

Online Teaching Excellence: A Case Study of EMC Institute Kishtwar during COVID-19 Lockdown

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Abstract: *The increased trend of online teaching among students and teachers has created a new learning culture by providing innovative ways for teachers to enable learners to engage actively in different learning activities. This paper investigates the effect and potential use of the social media to support faculty in implementing a social constructivist approach to facilitate student-centered learning and to improve problems arising from student engagement in view of covid-19 lockdown. 140 students from E masters Coaching Institute Kishtwar in J & K, enrolled in 11th and 12th Class, were encouraged to participate in a number of formative questionnaires through online mode. A mixed-methods case study approach was followed. The quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed and triangulated alongside the qualitative analysis. The results show that the social media exercise has a very valuable role in facilitating a constructive approach by teachers. A majority of students showed a positive attitude to online learning, being provided with more opportunities to engage personally, communicate and work collaboratively, helping them to construct their own learning and develop 21st century skills for life and learning through social interaction.*

Keywords: Digital Education, Internet teaching, Online Class, Social Networking

1. Introduction

Twenty-first-century learners appear to differ from previous generations in expectations and learning styles. To meet their learning needs, there are many changes in teaching and learning methods to be assimilated and many opportunities to be explored and embraced. In response to this demand, higher education (HE) institutions in India and internationally are challenged to embrace technology-enabled pedagogical innovation. This development requires significant changes to teaching and learning practices that will empower digital native learners to acquire skills in complex problem-solving, critically reflexive analytical thinking and succinct communication, in appropriately technology-assisted contexts [1]. More recently, the emerging web technologies (blogs, twitter, podcasts, wikis, social network sites (SNSs), virtual worlds, video sharing and photo sharing) have evolved to show much promise of enhanced teaching and learning practices [2-4]. Since SNSs, especially Facebook and whatsapp have become an integral part of the daily life of students as well as of faculty. [5-7]. Educational institutions are using emerging technologies to create learning environments to stimulate their students and prepare them for lifelong learning. Social media has transformed and impacted on communication, learning, research and education in general. Among the vast variety of online tools which are available for communication, social networking sites (SNS) have become the most modern and attractive tools for connecting people throughout the world [8].

E-learning has recently grown rapidly, in response to Covid-19 Lockdown all over the country where almost all stakeholders are pursuing their vision to improve the quality of education through more learner centered and technology-enhanced teaching and learning practices. Most of the universities, the higher educational institutions as well as the so called best schools have introduced e-learning to supplement face-to-face instruction and created its own

platform to manage students' learning material and other collaborative activities [9,10].

These days a good number of faculty members are leaning towards a flexible framework, particularly Zoom, Google, Facebook and Whatsapp platforms, as the potential to foster a radical and transformational shift in teaching and learning towards a learner-centred approach [11,12]. An interesting aspect of these tools is that, it is not limited to desktop or laptop computers but could be accessed through mobile applications and smart phones making it very accessible and easy to use. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in this regard has gained extra momentum, as they have quickly become a pervasive way for people to connect and interact online all over the world. The creation of Social Networking Sites is a phenomenal technological evolution in the world of Web applications. These sites are widely used throughout the world connecting millions of people simultaneously. Social networking sites (SNSs) or social media provide the virtual space for people to communicate and get together, hence it is arguably one of the most appropriate avenues for students to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

Various studies have revealed that due to the increased popularity of SNSs, scholars are questioning whether grades of students are being affected by how much time is being spent on these sites[13]. Essentially, the environment and other factors may affect the way a student views learning and studying. Truly SNSs are one of the factors that can affect student's time, insight, and outlook about learning and studying. With the prevalence of SNSs, various studies validated that students' study time and their academic performance could be affected [14,15]. Moreover, the study also shows that users who spend more time on SNSs like Facebook spend less time in studying [16,17]. In recent times social media have been a major stay in the minds of students and the world at large thereby causing a lot of drastic measure by students, teacher and even educational administrators at large. Therefore this study intends to

Volume 10 Issue 5, May 2021

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examine the use of social media and impacts on student's academic life, if it helps improve their academic performance or otherwise, particularly at the tender age taking EMC Kishtwar as an example.

1.1 Objectives

The general purpose of this study is to identify the various uses of the Social Media by students and consequently ascertain its impacts on the academic learning and performance on students, specifically, the level of collaboration between them while using the social media in the module in and out of classroom. The study sought to specifically answer the following objectives;

- To identify the commonly used social media sites
- Evaluate the rationale for using these SNS in an academic context.
- Evaluate the potential of the social network in academia and how it affects student learning.
- Examine the attitudes of students of the use of SNS for teaching and learning
- To ascertain SNSs influence on student's study time and academic learning
- To determine the relationship between the usage of social media and student academic performance
- Measure the level of engagement and collaborations between students, tutors, and instructor in and out of the classroom while using Facebook/whatsapp.

