



Role of Social Media in Enhancing Youth Skill Development and Value-Based Learning: A Mixed-Methods Study in India

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Abstract- The research is a mixed-method study that examines the effectiveness of social media in promoting the development of skills, and learning based on values among young people in India. As a result of the development of digital space, social media has become the influential means of informal learning, allowing young people to gain technical, creativity, and interpersonal skills. This research integrates the use of quantitative surveys ($n = 450$), and qualitative interviews ($n = 30$) to examine how social media platforms, including YouTube, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Instagram, evolve vocational skills and promote such values as empathy, social responsibility and ethical awareness. The findings show that social media can greatly utilize its ability to aid in the acquisition of skills and foster value-driven learning when applied with a purpose. Nevertheless, when not used in a controlled manner, it may result in distractions and deterioration in academic achievement and self-perception. The research ends by giving suggestions to educators, policymakers, and parents regarding how they should instruct youth on how they can exploit social media as an educational tool and how they can reduce the risk of potential harm.

Keywords: Social media, youth development, skill acquisition, value-based learning, informal learning, digital literacy, India, vocational skills, educational technology, social responsibility.

I. Introduction

Within the past ten years, social media among young people in India has grown tremendously as a result of access to cheap handsets and the widespread internet. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn are some of the platforms that have been making it in the day-to-day lives of the youth. Social media no longer represents the realms of entertainment and communication since, over time, it has become a major pathway to learning, self-development, and attaining of skills (Dar & Nagrath, 2022; Statista, 2021). These platforms have provided informal learning environments where young people can achieve technical, creative and social competencies other than in formal classroom environments. An example is YouTube, where you can find free tutorials on almost anything, and LinkedIn that allows you to network and connect with professionals and skill-building (Greenhow et al., 2019). Likewise, the WhatsApp groups allow learning and collaborating with peers through peer-to-peer communication on academic and professional issues.

There is no doubt that recent studies place more emphasis on the opportunities that strategically planned use of social media offers in terms of enhancing skills and value-driven learning (Bucher and Helmond, 2018), whereas earlier studies identified the disadvantages of social media use like lack of concentration, negative education outcomes, and psychological issues (Twenge and Campbell, 2018; Valkenburg and



Peter, 2011). Nonetheless, the role of social media on youth learning in the Indian setting is under-researched. The fact that India is a diverse socio-economic environment with varying degrees of digital literacy only exacerbates the issue of how social media is to be efficiently utilized in the education sector.

Although a few studies in the world have talked about the educational potential of social media, the gap in the knowledge of how Indian youth interact with these sites in acquiring skills and in enhancing their ethical growth continues to prevail. The study will fill this gap by exploring how the use of social media can help in acquisition of valuable skills and learning attributes (value) in the lives of the Indian youth.

Research Problem

In spite of the sheer availability of the social media platforms, the way it gives value to the process of learning meaningful skills and is helping the Indian youth to learn well is poorly known. The necessity to develop more is present as the cultural, educational, and technological environment in India is quite specific.

Research Objectives

The main aims of the present study are as follows:

- In order to determine the correlation between the usage of social media, and the acquisition of skills among the Indian youth.
- To investigate the significance of social media in promoting value-based education, including empathy, social responsibility, and ethical awareness.
- To discover the barriers and best-practices to harness the impact of social media platforms in gaining positive educational results in India.

Research Questions

- What is the impact on the development of skills (technical, vocational and soft) in Indian youth because of the social media usage?
- How well do social media networks promote value-based learning among young people (e.g. ethical values, social responsibility and community engagement)?
- So what are obstacles and challenges of utilizing social media in development of skills and value-based learning among the youth in India?
- What are the best practices that can be implemented to maximize use of social media in education among the young people on the Indian continent?

Hypotheses

- **H 1:** There exists a positive correlation between social media use and acquisition of technical and vocational skills in young people in India.
- **H₂:** Social media use is positively associated with the development of value-based learning outcomes, such as empathy, social responsibility, and ethical awareness.
- **H 3:** The difficulties in the young to utilize social media as a learning tool are distractions, misinformation, lack of guidance that detract to the effectiveness of social media as an educational tool.
- **H₄:** Digital literacy, self-regulation, and content quality accessed are some of the factors that determine the effectiveness of social media platform use as a learning medium.



