding of both the positive and negative impacts of social media on education, offering recommendations for maximizing its benefits in the classroom.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of the study are to describe the students' perception and attitude toward the effectiveness of social media in the educational learning process. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To assess students' perceptions and attitudes toward using Facebook for learning and the sharing of learning materials.

- To examine the relationship between students' use of YouTube and their self-directed learning practices.

- To examine the perceptions and attitudes toward the effectiveness of Messenger as a suitable platform for receiving timely feedback from peers and instructors.

By addressing these objectives, this study provides a comprehensive overview of how social media affects students' learning experiences in Nepal, particularly in the context of sociology education.

Research Methods

This study has applied a descriptive, quantitative survey design to examine social media's impact on pedagogy among Kathmandu's sociology students. The sample consists of 60 students from three colleges, selected through purposive sampling to ensure participants have substantial experience with digital learning and social media in academics. The data were collected

using a questionnaire administered to students. The questionnaire consisted of several Likert-scale items that assessed students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of Facebook, YouTube, and Messenger for various pedagogical purposes (interactive learning, general communication, collaboration, sharing learning materials, and feedback). Each item posed a statement, and the participants indicated their level of agreement using a five-point scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). Analysis of the data involved identifying the frequency distribution of each response category (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, etc.) for each item, and computing the mean score for each item. These descriptive statistics were then used to give an overview of students' attitudes toward each platform and its various uses in education.

Students' Perception and Attitudes towards Facebook

The application of social media sites in educational settings is an actively evolving field. Despite the existing problems of distractions and misuse, studies suggest that sites like Facebook are a valuable opportunity for pedagogical interaction. Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) further note that Facebook can be of value as an educational tool for application in facilitating educational interaction, e.g., for distance learners. The functionalities of the platform, like its capacity to facilitate collaborative activities and one-to-many communication across various media, facilitate communication and interaction, especially in language learning situations (Arumi et al., 2021). This is in line with evidence showing that Facebook's social features may facilitate English language learning (Chen, 2020). The ability of students to reach friends, share information, and discuss shared areas of interest encourages potentialities of informal language practice and learning (Liu & Chen, 2020). Peer-to-peer opportunities by Thao (2021) are also brought about by question-and-answer opportunities as well as open-ended discussions with Facebook, in connection to what social links dominate on the platform. These studies collectively show that, strategically employed, Facebook can be a supplementary tool for enhancing communication skills and facilitating collaborative learning. More research is needed, however, to explore effective pedagogical approaches that maximize the potential of Facebook while minimizing potential drawbacks such as distractions and information overload. There were six statements related to Facebook. The following table presents the students' attitudes towards Facebook.

Table 1 Students' Perception and Attitudes towards Facebook

S. No.	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total Value	Mean Value
1	Use of social media	25	20	10	4	1	245	4.08
2	Use of Facebook for Interactive Learning	15	25	12	5	3	224	3.73
3	Use of Facebook for only General Communication	15	25	12	5	3	224	3.73
4	For Collaborate Interaction	18	20	12	6	4	222	3.7
5	Use of Sharing Learning Materials	20	26	6	5	3	235	3.91
6	For Getting Fast Feedback from Peers and Instructors	15	13	10	12	10	191	3.18

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Note: SA- Strongly Agreed, A: Agreed, U- Undecided, D- Disagreed, SA- Strongly Disagreed.

Statement 1 discusses the use of social media, and it shows that 25 students strongly agreed, 20 agreed, 10 were undecided, 4 disagreed, and 1 strongly disagreed. This indicates that most students use social media, suggesting generally positive attitudes toward its use.

Statement 2 focuses on the use of Facebook for interactive learning. The responses show that 15 students strongly agreed, 25 agreed, 12 were undecided, 5 disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed. This suggests that Facebook is commonly used for interactive learning, with a positive attitude from the majority of students.

Statement 3 addresses using Facebook for general communication. Here, 25 students strongly agreed, 20 agreed, 6 were undecided, 6 disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed. This indicates that Facebook is primarily used for communication, and students generally have a positive view of this usage.

