



THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' ACADEMICS AFTER COVID- 19

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Abstract : The features and possibilities of online social media have been attracting users after the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous research has found that college students utilize social media more regularly than other groups during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The current study focuses on the positive role of social media on academics after the onset of COVID-19. The study was conducted with a sample size of 200 postgraduate students which include 100 males and 100 females from urban Bangalore. A self-constructed questionnaire with 20 items scale was administered to the sample population and scores were interpreted and results were compared. The collected data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Jamovi. Results show that students use social media positively in academic learning. Findings show that female participants are having more social media usage than male participants for academics and second-year students are using social media more frequently than first-year students for academic purposes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media plays a significant role in the higher academic sectors in that it is more than just a means of searching for information. Technology has changed the way people collaborate and has resulted in the creation of an open social platform such as social media, which allows the dwellers of our planet to communicate with one another, transforming the globe into a global village (Raymond Owusu Boateng & Afua Amankwaa, 2016). Interconnectivity is a significant feature of social media. Like ways, it helps to create a chain of people for educational interactions or commercial purposes, to make new friends, or to share relevant information. Studies show that university students are the common category of people who use social media the most (Azizi et al., 2019). Gradually the use of the internet as a reaching machine overlaps with the use of social media also called social networking sites. The emergence of social media cut down the process because they do not call for advanced internet knowledge or experience and are made up of a wide collection of different formats and topics. This means that anyone can connect through social media with basic knowledge. Social media has thrown down the boundaries and provided decentralized communication channels, allowing everyone, including individuals in repressive nations, to have a voice and engage in a democratic manner (Amedie, 2015).

The usage of social media has rapidly increased in recent years. Social networking sites are not only utilized by working people but there is also a significant growth in the use of social media by students or the education society. Social networking has been discovered to be an efficient academic tool for increasing students' CGPA Boahene et al. (2019). During the outbreak of Covid-19, many educational institutions were compelled to change their regular education system into an online mood. According to Khanra et al. (2021), the emergence of COVID-19 has drastically altered the lives of college students. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, What's App, Instagram, Google Plus, YouTube, etc. are being used among students for communication as well as entertainment. Social media are mostly used by students to communicate and exchange ideas with lecturers specifically in western contexts (Sudha and Kavitha, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic has increasingly spread the positive use of social media to all parts of the world. Education institutions were compelled to integrate social media into their education system for increasing academic productivity. Lockdown caused college students to use social media for educational purposes even though the original intended use of social media was entertainment (Liu et al., 2021).

University students are more prone to establishing social media use than others due to their intensive use of and minimal external control over their Internet use, substantial spare time, and flexible schedules (Turel and Qahri-Saremi, 2016). The reason behind the rapid development in social media usage among teenagers and college and university students is for adopting social media applications to obtain worldwide access (Habeb Adil et al., 2020). Students are more dependent on data and knowledge readily available on social media and the internet. This is why, in most cases, students' learning skills and research capacities are improving, since their contact with these sites helps them to improve their academic performance.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study included 200 postgraduate students from Bangalore which has 100 male and 100 female participants. A self-constructed questionnaire with 20 items scale was used to collect the data across 3 months. Participants gave their permission before taking the survey. All the participants included in the survey were full-time college-going students all the answers were given based on self-experience and honesty. The language used in the questionnaire was ordinary English and the questionnaire was validated. The questionnaire was shared with random people and unappropriated responses were excluded from the data. The background of the study includes the purpose and objectives of the study of informed to the participants prior to the administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to the participants via a google form. Confidentiality was followed in all the stages of the research. The collected data was analyzed using Microsoft excel and Jamovi.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 200 students replied to the survey, and they were all utilizing social media for educational purposes. The statistics included equal participation of men and women. The first question was designed to ascertain if the person used social media to overcome academic challenges. Almost every one of the 200 participants uses social media to handle academic challenges (Figure 1). There is no significant distinction between male and female participants. A study conducted by Geoffrey S. Sepillo (2019) found that There is no substantial difference in social media usage between female and male students in terms of social networking, creativity, and production, enjoyment and leisure, information seeking, and learning.