2. Methodology

In order to mitigate this challenge, the instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire. It was titled Social Media Usage and Impacts on Academic Learning/Performance of students. The questionnaire was divided into two broad parts: Section A and Section B. Section A is on demographics of the respondents, while Section B was divided into clusters to address each research objective. Special precautionary measures were taken regarding privacy and security of students' information. Only required and most relevant information has been gathered and the rest has been filtered.

To ascertain the quantitative as well as qualitative research standard, the study used a questionnaire with semi structured questions and opinion statements to collect data. The target participants of this study include the students enrolled in Class 11th and 12th at E – Masters Coaching Institute Kishtwar. The experimental group comprised 140 students comprising of both male and female. An initial questionnaire was given to the whole class of 220 students before the start of the experiment to find out if they owned mobile devices and facebook accounts/whatsapp accounts. Those who did not have smart phones were left out for the successive experiments and those who were having smart phones but were without accounts were encouraged to open them. After the initial questioning the whatsapp was used to

disseminate information being the most common media used by the students, hence same was chosen for the study by creating a whatsapp group of the students. During the experimental period, daily activities on the whatsapp group were monitored to find out the extent of their use for engagement. The observations were carried out for 90 days of teaching after that; an evaluation questionnaire was used to collect data from the students. The questionnaire sought information about participant's age and gender; student perceptions on the use of Facebook/whatsapp and other social networking sites and its impact on their engagement and education. For data analysis closed questions and opinion statements were aggregated into frequency tables for interpretation.

2.1 Data Collection

The data collected from the questionnaire was presented in various sections as under.

2.2 Participant Gender and Age and Class

A total of 140 Students from class 11th and 12th in E-Masters Coaching Institute Kishtwar were chosen as research subject as indicated in the Table 1 below.

The data shows that 65 (46.43%) of the respondents were from the 11th Class of which 24 (36.92%) were females and 41 (63.08%) were males, 75 (53.57%) of the respondents were from the 12th class, of which 32 (42.67%) were male and 43 (57.33) female. Out of total respondents 52.14% were Male, 47.86 Female, 17.86% in the age group of 15 whereas 40% and 42.14% were in the age group of 16 and 17 years respectively showing that majority of the students were of the age group of 16 and 17

Table 1: Students under study

Class	No of respondents	Sex		Age group of Participants		
		Male	Female	15Y	16Y	17Y
11 th	65	41	24	25	32	08
12 th	75	32	43	00	24	51
Total	140	73	67	25	56	59

Social Media sites used by Students

The Table-2 below shows that 119(85%) of the students do use Facebook while 21(15%) of the respondents do not. 9(6.43%) of the students use Twitter, while 131(93.57%) of the respondents do not. All 140(100%) of the respondents use YouTube and Whatsapp. Only 2(1.43%) of the students do use of LinkedIn, while 138(98.57%) of the respondents do not. 38(27.14%) of the students make use of Instagram, and 102(72.86%) do not use it. 13(9.29%) of the students use Pinterest, while 127(90.7%) of the respondents do not. 43(30.71%) of the students do use Snapchat, while 97(69.29%) of the respondents do not. 14(10%) of the students mentioned use of other social media sites, like Research Gate, Google Plus, Blogs, etc., however 126(90%) of the respondents left it blank.

Table 2: Social media sites used by undergraduates

Response	FACEBOOK	TWITTER	YOUTUBE	WHATSAPP	LINKEDIN
Yes	119(85%)	9(6.43%)	140(100%)	140(100%)	2(1.43%)
No	21(15%)	131(93.57%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	138(98.57%)
Total	140(100%)	140(100%)	140(100%)	140(100%)	140(100%)
Response	INSTAGRAM	PINTEREST	SNAPCHAT	OTHERS	XXX
Yes	38(27.14%)	13(9.29%)	43(30.71%)	14(10%)	
No	102(72.86%)	127(90.71%)	97(69.29%)	126(90.6%)	
Total	140 (100%)	140 (100%)	140 (100%)	140(100%)	