Statement 4 examines using Facebook to facilitate collaboration between students and teachers for learning. The results show that 18 students strongly agreed, 20 agreed, 12 were undecided, 6 disagreed, and 4 strongly disagreed. This suggests that Facebook is seen as a tool for collaboration in learning, and students have a positive attitude toward it.

Statement 5 involves using Facebook to share learning materials. In this case, 20 students strongly agreed, 26 agreed, 6 were undecided, 5 disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed. This indicates that Facebook is widely used for sharing educational content, and many students have a positive attitude toward this use.

Statement 6 focuses on using Facebook to receive fast feedback from peers and instructors. The responses show that 15 students strongly agreed, 13 agreed, 10 were Undecided, 12 disagreed, and 10 strongly disagreed. This indicates that most students do not use Facebook for quick feedback, with a somewhat neutral to positive attitude toward this statement, as indicated by a mean value of 3.1. The data suggests a strong acceptance of Facebook for general communication and sharing learning materials (means above 3.7). The relatively high mean for interactive learning (3.73) also indicates its potential in this area. However, the lower mean for receiving quick feedback (3.18) suggests that students do not perceive Facebook as an ideal platform for this purpose. This could be due to several factors, including the platform's design, the potential for information overload, or the lack of dedicated features for immediate feedback exchange.

Students' Perception and Attitudes towards YouTube

The use of technology, particularly YouTube, in education has gained increased attention from researchers. [Moghavvemi et al.](#)

(2018) examined the multifaceted uses of YouTube, acknowledging its role in product inquiry, learning by academics, accessing information, and entertainment. They emphasized that even though YouTube has tremendous educational potential, like providing solutions to academic problems for a big population of people, its overuse has also had adverse impacts on the academic and social life of students.

Similarly, Rice, Cullen, & Davis (2011) and Raja & Nagasubramani (2018) examined the positive and negative impacts of technology in learning environments. Their research showed that in their appropriate applications, technology devices such as PowerPoint presentations, digital cameras, and computers can greatly enhance the learning process. These tools facilitate a better understanding of lessons as well as propel educational goals towards realization. Further, they added that interactive and visual-based materials enhance the learner's active participation and involvement in the learning process.

Supplementing the instructional value of YouTube, [Portugal et al. \(2018\)](#) added learner interest as essential in establishing YouTube as a successful learning device. They theorized that YouTube stands out from other educational websites due to its versatility, offering students and educators control over curriculum and content. This versatility makes YouTube a unique and attractive resource for customized learning experiences. [Maziriri et al. \(2020\)](#) examined students' attitudes towards the use of YouTube as a learning platform, in this case through video tutorials. They concluded that YouTube was received positively in formal educational settings, with students having positive attitudes towards its use. Among the key findings was the strong relationship between students' attitudes and their behavioral intentions to use YouTube for learning. This suggests that YouTube has immense potential as an effective learning tool, especially at the tertiary level, where independent learning and interaction are of utmost importance. The encouraging reception underscores YouTube's growing role in supporting student-centered learning and augmenting academic experiences. [Kay \(2012\)](#) emphasized the multifaceted role of videos in education, such as their ability to develop positive attitudes, assist in managing learning, and improve the reading habits and academic performance of students. Videos, according to Kay, are great tools for improving engagement and study habits. However, he also determined several drawbacks of using them in educational environments. These include reduced classroom engagement, a tendency to utilize traditional or less interactive teaching methods, and the prevalence of technical issues that could interfere with the learning process. There were five statements related to YouTube. The following table presents the students' attitudes towards YouTube.

Table No. 2: Students' Attitudes towards YouTube

S. No.	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total Value	Mean Value
7	Use of You Tube	26	19	6	5	4	288	3.96
8	Used You Tube for Self-Learning	25	15	10	5	5	230	3.83
9	For Collaborate Interaction	25	20	6	6	3	258	4.3
10	Use You Tube for Sharing Audio and Visual materials	20	15	19	3	3	236	3.7
11	For Getting Learning Materials Only	24	20	7	5	4	235	3.91

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Note: SA- Strongly Agreed, A: Agreed, U- Undecided, D- Disagreed, SA- Strongly Disagreed.