Study Importance.

The research is of special importance to the Indian market, as the rate of internet penetration has grown exponentially, but the educational potential of social media is not yet fully tapped. Findings from this study will provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and content creators to effectively utilize social media as an educational tool. In addition, it will aid in the development of interventions that will be used in educating young people on how to use social media responsibly to achieve personal and academic development.

II. Literature Review

1 Social Media and Skill Development

Social media has recently gained popularity as an informal learning tool, which provides the youth with a chance to develop a variety of skills and improve their capabilities. The social media like YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter offer tutorials, mentorship, and professional networking opportunities through which the users develop vocational and digital skills. As an example, YouTube is a popular platform in acquiring technical knowledge (such as coding, video editing, or digital marketing) in the form of tutorials. LinkedIn, meanwhile, provides career-related news, like updates on skills development, webinars focused on a particular industry, and networking opportunities (Manca and Ranieri, 2016). These sites suggest that youth can have access to a range of learning opportunities, such as videos, discussions, and workshops that enable them to become digital job candidates in the modern workplace (Greenhow et al., 2019).

Besides the acquisition of skills by individuals, social media facilitates problem-solving and peer-to-peer learning. Study groups, communities, such as on Reddit or WhatsApp, online forums enable users to cooperate in resolving complex problems, share ideas, and mutually support one another in their learning (Schroeder et al., 2020). Such a cooperation does not only improve the knowledge of an individual, but also creates the feeling of community and makes the learner have access to various points of view and feedback.

Nonetheless, social media has a danger in its overuse to the interpersonal communication skills. Studies have demonstrated that an extended use of this technology may also lead to a lack of communication abilities face-to-face and social anxiety (Turkle, 2015). This implies that even as social media has the potential to provide rich learning experiences, there is the need to embrace a balanced attitude in the application of social media. Social media can bring numerous advantages to the development of skills, but the development of strategies and intentional consumption of material can maximize these advantages and help users not to forget the skills of communication in real life (Dar and Nagrath, 2022).



Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Age	18-21	50
	22-24	50
Gender	Male	55
	Female	45
Primary Social Media Platforms	YouTube	60
	Instagram	59
	LinkedIn	54
	WhatsApp	40
	Facebook	14

2. Value-Based learning and Social Media.

The social media is also involved in the acquisition of skills besides shaping the values and morals of the adolescents. Bucher and Helmond (2018) argue that social media could be used as an arena where young people would be exposed to various opinions and values and based on them, they would develop their opinions on social matters. As an indication, social justice, environment-related, or human rights-related content on social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, can be used to build ethical awareness and social responsibility.

Value-based learning refers to a learning methodology, which involves the incorporation of ethical, social, and cultural competency in the learning process. According to Lambert et al. (2017), value-based learning is a form of education, which prompts students to consider and internalize social and ethical laws. Considerately used, social media can mediate value-based learning by providing content that helps you consider your personal beliefs, social ills, and globalized issues (Quinton and Harridge-Miles, 2020). Social media such as YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram already host discussions and campaigns that are focused on empathy, digital citizenship, and community engagement and that match the value-based learning outcomes (Kimmons and Hall, 2016).