Reasons for using the social media

The Table-3 below in response to the research survey shows that 80(57.15%) of the students strongly agree to using the social media “to keep in touch with family, friends and teachers”, 35(25%) of the students agree, 12(8.57%) remained undecided, 9(6.42%) disagree, and 4(2.86%) strongly disagree to using the social media to keep in touch with family, friends and teachers. The study further shows that 52(37.14%) of the students strongly agree to using the social media “to keep up with the trending issues”, 75(53.57%) of the students agree, 9(6.44%) remained undecided, 3(2.14%) disagree, and 1(0.71%) strongly disagree to using the social media to keep up with the trending issues/happenings. Using social media “to improve my social skills” 32(22.86%) of the students strongly agree, 75(53.57%) of the students agree, 23(16.43%) of the students remained undecided, 8(5.71%) of the students disagree, while 2(1.43%) strongly disagree. Using social media “to eliminate boredom” 74(52.86%) of the students strongly agree, 50(35.71%) of the students agree, 13(9.29%) remained undecided, 2(1.43%) of the students disagree, and 1(0.71%) strongly disagree to using the social media to eliminate boredom.

Using social media “to study faster (using different sites) and solve assignments” 65(46.43%) of the students strongly agree, 62(44.29%) of the students agree, 8(5.71%) remained undecided, 3(2.14%) of the students disagree and 2(1.43%) strongly disagree to using the social media to study faster (using different sites) and solve assignments” Using social media “to increase my knowledge” 92(65.71%) of the students strongly agree, 45(52.15%) of the students agree,

2(1.43%) of the students disagree, and 1(0.71%) strongly disagree to using the social media to increase my knowledge.

Study further shows that 43((30.72%)of the respondents strongly agree to using the SNSs for “instant messaging, whatever I am online”, 70(50%) of the respondents agree, 10(7.14%) remained undecided, 10(7.14%) disagree, 7(5%) strongly disagree. 22(15.71%) of the respondents strongly agree to using SNSs for “online gaming and trivia, whenever I get the opportunity”, 45(32.14%) agree, 18(12.86%) remained undecided, 33(23.57%) disagree and 22(15.71%) strongly disagree. 24(17.14%) strongly agree to “visit social networks to make new friends”, 57(40.72%) agree, 26(18.57%) remained undecided, 12(8.57%) disagree and 21(15%) strongly disagree.

68(48.57%) strongly agree to using the SNSs “to collaborate with other students, sharing study materials, and engaging discourse, 54(38.57%) agree, 11(7.86%) remained undecided and 7(5%) disagree. 38(27.14%) strongly agree to using the SNSs to make discuss on college work like assignments, projects, presentations, etc”, 74(52.86%) agree, 10(7.14%) remained undecided, 17(12.15%) disagree and (0.71%) strongly disagree. 64(45.71%) of the respondents strongly agree to using the SNSs to “stay connected with my lecturers, to discuss class-related issues and also get important announcements from them, 53(37.86%) agree, 12(8.57%) remained undecided, 7(5%) disagree and 4(2.86%) strongly disagree.

Table 3: Reasons for using the social media

Reasons for using the social media	strongly agree	Agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree	
To keep in touch with family, friends/teachers	80 (57.15%)	35 (25%)	12 (8.57%)	9 (6.42%)	4 (2.86%)	140 (100%)
To keep up with trending issues/happenings	52 (37.14%)	75 (53.57%)	9 (6.44%)	3 (2.14%)	1 (0.71%)	140 (100%)
To improve my social skills	32 (22.86%)	75 (53.57%)	23 (16.43%)	8 (5.71%)	2 (1.43%)	140 (100%)
To eliminate boredom	74 (52.86%)	50 (35.71%)	13 (9.29%)	2 (1.43%)	1 (0.71%)	140 (100%)
To study faster (using diff sites) and solve assignments	65 (46.43%)	62 (44.29%)	8 (5.71%)	3 (2.14%)	2 (1.43%)	140 (100%)
To increase knowledge	92 (65.71%)	45 (32.15%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.43%)	1 (0.71%)	140 (100%)
Instant messaging, whenever I am online	43 (30.72%)	70 (50%)	10 (7.14%)	10 (7.14%)	7 (5.0%)	140 (100%)
Online gaming and trivia, whenever I get the opportunity	22 (15.71%)	45 (32.14%)	18 (12.86%)	33 (23.57%)	22 (15.71%)	140 (100%)
visit social networks to make new friends	24 (17.14%)	57 (40.72%)	26 (18.57%)	12 (8.57%)	21 (15%)	140 (100%)
collaborate with other students, sharing study materials, and	68	54	11	7	-----	140

engaging discourse	(48.57%)	(38.57%)	(7.86%)	(5%)		(100%)
make discuss on college work like assignments, projects, presentations, etc	38 (27.14%)	74 (52.86%)	10 (7.14%)	17 (12.15%)	1 (0.71%)	140 (100%)
stay connected with my Teachers, to discuss class related issues and also get important announcements from them	64 (45.71%)	53 (37.86%)	12 (8.57%)	7 (5%)	4 (2.86%)	140 (100%)

Time Spent online on the social media daily:

The Table-4 below shows in response to the survey the time spent by students online on a daily basis. 13(9.29%) of the respondents spent one two hours daily, 65(46.43%) of the respondents spent two five hours daily, 42(30%) of the respondents spent five eight hours daily, 20(14.29%) of the respondents remain more than eight hours online daily.