Statement 7 addresses the use of YouTube for learning. According to the responses, 26 students strongly agreed, 19 agreed, 6 were undecided, 5 disagreed, and 4 strongly disagreed.

This shows that most students use YouTube for educational purposes, indicating a positive attitude toward its use in learning.

Statement 8 focuses on using YouTube for self-directed learning. The results were as follows: 25 students strongly agreed, 15 agreed, 10 were undecided, 5 disagreed, and 5 strongly disagreed. This suggests that a majority of students use YouTube for self-learning, reflecting a favorable attitude toward utilizing YouTube for this purpose.

Statement 9 is about whether YouTube helps make learning easier and more effective. In this case, 25 students strongly agreed, 20 agreed, 6 were undecided, 6 disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed. This indicates that most students believe YouTube makes learning more accessible and effective, with many students showing positive views toward its impact on learning.

Statement 10 discusses using YouTube to share audio and video materials for educational purposes. Here, 20 students strongly agreed, 15 agreed, 19 were undecided, 3 disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed. The results suggest that YouTube is commonly used for sharing educational multimedia content, with a generally positive attitude among students towards this function.

Statement 11 addresses using YouTube to access learning materials. The data shows that 24 students strongly agreed, 20 agreed, 7 were undecided, 5 disagreed, and 4 strongly disagreed. This indicates that most students use YouTube to find learning materials easily, suggesting a positive attitude toward using the platform for this purpose. The results indicate a highly positive attitude toward YouTube's use for learning, self-learning, and

accessing learning materials (means above 3.8). The relatively high mean for collaborative interaction (4.3) suggests its potential for group learning activities. The relatively lower mean for sharing audio and visual materials (3.7) may reflect the platform's limitations in facilitating controlled sharing within educational settings.

Students' Attitudes towards Messenger

Fathy et al. (2015) identified the effectiveness of WhatsApp Messenger as a learning tool, particularly in developing collaborative writing skills among learners. Through the practice of short writing exercises through text, where learners write a sentence or two and turn-by-turn complete each other's work through a group chat. Learners are actively engaged and motivated to engage with each other. Not only is writing skill enhanced, but the learning process is as well. Also, the use of WhatsApp as an educational platform is beneficial for the involvement of the students through the addition of an available and well-known platform within the learning environment. Supporting this statement, Mbukusa (2018) agreed that mobile messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, when integrated into instruction, match the needs of contemporary learning through the application of internet-based instruments to enhance students' experiences. There were six statements related to Messenger. The following table presents the students' attitudes towards Messenger.

Table No. 3: Students' Attitudes towards Messenger

S. No.	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total Value	Mean Value
12	Use Messenger for Interactive Learning	24	20	7	5	4	235	3.91
13	Use Messenger for only General Communication	20	19	16	4	1	233	3.88
14	For Collaborative Interaction	20	16	16	5	3	225	3.75
15	For Sharing Learning Materials	15	18	10	9	8	203	3.38
16	For Getting Fast Feedback from Peers and Instructors	20	21	10	4	5	312	5.2

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Statement 12 addresses the use of Messenger for interactive learning. The responses were as follows: 24 students strongly agreed, 20 agreed, 7 were undecided, 5 disagreed, and 4 strongly disagreed. This suggests that most students use Messenger for interactive learning and have a positive attitude toward this practice.

Statement 13 focuses on the use of Messenger for general communication. The results showed that 20 students strongly agreed, 19 agreed, 16 were undecided, 4 disagreed, and 1 strongly disagreed. This indicates that Messenger is primarily used by most students for general communication, with a positive attitude toward this statement.

Statement 14 discusses using Messenger to facilitate collaboration between students and teachers. In this case, 20 students strongly agreed, 16 agreed, 16 were undecided, 5 disagreed, and 3 strongly disagreed. The majority of students use Messenger to collaborate, suggesting a positive attitude toward this function.