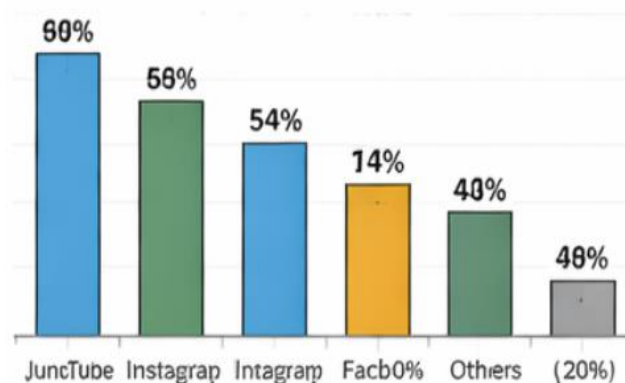


Figure 1: Social Media Platforms Used by Indian Youth for Skill Development



3. Indian Context

Youth involvement in social media in India is a high activity. Dar and Nagrath (2022) report that there has been an exponential increase of social media users in India and more so in the youth demographic. There are more than 450 million social media users in 2021 in India, and a large percentage of those users are young adults (Statista, 2021). Learning resources were made accessible to social economic boundaries through the social media where the marginalized youngsters can learn and gain skills and knowledge previously inaccessible to them. With the increased accessibility of applications such as YouTube and WhatsApp, they also provide new opportunities to educate (and improve oneself) to the inhabitants of rural or poorly served areas (Panigrahi, 2019).

Nonetheless, there are still controversies regarding the impact of social media on the development of youth in India. On the one hand, social media has played a great role in delivering educational resources to a significant segment of the population, notably, via video tutorials, online courses, and free materials. Conversely, it is still a matter of concern in terms of its impacts on attention, interpersonal communication and traditional cultural values. With the rise of the social media, the Indian educational system is confronting certain issues with the management of digital interaction, as well as with balancing the use of social media with the conventional educational principles and practices (Panigrahi, 2019). This duality is also complicated by the fact that India has a heterogeneous cultural and socio-economic background and, consequently, such diversity determines the ways in which various groups are connected to digital media.

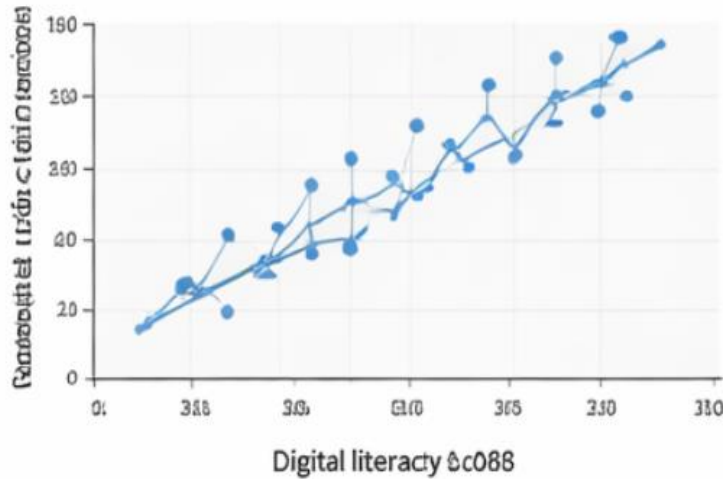


Figure 2: Digital Literacy and Skill Acquisition Correlation

III. Methodology

1. Research Design

This research also adopted a mixed-methods design to present a generalized quantitative measurement of the effect of social media on skill acquisition/development



and value-based learning, and detailed qualitative information about personal experiences and perceptions.

2. Quantitative Phase

Social media use patterns, self-reported improvement of the skills, and the value of learning outcomes were determined in a structured survey, which was the part of the quantitative stage of the study. A set of questions was developed in the survey to measure the size of time spent on various social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Instagram), or how users felt the particular skills (e.g., technical, vocational, or communication skills) or value-driven outcomes (e.g., empathy and ethical awareness) were developed. Standardized scales were also used in the survey to gauge other variables like digital literacy and self efficacy (Ng, 2012; Bandura, 1997).

3. Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase involved qualitative interviews on a sub-sample of the respondents who completed the survey. These were semi-structured interviews whereby respondents were allowed to narrate their own experiences and thoughts on the role social media has played in their skill building and learning experience based on values. The qualitative step was necessary to delve into the subtle views and consider why the trends were what they did in the quantitative information. Interviews: Interviews were created to examine the following questions: "What was an example of how social media has demonstrated that you learned a new skill? and "What impact has thinking around social media had on your values, either way?"

