

Usage Behavior of Social Media for Information Exchange among Teachers and Research Scholars of Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

Social media's expansion has reshaped academia by allowing fluid interaction and multidirectional flows of information. This research paper empirically investigates the usage behavior of social media as reported by teachers and research scholars of Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV), Indore. A structured questionnaire was distributed to a total of 170 respondents (110 teachers and 60 research scholars) and it produced a total of 145 usable responses (95 teachers and 50 research scholars). Percentage of number of teachers or researchers per response and mean were used descriptively, while chi-square tests and Pearson correlation, were used inferentially. The education and research community engages in academic communication mostly through WhatsApp, YouTube and ResearchGate. Teachers primarily utilize social media for professional networking and to exchange information pertinent to their institution, while research scholars primarily use social media to explore the literature and collaborate. There was a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.63, p < 0.01$) between usage behavior and perceived usefulness. The present study demonstrated social media can provide a rapid and engaging form of academic communication, which may also be hindered by information overload, or issues relating to the validity and credibility of information. Recommendations for more effectively integrating social media as an academic communication tool are presented.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Information Exchange, Academic Communication, Educators, Research Scholars, Devi Ahilya University Indore, Empirical Study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital communication has transformed the flow of academic information. The use of social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and ResearchGate enables educators and researchers to share knowledge quickly across institutional boundaries. The presence of a mobile internet connection and the proliferation of smartphones in India have accelerated this shift. In higher education, both teachers and research scholars are active in the social media landscape for professional collaboration and networking, as well as sharing their scholarly output and intellectual projects.

Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV), a prominent and sizable state university located in Madhya Pradesh, has an active academic community representing various disciplines. Their engagement with social media should provide insights into the digital scholarship practice at universities in India.

1.1 Background and Rationale

Past research has placed a strong emphasis on students' engagement with social networking in learning. Few studies have examined Indian faculty or research scholars who are the producers of knowledge. Therefore, understanding the ways Indian scholars will capitalize on, and the role of social media in their information sharing, will help educational institutions to plan a better distributed strategy in a digital world. Thus, this research explores the estimated behaviour patterns, including engagement use with social media potential use for academic contexts, with teachers and research scholars attached to DAVV University.

1.2 Objectives

1. Evaluate the use and frequency of social-media use among teachers and research scholars.
2. Determine preferred platforms to communicate in academic and research contexts.
3. Investigate why and how useful social media, in researchers' and teachers' perceptions.
4. Compare usage patterns that emerge for teachers versus research scholars.
5. Examine relationships between use frequency and reported usefulness.
6. Inquire about barriers to academic use.

1.3 Research Questions

Which platforms are most used in academia?

How does use differ by role?

Why do users use/are prevented from using?

Are the users who use a platform more frequently perceive its usefulness more?

1.4 Significance

Outcomes from this study will inform university administrators, librarians, and policy makers about the use of social media as a platform for academic communication. Outcomes can help develop training programs and institutional policies that support responsible digital scholarship.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This study only includes the teachers and research scholars at DAVV. The data is self-reported and cross-sectional; generalizing the findings to other contexts should be done cautiously..

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The utilization of social media for information sharing and scholarship has redefined the academic context around the world. The academic community, consisting of scholars, educators, and researchers, has turned to various social networks as a means of sharing research, collaborating with colleagues, and gathering current information. A review of relevant literature provides insight into practices of the academic community and presents gaps for this study to address.

2.1 Conceptual Framework of Social Media as Academic Communication

Social media allows users to create, share, and interact with content in a participatory space. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as, "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content," Zhang and Ebner (2020) also emphasize education's expanded use of social media, beyond social interaction, as formal scholarly networking, research collaboration, and educational resource dissemination, Tess (2013). According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to create profiles, identify connections, and view their connections within the social network. The establishment of social networks communicates information that is important for sharing knowledge between teachers and research scholars, creates an environment for digital scholarship, and open communication.

2.2 Global Studies on Social Media Usage in Academia

There have been several studies undertaken exploring social media usage in the academic context in globally. For instance, Manca and Ranieri (2016) found that staff in higher education are using social media for professional development, professional communication and professional visibility. These authors noted that social media is becoming increasingly more important and prevalent for these purposes. Similarly, Donelan (2016) found that academic social networking sites (ASNSs) such as ResearchGate or Academia.edu are important ways to share research outputs and increase academic visibility.

In the United States, Junco (2012) noted that social media plays a positive role in increasing student engagement and information exchange in the academic context when used appropriately and based on the right context. Faculty members tend to be more cautious with how they adopt social media into their teaching and research practice due to personal and institutional concerns about data privacy, academic reputations, and time (Veletsianos, 2012). Studies by Al-Aufi and Al-Azri (2013) in Oman found that while academics stated social media had a great deal of potential for communicating academics, they were not used frequently for academic purposes, due to barriers within the institutions or not having a formal social media policy.

