

USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Social media has become indispensable in our lives, serving as a crucial platform for both education and socialization. The aim of the study is to investigate the utilization of social media by undergraduate students in the Imphal West area of Manipur. To achieve the study's objective, a descriptive research approach was employed, with a sample of 100 undergraduate students selected via simple random sampling from diverse colleges in Imphal West District, Manipur. The obtained data were further analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The study revealed that students engaged with social media daily for 2 to 4 hours, with Instagram as the predominant platform, and that their overall social media usage was moderate. This study examined the impact of demographic variables.*

Keywords: *Social media Usage, Undergraduate students, Demographic Variables.*

Introduction

Social media has become an indispensable part of daily life for individuals, particularly young people and students, encompassing education, entertainment, social interaction, and relationship development, among other areas. Social media serves as a medium for interpersonal interaction, enabling users to share articles, news, photographs, and other materials with others on the platform. However, its definition should not be limited to the platform itself; it is more accurately defined by the materials or content generated by users and disseminated on the platform (Miller et al., 2016). Certain social media platforms may encompass

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter/ X
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- TikTok

These platforms have evolved into venues for social interaction, rather than merely serving as communication tools. Social media represents a fusion of conventional mass communication and individualized interaction. It enables users to engage with groups of varying sizes while managing their privacy settings. This flexible communication framework is referred to as "scalable sociality" (Miller et al., 2016).

The widespread availability of internet connectivity and the ubiquity of smartphones have enabled more efficient, rapid social media use. The utilization of social media in India has surged, driven by the proliferation of mobile connectivity and Internet accessibility. By the end of 2025, there will be over 1.06 billion mobile connections, representing 72.5% of the population; however, not all of these connections will have internet access, and around 500 million individuals will use social media, accounting for 34.1% of the population, according to Data Reportal. The enhanced accessibility has raised numerous concerns about the safety and privacy of individuals, particularly students. Research indicates that social media use has both beneficial and detrimental effects. Many students use social media as a virtual community to seek support, express their emotions, and alleviate loneliness. Consequently, social media may provide significant advantages for their current mental health issues (Naslund et al., 2020). The platforms may serve as a venue for mental wellness. Nevertheless, incidents of cyberbullying, sleep deprivation, and effects on study habits have also occurred (Ajewumi et al., 2024). Therefore, it is essential to assess the extent of social media utilization among undergraduate students. The majority of these undergraduate students are aged 18 to 22, a pivotal phase in youth development characterized by identity formation, the establishment of social relationships, and the development of lifestyle and habits. This phase is particularly susceptible to social media dependencies. This study aims to determine the scope of social media use and the influence of demographic characteristics, such as gender, field of study, and locality, on social media patterns.

Review of Related Literature:

Siddhartha et al. (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the "Usage of Social Media among Undergraduate University Students," aiming to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of social media utilization among undergraduates at the university. The study found that YouTube and WhatsApp are the most widely used platforms, followed by Instagram, primarily for entertainment and communication. Users engage with these platforms 10+ times daily for more than 3 hours, enhancing study quality, facilitating group discussions, fostering communication, developing skills, and alleviating stress, albeit with drawbacks such as cyberbullying and misinformation.

Kumar and Taj (2021) conducted a study on the "Utilization of social media among undergraduate students." The study aims to analyze the social media usage patterns of undergraduate students. The data was examined using descriptive statistics, including mean and percentage analysis. The study revealed that 96 percent of students consistently utilized social media, with females aged 18-20 being the predominant users. 32% of student respondents allocate 1-2 hours daily to social media, while 55% have engaged with it daily for the past 4 years. WhatsApp was the most widely used platform, with 86 percent of respondents indicating its importance as a communication tool.

Alhajjaj et al. (2025) conducted an analytical study titled "Social Media and Its Impact on University Students" to assess social media usage and its effects on academic life, including both positive and negative implications for the educational process. The study used a quantitative survey of 120 students and analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that students used social media for many purposes and devoted significant

time to several platforms, exhibiting diverse usage patterns that adversely affected their academic lives, leading to distractions and ineffective time management.

Singh et al. (2025) conducted a study titled “Social Media Exposure and Its Influence among Undergraduate Students” to investigate the correlation between social media usage and academic achievement among a sample of 87 students, employing a combination of convenience and random sampling techniques, and analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that users of social media sites engaged with these platforms for an average of almost 2 hours each day, potentially resulting in addiction and distractions from their academic performance. The findings emphasized the importance of a balanced approach to social media utilization to enhance its impact on academic achievement.

Pant et al. (2025) investigated the effects of social media use among college students, focusing on its dual nature and its influence on academic performance, social behavior, and mental health, particularly on academic distraction, using a convenience sample of 100 students and both primary and secondary data. The findings indicated a beneficial effect on their academic performance and the development of new skills. Social networking platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, can consume 1 to 3 hours of students' time daily, serving as a distraction. Excessive use may adversely affect the mental health and academic performance of college students.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the frequency and duration of social media usage among the undergraduate students.
2. To study the level of social media usage among the undergraduate students.
3. To study the significant differences in social media usage based on demographic variables with respect to gender, stream, and locality among the undergraduate students.