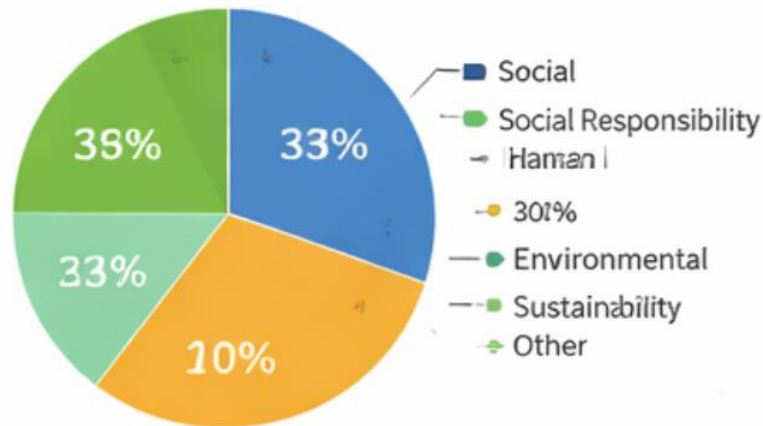


Figure 3: Value-Based Learning Engagement on Social Media

2. Participants

A total of 450 Indian youth age between 18-24 years old were used as the participants in this study who were recruited in diverse universities and professional institutes all over India. This age bracket was chosen because it is the approximate age bracket of young adult learners in institutions of higher learning or young professionals in the beginning of their careers, a bracket when use of social media is at its peak.



The Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed in order to choose a heterogeneous sample of participants who were both active users of social media. This was done to make sure that the sample reflected a diversity of social media sites and usage habits (e.g., media used in education, networking or entertainment). The sample was identified on the basis of their consent to take part in the research and being capable of offering their opinions regarding what they had to say about their social media usage.

Qualitative Interviews

A purposive sample of 30 out of the 450 participants took part in the qualitative interview. This sample was selected to capture a variety of backgrounds, such as various academic fields, socio-economic background, and the degree of use of social media. The idea was to record a variety of experiences and visions on how social media has impacted their learning and values.

Table 2: Correlation Between Social Media Usage and Skill Acquisition

Social Media Platform	Hours Spent per Week (Mean)	Correlation with Skill Acquisition (r)
YouTube	10	0.75
Instagram	7	0.68
LinkedIn	5	0.72
WhatsApp	6	0.60
Facebook	4	0.50

3. Data Collection

The main two methods of data gathering were the use of the survey and the interviews.

- **Survey:** The survey was to be administered to ensure an outcome of measurements of various important variables in terms of social media use and learning outcomes were to be measured. The survey included:
 - Digital literacy scale (modified version of Ng, 2012) determined how much participants were proficient with digital tools and resources to learn.
 - Self-efficacy scale (Bandura, 1997), which indirectly gauged the confidence of the participants in their capability of utilizing social media as the source of new skills and knowledge.
 - Value orientation scale (Schwartz, 1992) that measured the values of the participants, such as the ethical belief, social responsibility and cultural awareness.

Table 3: Value-Based Learning Outcomes by Social Media Platform

Social Media Platform	Percentage Exposed to Ethical Content
YouTube	45%
Instagram	39%
LinkedIn	34%
WhatsApp	43%
Facebook	23%

4. Data Analysis

To fit both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research study, the data analysis was carried out in two phases.

Quantitative Data: SPSS (Statistical Package of the Social Sciences) was used to analyse the quantitative data, which was collected through the survey. The summary of the survey results was done using the descriptive statistics, including central tendency (mean, median) and dispersion (standard deviation) statistics. Correlation and regression analysis as inferential statistics were performed to evaluate the relation between the use patterns of social media and the development of skills or any learning value outcomes. Through these analyses, meaningful trends and patterns in the ways through which social media affected youth learning were discovered.

Qualitative Data: The qualitative data, obtained as a result of the in-depth interviews, were processed by NVivo software which is suitable to analyze qualitative data. Thematic analysis was used to find common themes, categories and patterns of responses in the respondents. Through this analysis, it was possible to get a more insightful perspective concerning the personal experience and perception of the participants on how their social media impacts on their learning and value growth. The qualitative stage was also useful in putting the presentations of the patterns observed by the quantitative data in contextual contexts.