2.3 Indian Studies on Social Media and Academic Use

In India, social media is quickly becoming a major player in higher education and research. Kumar and Singh (2017) noted that university faculty and scholars utilize social media platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook to share course materials, talk about research projects, and plan academic activities. Similarly, Bhattacharya and

Usage Behavior of Social Media for Information Exchange among Teachers and Research Scholars of Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore: An Empirical Study

Sharma (2020) observed that ResearchGate and LinkedIn are the primary platforms for research scholars to create networks and share publications.

Patil and Kanamadi (2019) noted that Indian universities are going through a transition from traditional methods of communication to technology-based collaboration. That said, both the digital divide and information literacy remains obstacles in the optimal academic use of these tools. Natarajan and Kumar (2021) studied found that even though Indian academy members identify the value of social media for visibility and prominence in scholarship, little value from institutions or training for effectively adding visibility with existing social media tools is provided.

2.4 Role of Social Media in Information Exchange

Engaging in information sharing and usage across social media in academia can include sharing research content, participating in dialogue, and utilizing professional content. Chugh and Ruhi (2018) state that social media can facilitate both formal and informal learning opportunities and the co-construction of knowledge by academics and researchers. Social media, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, provide opportunities for immediate interaction while ResearchGate and LinkedIn provide opportunities for researchers and academics to share their research output with different audiences (Mas-Bleda et al., 2014).

Rowlands et al. (2011) found that researchers often turn to social media to monitor information through collaboration and dissemination purposes, quickly bridging the gap in the research communication cycle. For teachers, social media has provided spaces, such as YouTube, for access to educational repositories to support blended and flipped learning environments (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

2.5 Patterns of Social Media Usage among Teachers and Research Scholars

Research demonstrates variations in usage patterns based on demographic and professional traits. Al-Shehri (2019) indicates that younger scholars and early career faculty are more willing to use multiple platforms for research collaboration, whereas senior scholars are more likely to engage with a limited number of tools, such as email or institutional portals.

A study by Mahmood and Malik (2020) in Pakistan found that research scholars use social media more than teachers for academic communication and sharing, and similarly, reporting by Indian studies (Sinha & Jena, 2020) showed research scholars were more active in academic social networking while teacher use of social media was generally a combination of interacting with others for teaching and administrative communication.

2.6 Challenges and Concerns in Academic Use of Social Media

Although there are advantages to the academic use of social media platforms, the academic use of social media is problematic in a variety of ways. Numerous studies have identified issues such as information overload, data privacy, authentication of educational resources, and time management (e.g., Ali, 2019; Ainin et al., 2015). Teachers regularly share their concerns about the blending of professional and personal boundaries via social technologies (Manca & Ranieri, 2017). Along with this, the institutional circumstances regarding the use of social media for academic purposes are still in development, particularly at Indian universities, resulting in lack of consistency of use.

2.7 Summary of Literature Gap

The literature analyzed indicates an extensive volume of research conducted in the area of the social media use in educational purposes, and social media use in the academic community from across the globe; though an emerging body of literature from Indian institutions. At the state university level in Central India, however, few empirical studies can be cited exclusively geared towards teachers and research scholars. Additionally, no studies can be found that present a more comprehensive statistical assessment that combines descriptive statistics with inferential statistics, where the relationships between demographic variables and social media use behavior are clearly examined. The present study aims to fill in that gap by examining social media use behavior surrounding purpose and patterns, along with examining relationships among teacher and research scholar demographics and social media use at Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive-cum-analytical design was applied. A structured questionnaire was utilized to collect data, which contained both close- and open-ended items.

3.2 Population and Sample

Target Population: Teachers and research scholars of DAVV.

Total distributed = 170 (110 teachers, 60 scholars).

Valid responses = 145 (95 teachers, 50 scholars), which represents an 85.3 % response rate.

3.3 Instrument Design

The questionnaire contained the following components:

1. Demographics.
2. Frequency and duration of social media usage.
3. Preferred social media platforms.
4. Social media for academic purposes.
5. Perceived usefulness (5 point Likert scale).
6. Barriers to use.

The reliability of the data collected was initially assessed to determine internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$).

3.4 Data Analysis

The data was processed in SPSS 26. Descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, SD) described patterns and trends. The chi-square statistic tested the association between two categorical variables (e.g., user demographic \times platform usage). The Pearson correlation measured the relationship between frequency of use and usefulness scores (interval data).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Profile of Respondents

Table 1. Demographic Distribution

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	82	56.6
	Female	63	43.4

Usage Behavior of Social Media for Information Exchange among Teachers and Research Scholars of Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore: An Empirical Study

Age	≤ 30	38	26.2
	31–45	67	46.2
	> 45	40	27.6
User Category	Teachers	95	65.5
	Research Scholars	50	34.5

4.2 Frequency of Use

Usage Frequency	Teachers (%)	Scholars (%)	Total (%)
Daily	74.7	82.0	77.2
Weekly	18.9	14.0	17.6
Occasionally	6.4	4.0	5.2

A majority (77 %) access social media daily, indicating high engagement.