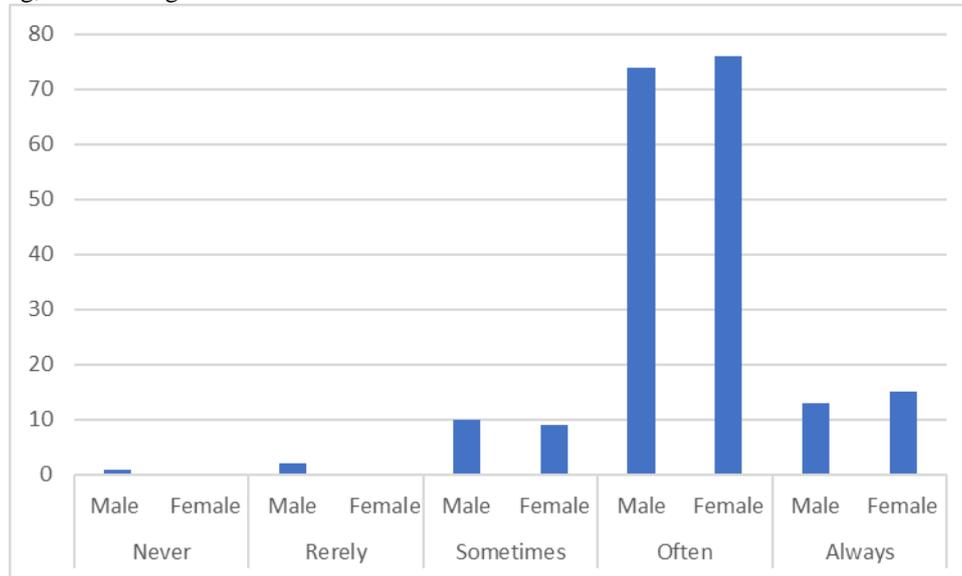


Figure 1- I use social media to solve my academic problems

The study focused to gather data about the usage of social media in research. Almost every participant undertakes their study using social media. When it comes to research, females have more knowledge of how to use social media. According to research done by Muscanell and Guadagno (2012) found that females utilize social media for educational reasons more than males. No participants stated that they do not conduct research utilizing social media.

The following question is mostly concerned with the usage of social media in online meetings. Almost everyone uses social media for online academic group discussions. After the onset of COVID-19, most meetings and other programmes were converted to an online format for more convenience and security. COVID-19 has demonstrated an excellent method of communication and utilisation of all social media resources that will assist students in dealing with any challenges. The researcher asked the participants how much they utilise social media to prepare for examinations. Students can meet online mode at any time to prepare for examinations. The research points to understand how students use social media for collaborative learning. 78% of the participants pointed out that they use social media as a platform for collaborative learning and they get more benefits out of it. Only one male participant said that he is not using social media for collaborative learning. Boys are more likely to use social media for conversation and connection, whilst girls are more likely to use social networking sites for educational purposes (Ali et al., 2021). All others one or other way use social media to connect with each other and learn together.

There was a question asked to the participants to figure out whether the participants use social media to seek help from the teachers. According to the data, female students seek more help from teachers rather than male students. But it shows that most of the participants use social media to seek help from the teachers. 33% of the participants sometimes only use social media to seek help from the teachers. Medical educators are being pushed to develop rules for utilising social media for educational purposes in order to improve students' academic performance (Alnjadat et al., 2019). The next question was asked to understand how students use social media platforms to express their ideas. 90 % of people regularly use social media to express their ideas. The study attempted to comprehend how students achieve better results if social media is integrated into lessons. 97% of participants noted that the integration of social media will help them to get better results (Figure 2).