Statement 15 addresses the use of Messenger for sharing learning materials. Here, 15 students strongly agreed, 18 agreed, 10 were undecided, 9 disagreed, and 8 strongly disagreed. This shows that most students do not use Messenger to share learning materials, indicating a negative attitude toward this idea.

Statement 16 highlights the use of Messenger for receiving fast feedback from peers and instructors. The responses were as follows: 20 students strongly agreed, 21 agreed, 10 were undecided, 4 disagreed, and 5 strongly disagreed. This suggests that most students use Messenger to receive quick feedback, reflecting a positive attitude toward this statement. Students demonstrated a positive attitude toward using Messenger for general communication and interactive learning (means above 3.8). Its use for collaborative interaction also received a positive response (3.75). However, the significantly lower mean for sharing learning materials (3.38) indicates a less favorable perception of Messenger for this purpose. Conversely, the high mean for receiving quick feedback (5.2) suggests that students find Messenger particularly useful for this specific learning activity. This could be attributed to its real-time communication features and ease of direct messaging.

Popularity of social media in Education

Survey results show that social media is widely used among sociology students in Kathmandu for academic purposes. Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Google, and Messenger are integral to students' learning experiences. YouTube is particularly popular for self-learning, as students use it to watch educational videos, clarify concepts, and explore supplementary material. Facebook and Messenger are commonly used for peer discussions,

group collaborations, and sharing study materials. It shows that the overall positive attitudes towards utilizing Facebook and YouTube to support a variety of learning tasks, including interactive learning, cooperative work, and sharing learning resources. Scores ranging from 3.7 to 4.08 on most Facebook and YouTube statements indicated agreement. However, the use of these sites for instant peer and instructor feedback was more inconsistent (Facebook mean = 3.18). While Messenger use was also prevalent for communication and collaboration, its use in sharing learning content was less positively rated (mean = 3.38). In contrast, instant feedback use of Messenger had very positive attitudes (mean = 5.2). The findings show that while social networking sites are adopted for a variety of educational endeavors, their influence on some learning tasks is not as broad. Further research would be needed to explore the intricacies of integrating social media into schools and optimizing their pedagogical applications. Google is primarily used for research, with students relying on it for instant access to a vast array of academic resources.

The benefits of social media in education are clear. Students reported that social media enhances interactive learning by providing multimedia content that supports different learning styles. Social media also offers flexibility, allowing students to learn at their own pace and revisit materials as needed. Additionally, digital collaboration through social media encourages engagement and fosters a sense of community among students.

Despite its benefits, social media also introduces significant challenges. One major issue is digital distraction, with 40% of students admitting to spending excessive time on non-academic content. Misinformation is another concern, as students struggle to identify credible sources of information amidst a sea of unreliable content. Furthermore, the digital divide remains a significant issue, with underprivileged students facing limited access to the internet and digital resources, hindering their ability to fully participate in digital learning.

Conclusion

This study affirms that social media plays a crucial role in modern pedagogy, offering a variety of benefits, such as interactive learning, digital collaboration, and expanded access to resources. However, its effectiveness in education depends on institutional regulation, student responsibility, and access to digital resources. While social media presents opportunities for enhancing educational outcomes, it also introduces risks such as distractions, misinformation, and unequal access to technology. This study provides preliminary results with regards to the attitudes and perceptions of students toward using Facebook, YouTube, and Messenger as a learning tool. The evidence shows that each website has its strengths and limitations in facilitating learning activities. Facebook and YouTube are found to be best for sharing resources and communication, whereas Messenger excels in facilitating real-time feedback and interaction. However, the limitations of the study, in particular the lack of inferential statistics and demographic data, restrict the generalizability of the findings. More stringent methodologies, including the use of inferential statistics and demographic controls, need to be employed by subsequent research to make more definitive conclusions and to examine the determinants of students' preference for different social media sites in educational contexts. Qualitative research can also provide insight into the determinants of students' attitudes and preferences.

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