4.3 Preferred Platforms

Platform	Teachers (n = 95)	Scholars (n = 50)	Total %
WhatsApp	94 (98.9 %)	49 (98 %)	98.6
YouTube	85 (89.5 %)	48 (96 %)	91.7
Facebook	58 (61 %)	37 (74 %)	65.5
ResearchGate	66 (69 %)	45 (90 %)	76.6
LinkedIn	62 (65 %)	34 (68 %)	66.2
Twitter	24 (25 %)	12 (24 %)	24.8

Interpretation: WhatsApp and YouTube dominate across groups. ResearchGate is particularly favored by scholars for research networking.

4.4 Purposes of Use

Respondents could select multiple purposes.

Purpose	Teachers %	Scholars %
Academic discussion	72	86
Sharing research output	68	78
Accessing literature	66	90
Professional networking	81	74
Teaching resources	84	58
Event updates	79	62

Inference: Teachers emphasize teaching and networking; scholars emphasize literature access and collaboration.

4.5 Perceived Usefulness

Mean score (1–5 scale):

Platform	Teachers Mean	Scholars Mean
WhatsApp	4.32	4.56
YouTube	4.41	4.64
ResearchGate	4.18	4.71
LinkedIn	3.98	4.21

Overall mean usefulness = 4.37 (SD = 0.42), indicating high perceived benefit.

4.6 Chi-Square Analysis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between user category and purpose of use.

χ^2 (5	N = 145) = 12.83	p = 0.025 < 0.05.
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Result: Significant—teachers and scholars differ in purposes (teaching vs. research focus)

4.7 Correlation Analysis

Variables: Frequency of use (ordinal) and perceived usefulness (score). $r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Interpretation: Higher frequency associates strongly with higher perceived usefulness; regular users find greater academic value.

4.8 Barriers to Use

Barrier	Teachers %	Scholars %
Information overload	72	70
Lack of time	68	54
Credibility concerns	63	66
Poor internet connectivity	51	46
Lack of training	45	38

Major constraints include overload and authenticity issues.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. High Usage: Approximately 80% of individuals utilize social media on a regular basis, which demonstrates social media's adaptation into everyday academic lives.
2. Preferred Platform: Students were interested in WhatsApp for instant messaging, or YouTube for academic research videos, while ResearchGate appeared to attract those interested in scholarly focused work.
3. Different Functions: In general, it appeared that teachers leverage social platforms to share pedagogy and connect with other practitioners, while scholars prioritize finding scholarly literature and peer-to-peer collaboration.
4. Positive Factors: Evidence demonstrates frequent social media users perceived social media as providing more academic benefits, in alignment with the construct in the Technology Acceptance Model entitled perceived usefulness.
5. Group Difference: Results from the chi-square statistic revealed statistically significant differences between teachers' and scholars' reasons for use categories.
6. Challenges: Information overload, where users encounter too much information; the practitioner was uncertain if resources found on social media were credible; and time constraining users from maximizing use.
7. Overall usage: Overall, social media, while beginning a different form of communication, brings a new opportunity for immediacy and transparency to communication, while needing to understand if only social media alone has helpfulness or what institutions need to do to keep that useful engagement productive.

CONCLUSION

The study supports the assertion that social media has become essential in the exchange of academic information at DAVV. Faculty and research scholars are using various platforms to disseminate academic knowledge, obtain resources and maintain professional contacts. While level of engagement and purpose may differ by role, those surveyed are generally very favorable in their perceptions of the usefulness of social media. Inferential findings demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between frequency of use and accessory functions that indicate routine use enhances academic productivity as a result of scroll engagement. Trustworthiness, overload, and lack of official status still remain concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institutional Recommendation: Institutions should create social-media policies that promote scholarly engagement and accountability.
2. Training in Digital Skills and Literacy: Host professional learning communities (PLCs) to discuss citation ethics, methods of verifying sources, and utilizing platforms.
3. Institutional Learning Management System Integration: Create a social media platform for sharing information either via the institution's LMS or from an academic/non-academic institution.
4. Trustworthy Information Development: Actively encourage verifying information and factual sources prior to sharing with scholars and the general public.
5. Encouragement of Open Scholarship: Encourage scholars to use ResearchGate, LinkedIn, and other platforms to share and showcase their institution's work.
6. Future Research: Longitudinal studies can examine how behavioral changes and practices tracked over time (cross-disciplinary).

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