Hypotheses of the study:

1. There is no significant level of social media usage among the undergraduate students.
2. There is no significant difference in social media usage based on demographic variables with respect to gender, stream, and locality among the undergraduate students.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive methodology to evaluate the research objectives regarding the use of social media among undergraduate students. The study sample comprises 100 students exclusively from the arts and science streams. The samples are obtained by a simple random sampling method from several colleges in the Imphal West District of Manipur. The primary data were gathered using a meticulously designed standardized questionnaire, the “Social Media Usage Scale,” by Momin Sumaiya and Siddiqui Mohd. Mahmood, comprising closed-ended items based on a 5-point Likert scale. The acquired data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics (percentages, means, standard deviations, ranges) and the independent-samples t-test.

Results and findings:

Demographic characteristics of the studied respondents:

1. Gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	36	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Female	64	64.0	64.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that among the 100 undergraduate students, 36 percent are male and 64 percent are female.

2. Stream

Stream					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Arts	58	58.0	58.0	58.0
	Science	42	42.0	42.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

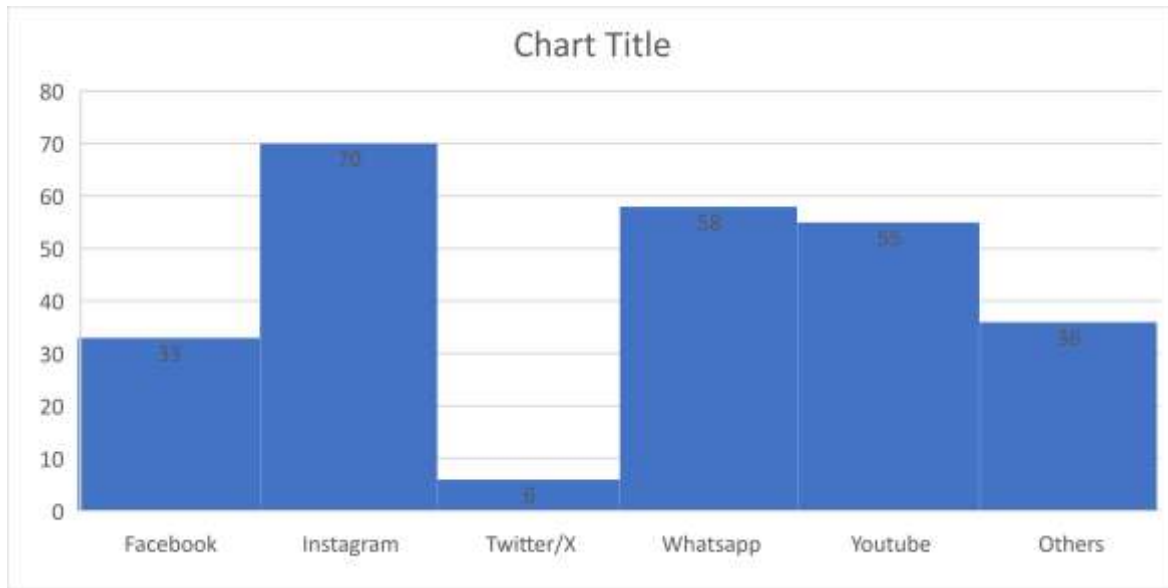
The above table shows that among the total 100 undergraduate students, 58 percent are in the arts stream and 42 percent in the science stream.

3. Locality

Locality					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urban	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Rural	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that among the total 100 undergraduate students, 50 percent are urban and 50 percent are rural, representing an equal, balanced group across the two localities.

4. Most used social media platforms:



The table above shows the most used social media platforms among students. The students select all the platforms they use daily; Instagram is the most used, with 70 respondents.

Objective 1: To study the frequency and duration of social media usage among undergraduate students.

Frequency of social media usage					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	4	4.0	4.0	6.0
	Sometimes	24	24.0	24.0	30.0
	Often	50	50.0	50.0	80.0
	Very often	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The above shows that most undergraduate students use social media daily. Of the 100 students, 50 (50%) use social media daily.

Duration					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 to 2 hours	19	19.0	19.0	19.0
	2 to 4 hours	42	42.0	42.0	61.0
	4 to 6 hours	29	29.0	29.0	90.0
	More than 6 hours	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The above shows that the majority of undergraduate students spent 2 to 4 hours on social media each day. Of the 100 students, 42 (42%) use social media for 2 to 4 hours daily.

Objective 2: To study the level of social media usage among the undergraduate students.

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social media usage means	100	3.5481	.25887

In the table above, the mean score for social media use among undergraduate students is 3.5481, with a standard deviation of 0.25887. By using Range-based Interpretation of Likert scale, the level of social media usage has been divided into three equal levels based on a range of 1.33 (Range = $5 - 1/3 = 1.33$), i.e., Low, moderate, and high.

Mean Range	Level
1.00 to 2.33	Low
2.34 to 3.66	Moderate
3.67 to 5.00	High

In the above table, the mean score of 3.5481 falls under the moderate level of social media usage. This clearly shows that the undergraduate student respondents use social media at a moderate level, but the score is leaning towards the high end, indicating a greater inclination towards higher engagement. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant level of social media usage is rejected.