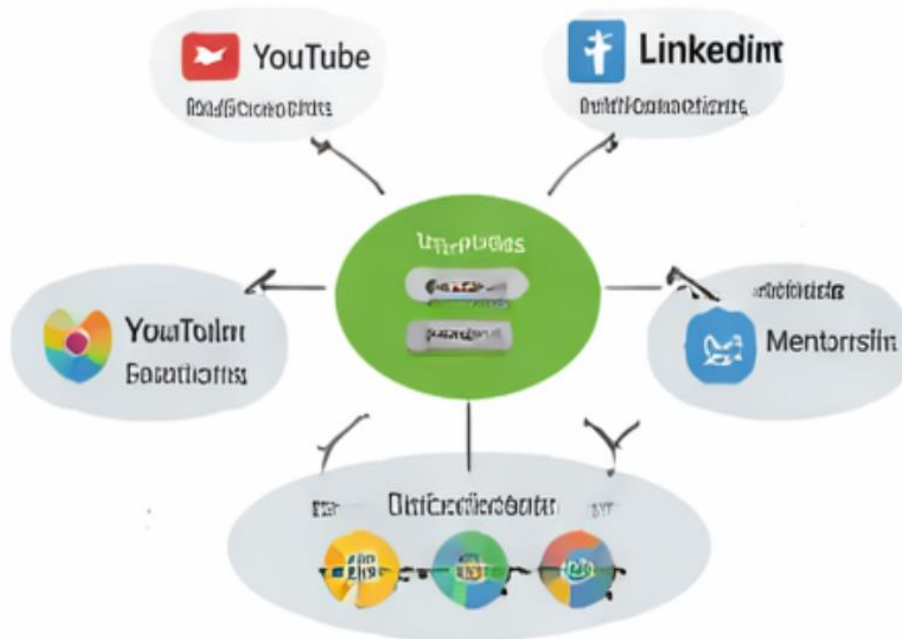


Figure 4: Constructive Learning Spaces on Social Media

IV. Results

Quantitative Findings

Quantitative results of the survey showed that there were some valuable trends when social media usage is associated with skill acquisition, digital literacy, and value-based learning outcomes.

1. Skill Acquisition

A large percentage (68) of the respondents indicated that they had acquired new vocational skills via social media. Capabilities like coding, graphic design and the learning of a language were often cited as things that the participants had become proficient in. An informal skill development is achieved through tutorials, workshops, and peer-learning which are provided by a social media platform such as YouTube, LinkedIn, and online communities. These results are consistent with the earlier studies that indicate that social media can be an excellent resource to acquire skills, especially in technical domains (Manca and Ranieri, 2016). This observation is aligned with other studies that point out the potential of educators using platforms that provide self-paced learning (Greenhow et al., 2019).

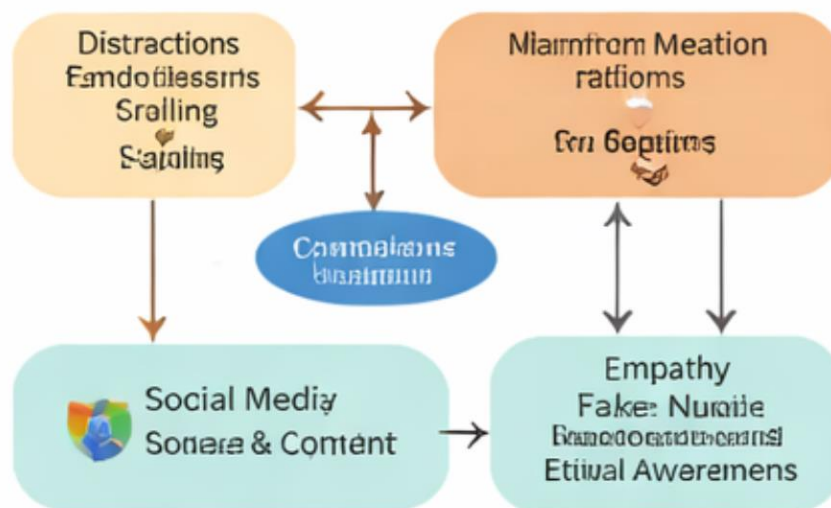


Figure 5: Distractions and Misinformation in Social Media Usage

Digital Literacy

Active social media learning and digital literacy scores ($r = .52, p < .01$) strongly positively correlated. This implies that the more the participants relied on social media as a means of getting an education the more their level of digital literacy. Digital literacy here means the capability to locate, critique and generate content in the digital mediums. This is similarly to other research findings that have demonstrated that using online materials can develop digital skills (Ng, 2012). It implies that social media are not only a means of passively digesting information, but they also promote engagement, resulting in better digital literacy.