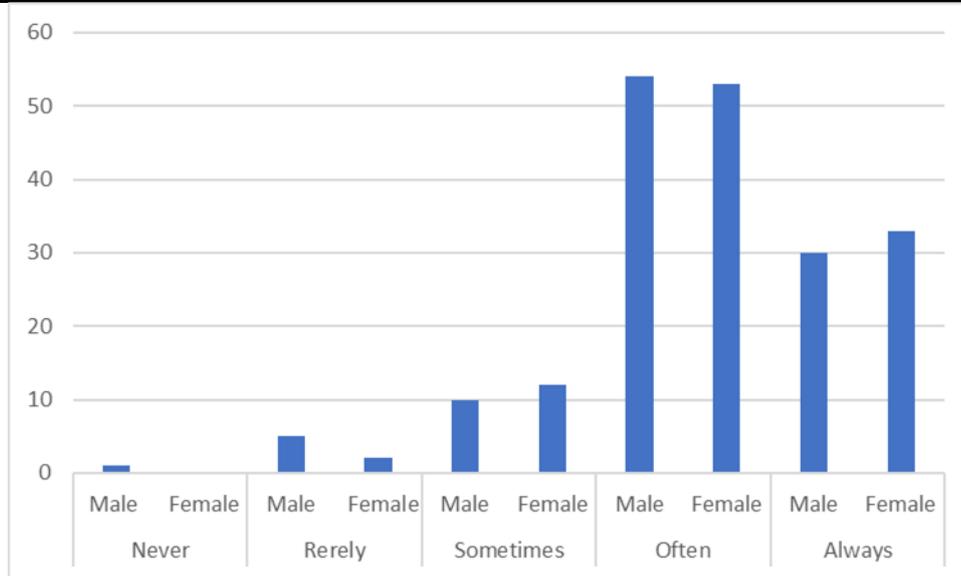


Figure 2 - I believe that me and my peers will achieve better results if social media is integrated into lessons.

The study attempted to determine how social media platforms help students to improve their work. Most of the said that social media really helps them to improve their work. The study aimed to find out whether social media facilitate the participants’ academic learning since the onset of COVID-19 (Figure 3). Expect one participant, all others pointed out that social media helps in their academic learning since the onset of COVID-19. Students spent more time on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic (Parlak Sert & Başkale, 2022).

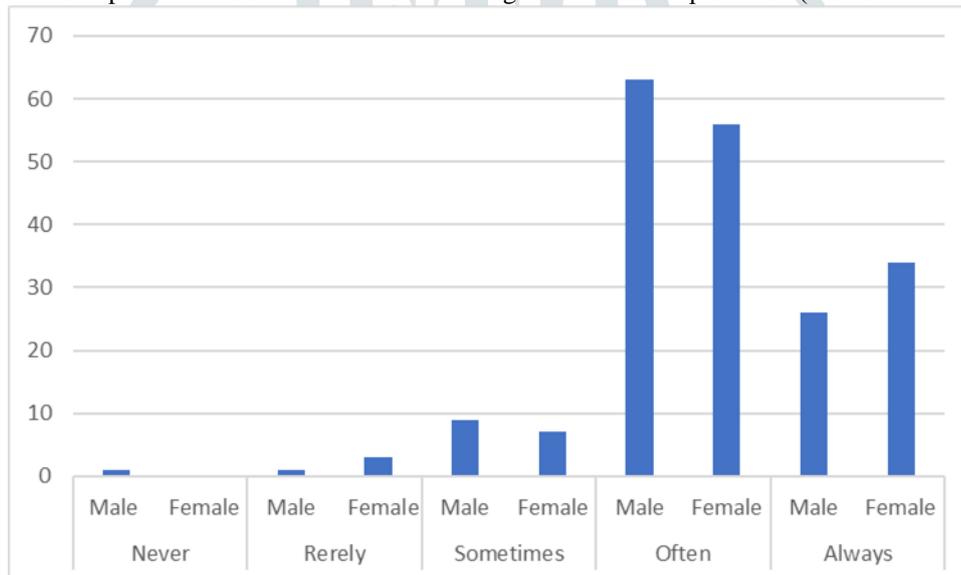


Figure 3 - social media facilitate my academic learning since the onset of COVID- 19.