Table 4: Time spent Online daily

One Two hours	Two Five hours	Five Eight hours	Always Online	Total
13 (9.28%)	65 (46.43%)	42 (30%)	20 (14.29%)	140 (100%)

Impact of Social Media on Academic learning

Table-5 shows the response of students to the relationship between social media and impact on academic performance. 85(60.71%) agree that social networking sites help to improve my grades, 40(28.57%) remained undecided and 15(10.72%) disagree. The use of social networking sites negatively affect my academic performance, 18(12.86%) agree, 22(15.71%) remained undecided, and 100(71.43%) disagree. To using the social media sites positively affect my academic performance, 98(70%) agree, 24(17.14%) remained undecided and 18(12.86%) disagree.

Table 5: Social media Impact on academic learning

Social media usage and students' academic performance	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Social networking sites help to improve my grades	85 (60.71%)	40 (28.57%)	15 (10.72%)
Use of social networking sites negatively affect my academic performance	18 (12.86%)	22 (15.71%)	100 (71.43%)
Using the social media sites positively affect my academic performance	98 (70%)	24 (17.14%)	18 (12.86%)

3. Data Analysis

The study found out that students adequately use the social media very well and the students are well-informed users of social media sites like Whatsapp, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat, etc, as indicative in Table-2 where it is reported that 100% of the respondents used the Whatsapp messenger and Youtube, 85% of the respondents used the Facebook, 38% used the Instagram. The study further found out that the students adhered to the social network for one (or all) of the following reasons: to keep up with trending issues, improve on social skills, to study faster and solve assignments, to keep in touch with friends and family, eliminate boredom, and to increase knowledge, frequent use for instant messaging and online gaming as indicated in Table-3. The studies also discovered that they make use of the social media for academic purposes like collaborating with other students, sharing study materials, and engaging discourse with teachers on class-related issues. According

to the findings of the study indicated in Table-4 88.73% of the respondents spent two eight hours online on a daily basis. With advancement in communication technology, staying online is seemingly the part of every man as there is an incessant exchange of information and ideas, emailing, teleconferencing, instant text messaging (chatting), and other avenues.

The study also ascertained as indicated in Table-5 the influences social networking sites have on the student study time and academic learning. According to the response from the students, 70% believed SNSs are beneficial for educational work/career development, elevation of social status and respect amongst peers, keep looped and updated on new trends in all sphere of learning in real-time, facilitate learning and skills development outside formal learning environment and enhanced interactions with teachers and increased confidence in educational activities. The study ascertained that social media has not too much negative influences on the students.

4. Conclusion

In response to the data as analyzed above, it is evident that social media played a central role in the academic learning and performance of the students. The students mostly used social media for communicating between their friends and teachers for educational purpose. The fact that social media is a part of them especially having been born in this era of emerging technology, most felt that they could not do without it. They depended on it for various positive things such as study and contacts with friends and getting on the loop of what was happening either in their circles, nationally or internationally.

To conclude with it is recommended that the students need to be trained on better usage of the social media as a tool that it is to serve their all-round growth, also to minimize time wastage on frivolities (chatting, cyber stalking, etc.) and other irrelevant engagements that are not of major importance in their academic lives. Since it is apparent that social media technologies have become intrinsic part of the students' lives, academic Institutions of higher learning should consider incorporating the use of social media technologies (SMTs) into the learning experience of the students as resources to support the educational communications between student and faculties. Moreover, a lot of benefits abound in the use of social media networks such as sharing information and ideas, improving reading and writing skills, developing sense of belonging, job link, etc.

The institutions should enlighten students on the positive and negative effects of social networking sites as media of interaction on students' academic learning and performance. Nevertheless, the students should be opened through the course of orientation to the benefits of using the social media sites and technologies for the sake of their self-

development. Lastly, the students who are heavy users, should moderate the use of the social media sites to avoid addiction and create a balance between their offline and online lives while using the sites.

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