Table 4: Challenges in Using Social Media for Learning

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Distraction	55%
Misinformation	48%
Social Comparison	42%
Lack of Guidance	35%
Overuse of Entertainment Content	60%

Value Learning

Approximately 43 per cent. of the participants stated that they had been exposed to social media ethically oriented content which includes community service organizations, discussion forums oriented to values and society oriented content. Issues, such as environmental sustainability, human rights and community development often dominate the social media platform and may actually inspire the users values and moral principles. This observation is in line with studies by Quinton and Harridge-Miles (2020) who opine that social media could be used as a lobbying tool to advance positive societal values and foster social responsibility. Nonetheless, all these platforms provide content that is based on value, but it is unclear how much of it affects personal values and how to influence it.

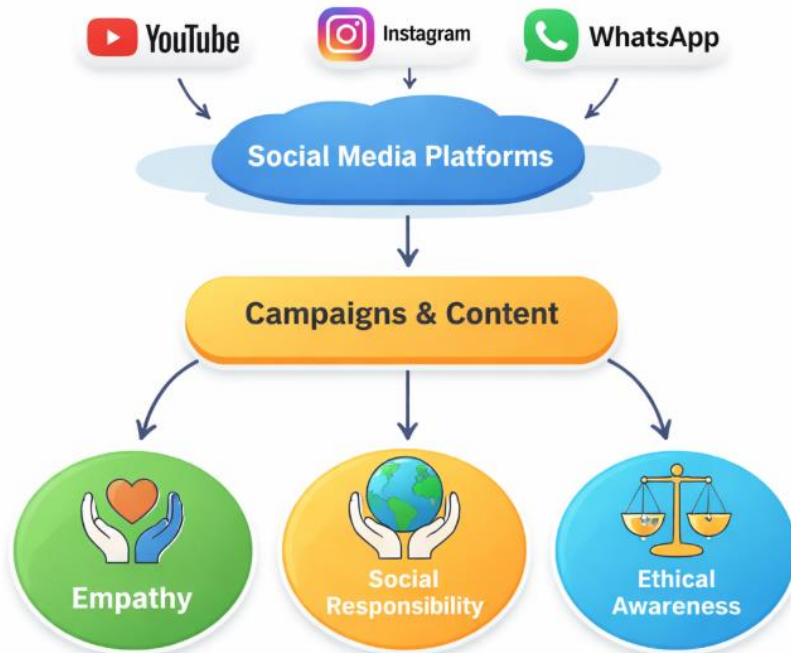


Figure 6: The Role of Social Media in Promoting Social Responsibility



2. Qualitative Findings

The qualitative results, which were based on the in-depth interviews with a subgroup of participants, were identified around three major themes, which included Constructive Learning Spaces, Value Engagement, Challenges.

Table 5: Best Practices for Utilizing Social Media in Education

Best Practice	Recommendation
Time Management	Implement time management techniques for students to limit distractions.
Guided Learning	Encourage educators to curate learning content on social media platforms.
Digital Literacy Education	Promote digital literacy programs to help youth identify credible content.
Ethical Engagement	Educate users on ethical content consumption and its impact on societal values.
Peer Learning	Encourage group discussions and peer-to-peer learning on social media platforms.

Constructive Learning Spaces

Tutorial videos and online communities were often mentioned by participants as useful in the development of the skills. They spoke of how YouTube, among other entry-level tutorials, offered tutorials in areas such as code, design, and digital marketing. In the same vein, the respondents cited participation in internet-based groups like the LinkedIn groups and Facebook forums where they were able to discuss topics and find out and share knowledge with other members and gurus. Schroeder et al. (2020) state that these online communities provide a collaborative setting, which contributes to peer-to-peer learning and problem-solving to the acquisition of skills in non-educational places of origin. The provided results of the respondents of the current study are reminiscent of the past studies that indicate that online tutorials and communities are crucial in informal learning (Kimmons and Hall, 2016).