The next question was how often the students spend their time on social media. All participants use social media and the majority of them spent a good portion of their time on social media. Next the researcher wanted to understand whether social media usage for academic purposes have been drastically increased since COVID-19 (Figure 4). All the participants commented that social media usage increased after the onset of COVID-19.

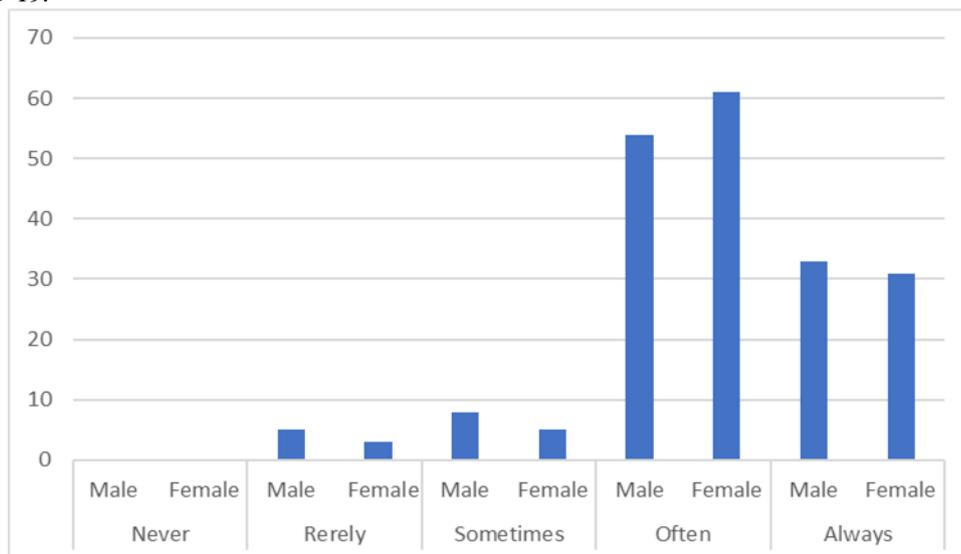


Figure 4 - Since COVID- 19, my social media usage for academic purposes has drastically increased.

The next question was asked to find out whether social media has affected students’ academic learning positively. All the participants stated that social media positively affects their academic learning. Female participants responded that they use social media more positively for academic learning compared to male participants.

The following question was also asked to understand whether social media outside of class is more motivating after COVID-19. Most of the participants said that social media is more motivating after COVID-19. They started to use all the facilities of social media and started to integrate the possible features into academics. This is a method that is used by many educational institutions even after COVID-19. To examine how social media will help participants’ study time effectively and easily complete assignments on time was also a major concern of the study. Most of them said that because of social media they are able to manage their online study time effectively and easily complete assignments on time.

Students are among the most active users of the internet and social networks (Azizi et al., 2019). A significant issue of the research was determining whether the use of videos, movies, or television shows that the participants watched on social media would help in their learning process. Most of them said that videos, movies, or television shows help in their learning process. They are getting new ideas and information from all these sources and the students can utilize them in appropriate situations. The topic sought to determine how frequently students utilise social media during the academic study. Data shows that students use social media during their academic learning and female students are more into it. Despite physical boundaries, mobile devices and social media give excellent educational e-learning options to students for academic collaboration, access to course information, and instructors (Gikas & Grant, 2013).

The study attempted to comprehend whether social media has increased participants’ communication skills after the onset of COVID-19 (Figure 5). Almost all the participants strongly said that social media has increased their communication skills after the onset of COVID-19. The advancement of internet technology has culminated in its adoption as the ideal medium for communication. The usage of social media improved students' communication abilities and academic achievement. This suggested that using social media for academic purposes will increase students' communication abilities and academic achievement. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has quickly evolved into a critical communication tool for information production, diffusion, and consumption (Tsao et al., 2021c).