Social media usage level					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moderate	68	68.0	68.0	68.0
	High	32	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Of the 100 undergraduate student respondents, 68 percent fall into the moderate level of social media usage, indicating a moderate overall level.

Objective 3: To study the significant differences in social media usage based on demographic variables with respect to gender, stream, and locality among the undergraduate students.

For Gender:

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	Male	36	149.361	13.2021	2.2003
	Female	64	154.375	9.4171	1.1771

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
				F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
		Lower	Upper							
Total	Equal variances assumed	3.873	.052	-2.204	98	.030	-5.0139	2.2751	-9.5288	-.4990
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.009	55.381	.049	-5.0139	2.4954	-10.0141	-.0137

The table above displays the total scores for two genders (male and female), with the statistical analysis conducted using an independent-samples t-test. The group statistics table presents the means of both genders along with their standard deviations. The male group (n=36) has a mean score of 149.361 and a standard deviation of 13.2021, whereas the female group (n=64) has a mean score of 154.375 and a standard deviation of 9.4171, indicating that the female group has a higher mean score than the male group.

The table indicates that Levene’s test for equality of variances yields a p-value of 0.052, just below 0.05, suggesting that the variances of the two groups are not statistically different. The t-test for equal variances is employed to test the hypothesis, yielding a t-value of -2.204, 98 degrees of freedom, and a two-tailed p-value of 0.030, with a mean difference of -5.0139. The p-value (0.030) is below 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Consequently, the null

hypothesis asserting no significant difference is rejected, signifying a substantial difference between the two gender groups.

For Stream:

Group Statistics					
	Stream	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	Arts	58	150.897	12.0433	1.5814
	Science	42	154.881	9.3866	1.4484

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	.809	.371	-1.786	98	.077	-3.9844	2.2308	-8.4113	.4425
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.858	97.427	.066	-3.9844	2.1444	-8.2402	.2714

The table above displays the overall scores of students in two educational streams, namely arts and science, with the statistical analysis conducted by an independent-samples t-test. The group statistics table presents the means and standard deviations for both streams. The arts stream students (n=58) have a mean score of 150.897 with a standard deviation of 12.0433, whereas the science stream students (n=42) have a mean score of 154.881 with a standard deviation of 9.3866, indicating that the science stream students outperform the arts stream students in mean score.

The table indicates that Levene's test for equality of variances yields a p-value of 0.371, which is well above 0.05, suggesting that the variances of the two groups are equal. The t-test for equal variances is employed to test the hypothesis, yielding a t-value of -1.786, 98 degrees of freedom, and a two-tailed p-value of 0.077, with a mean difference of -3.9844. As the p-value

(0.077) is above 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted, indicating no substantial disparity between the two stream groups.

For Locality:

Group Statistics					
	Localit y	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	Urban	50	151.400	10.2758	1.4532
	Rural	50	153.740	11.9143	1.6849

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	.162	.688	-1.052	98	.296	-2.3400	2.2251	-6.7555	2.0755
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.052	95.930	.296	-2.3400	2.2251	-6.7567	2.0767

The table above presents the overall scores for two regions (urban and rural), with the statistical analysis conducted using an independent-samples t-test. The group statistics table displays the means and standard deviations for each locality. The urban group (n=50) has a mean score of 151.400 and a standard deviation of 10.2758, whereas the rural group (n=50) has a mean score of 154.740 and a standard deviation of 11.9143, indicating that the rural group possesses a higher mean score than the urban group.

In the above table, Levene’s test for equality of variances yields a p-value of 0.688, which is well above 0.05, indicating that the variances of the two groups are equal. Then, the t-test for equal variances is used to test the hypothesis, yielding a t-value of -1.052 with 98 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed significance of 0.296, with a mean difference of -2.3400. Since the

p-value (0.688) is greater than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted, indicating that there is no difference between the two localities.

Conclusion:

The current study findings revealed that among the 100 randomly selected students, 36 percent were male and 64 percent were female. Among these, 58 percent are enrolled in the arts stream, while 42 percent are enrolled in the scientific stream. Fifty percent from urban regions and fifty percent from rural regions. Instagram was the most utilized platform, receiving 70 responses, followed by WhatsApp and YouTube. This indicates that a significant proportion of respondents engage primarily with platforms for social interaction, communication, and entertainment. Among 100 undergraduates, 50 percent frequently use social media, with 42 percent of that group spending 2 to 4 hours daily on it. Frequent engagement with social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp, for approximately 2 to 4 hours daily for information acquisition, social interaction, or academic endeavors, may lead to ineffective management and social media addiction (Tayo S. Subair et al., 2019). The present research concludes that undergraduate students use social media in a moderate, relatively consistent manner. The demographic variables of stream and locality do not significantly affect social media usage among these students; however, gender demonstrates a significant difference, indicating that it plays a crucial role in shaping social media usage patterns. This clearly indicates that males and females engage with social media in distinct ways. The findings underscore the need to enhance students' understanding of balanced, acceptable social media use.

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