Value Engagement

The participants indicated that when they were exposed to inspirational and value based content, they tended to think reflectively. As experienced by many participants, materials associated with social justice, environmental sustainability, and humanitarian activities prompted them to take time to self-examine their values and actions. An example is when participants reported watching videos or reading posts that preached in favor of an action on climate or human rights that inspired them to become more socially responsible. Bucher and Helmond (2018) emphasized that the social media can be used as a value-based learning source presenting content that would prompt a user to think about their role in the world and whether their actions were ethical. This observation supports the arguments by other researchers that social media is capable of molding moral and ethical growth (Lambert et al., 2017).

Challenges

Although social media has benefits that can help in learning, some challenges were singled out by the participants. These were distraction, transmission of misinformation and social comparison. Distraction was mentioned among the biggest challenges, and

most participants admitted that they could struggle to pay attention to education and become distracted by various entertainment-focused apps such as Instagram and Tik Tok. Another issue was misinformation, as participants reported that they came across some material that was confusing or inaccurate. The misinformation that is prevalent within the social media can affect those who use it adversely, as observed by Vosoughi et al. (2018). Moreover, the participants also voiced their fears regarding social comparison especially on sites such as Instagram, sometimes carefully designed images of what others live like caused the person to feel inadequate and lower their self-worth. It conforms to the conclusions made by Turkle (2015), who wrote about the adverse emotional effects of social media, especially with the self-image and in interpersonal communication.

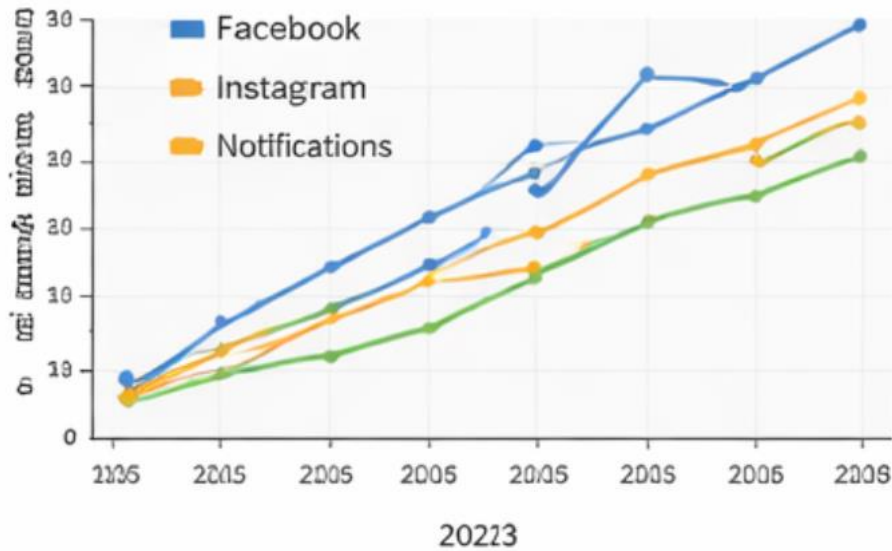


Figure 7: Social Media Usage Trends Among Indian Youth

V. Discussion & Conclusion

1. Interpretation of Findings

Informal skill learning through social media offers flexible, self directed learning resources, in line with worldwide results (Greenhow et al., 2019; Schroeder et al., 2020). The use of social media as a means of a value based learning, however, seems to be circumstantial; both positive messaging of values and content that may warp ethical perceptions are reinforced on the platform (Bucher and Helmond, 2018).

2. Implications

- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate social media in the curriculum and policies of examining and digital ethics.
- policymakers need to promote digital literacy initiatives with value education.



- Youth: Youth have to be advised on how to strike a balance between online education and offline contemplation.

3. Limitations & Future Research

The study is limited by self reported data. The future study can longitudinally study the effects of social media usage on career paths and value formations.

patching. The study also validates the effectiveness of automated scanning tools in identifying and prioritizing security risks in a structured manner.

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