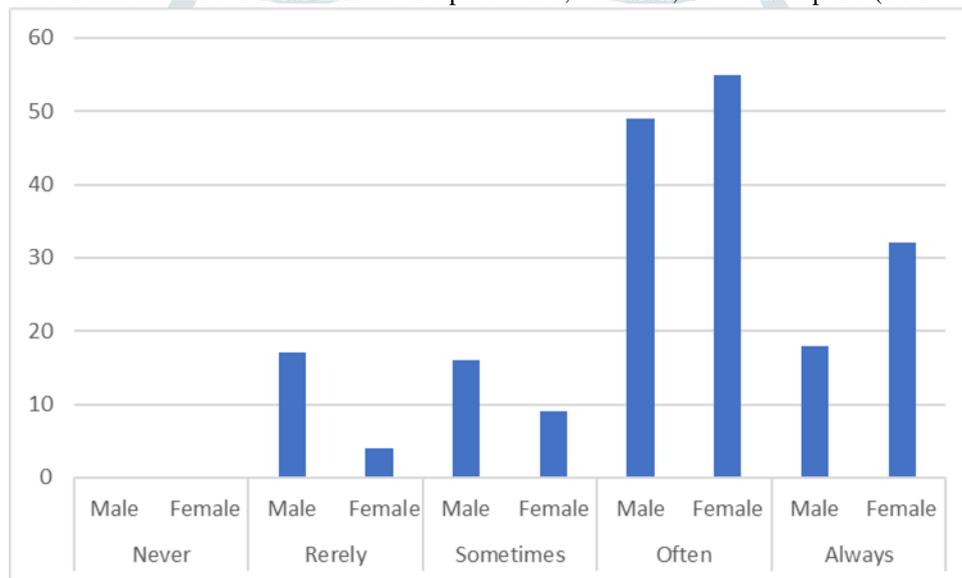


Figure 5 - social media has increased my communication skills after the onset of Covid-19.

The study explores whether social media makes the participants’ academic learning easier and 86% of them commented positively. Females have a small upper hand on the response. The last question aimed to determine if students appreciate spending time on social media for academic purposes. The vast majority of them enjoy the time that they spent on social media for academic learning.

Mann-Whitney U test was used to find out the significant difference in the role of social media among male and female students. The median value of social media usage among females was found to be 85.0 and for males, it was 81.0 (Table 1). Mann-Whitney U test value was found to be 4533 and the significant two-tailed value was 0.004 which is lesser than 0.05. It reveals that female participants are having more social media usage than male participants for academics. Earlier research findings state that females' academic performance was more highly influenced by the usage of social media than that of males. When it comes to social media, females have a higher and more substantial sense of ease of use, compatibility, and relative advantage than males (Idemudia et al., 2017)

Table 1. The difference between male and female use of social media for academic learning.

Gender	Median	Mann-Whitney U	P – Value
Male	81.0	4533	0.001
Female	85.0		

Maan -Whitney U test value for the usage of social media on academics among first-year and second-year postgraduate students was found to be 453 and the significant two-tailed value was <.001 which is lesser than 0.05. The median score of social media usage among first-year students was found to be 77.0 and that of second-year students was 86.0 (Table 2). Findings reveal that second-year students are using social media more frequently than first-year students for academic purposes. Students who are studying in their fourth year spend more time on social media to get the information for preparing research articles and theses compared to first-year students. Peter (2015) ascertained that there is a significant difference in the usage of social media networks by students of different ages.

Table 2 Difference between years of education and social media use in academics

Year of Education	Median	Mann-Whitney U	P – Value
1 st Year	77.0	4533	0.001
2 nd Year	86.0		

IV. CONCLUSION

A majority of students use social media for academic and non-academic purposes. Social media has a huge impact on the academic life of students. After COVID-19, most institutions and more students depend upon social media for making their learning process more interesting and easier. The findings of the research suggest that moderate use of social media is positively associated with academic learning. Female students are utilizing more opportunities of social media platforms for making their academic learning easier. The researcher also focused to find out the relationship between the social media use of first-year and second-year PG students..

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