

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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Abstract

In the era of digitalization, the education system witnesses the remarkable impacts of social media on the teaching-learning process. Today, it has emerged out as an interesting tool of learning because learners are turned out to be digital citizens. The contents streaming on social media are knowledge-enriching and prompting pupils for collaborative learning. The use of social media for imparting knowledge is nowadays popular due to its features viz. easy accessibility and speedy transmission of information and real-time conversation on virtual space. Keeping this scenario in mind, the researcher undertook a study with the primary aim of understanding the opinions of selected undergraduate social media users on improvement and enhancement of communication skills through social media platforms. The relevant data were collected from 190 undergraduate social media users by administering a structured non-disguised questionnaire. Chi-Square test, frequency distribution, percent were used to analyse the data. The findings reveal that videos of good orators, TED Talks on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TED App improve both the listening and speaking skills of social media users, and the majority of respondents also agreed that social media kinds of stuff offer excellent inputs to improve one's presentation skill.

Keywords: Social Media Platforms, Communication Skills, Improvement, Enhancement, Education System, Learning, Facebook, TED Talks

1 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary education system is perceived as a technology-driven which puts more emphasis on collaborative and reflective learning. And so, the educational technology occupies a prime place in a teaching-learning process. The emergence of social media and online meeting platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, GoToMeeting has revolutionized the entire process of imparting knowledge in educational institutes. This development has led to the rise of learning taking place in virtual space. Since millions of people across the world use social media for a variety of purposes, it is turned out to be a good learning tool. In fact, due to the flexibility and user-friendly features of social media applications, it is rightly regarded as a convenient learning tool. It offers a chance to various genres of learners to develop a variety of skills viz. acting, dancing, culinary, playing musical instruments, communication, etc. Besides, it provides a platform for promising artists and other such types of people to showcase their talents. It would be interesting to make use of social media platforms for learning. Certainly, it would give a hands-on experience to learners. **There has been a dramatical change in human lifestyle due to the advent and widely use of social media (Muftah, 2022).** The fascinating fact about social media platforms is that they teach a lot of things directly or indirectly. For instance, knowledge enhancing topical videos, the short-term digital workshop, creative contents in form of pictures or texts, amazingly expressed literary work in form of poetry or articles posted or shared on popular social media platforms viz. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogs, Apps, etc are useful to people desiring to improve their communication skills. **(Muftah, 2022) is of opinion that today, social media have become an integral part of students' and teachers' routine.** The contemporary scene has prompted the researcher to carry out the said study.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

1.1.1 Social media and social media platforms

Social refers to anything related to or of society or a specific group. It indicates the involvement of people and interaction & collaboration among them. While 'Media' means a medium through which information or message can be transmitted or shared. It means communication travels through media viz. newspaper, TV, radio, magazine, etc. Social Media are the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people or communities and organizations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility (Solomon & Tracey, p2). In general parlance, social media are web-based technologies through which people having common interest stay connected. Social Media

Platforms are nothing but social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Blogs, SlideShare, Snapchat, Helo, YouTube, etc.

1.1.2 Communication Skills

Communication is the process of exchange of ideas, feelings, and information through the use of an appropriate medium. Communication Skills refers to the ability of a person to give and receive certain types of information effectively. Communication skills encompass essential skills namely listening, speaking, observing, writing, and reading. A stronghold over communication skills results in a sound presentation skill.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Baruah, 2012) concluded that education is the main purpose for which social media are used by social media users. While 1/3rd of social media users believe that it bridges the communication gap. (Graham, 2012) discussed the results that students showed improvement in initiating and reciprocating social communication through the use of Facebook. (Rambe, 2012) was of a view that social networking sites democratize the communication. Facebook offers opportunities for student collaboration with both peer-generated content and pedagogical content knowledge. (Irwin, Ball, Desbrow, & Leveritt, 2012) asserted that Facebook is a learning platform helping the university students. It has lot of potential to promote collaborative and cooperative learning. (Rahman, 2014) reported the significant association between the usage of social networking sites and communication skills. (Adi Kasuma & Wray, 2015) found the relationship between the use of Facebook and academic achievement. (Veveve, 2015) found that majority of students' writing and speaking skills have been affected by social media and they don't bother about punctuation marks and grammatical rules while communicating on social media platform. (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016) were of the view that apart from benefits to the learners, social media provides a platform to writers and bloggers. (Magmanlac, Reyes, Boongaling, & Caiga, 2018) discussed that social media affects cognitive and social learning of students of mass communication. (Othman, Apandi, & Ngah, 2016) are of the view that a virtual world of communication has emerged due to the growth of online social media and affect the communication of students. And social media has revolutionized the way students think and interact and also their communication is dominated by social media. (Subramanian, 2017) opined that a bunch of conveniences is offered to youngster especially learners on social media and long-drawn written communication would be replaced by short and easy communication on the social media platform. (AlSaleem, 2018) found the effectiveness of Facebook activities in enhancing oral communication skills for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. (Kim, Karatepe, Lee, Demiral, & Hande, 2018) discussed that students get a chance to contribute to the social discussion by sharing content. (Tuliao, 2018) reported that most of the respondents believed that their communication skills have been improved because of social media and recommended that the educators should use social media in order to develop learners' communication skills and also for their academic achievements. (Abbas, Aman, Nurunnabi, & Bano, 2019) were of opinion that social media presents a variety of benefits to students. However, the behaviour of students is negatively influenced by its addictive usage. (Fatimawati, Mursalin, & Odja, 2020) found that social media is the effective tool for bringing improvement in learners' communication. (Olowo, Fashiku, Adebakin, & Ajadi, 2020) summed up that communication skills of principals have been enhanced and affected by the use of social media. (Defede, Magdaraog, Thakkar, & Bizel, 2021) stated that social media has changed the reading habits of the people and concluded that there is definitely an impact of social media on the way people communicate. The researchers revealed that according to half of the respondents, the way they write and speak has impressively been change due to social media. (Horoub, 2021) concluded that communication skills and body language of students are negatively by the social media and students who spend most of their times on social media tend to use less body language skills while interacting with others. (Chen & Xiao, 2022) stressed that social media are affordability advantageous for enhancing communication skills, and literacy improvement. (Ravindran, Ridzuan, & Wong, 2022) advocated through the findings of their empirical research that the most of the students of the view that their speaking skill has been enhanced due to the use of social media and they are able to interact effectively on social media platforms. Moreover, use of social networking sites has led to developing social skills which is said to be an essential for the interaction. (Muftah, 2022) found that communication skills and writing style have been significantly and positively influenced by the use of social media platforms and for majority of selected students, social media is a language learning tool.

3 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Social media platforms are widely used not only for getting socialized but also for learning purposes. The common observation is that people tend to use the short version of English terms while communicating on social media for which criticisms are received from the literary people. However, the way of expression has significantly changed due to social media. Interestingly, people would like to express their views in the English language on social media. Therefore, the researcher has made a sincere attempt to undertake a study to understand the opinions of undergraduate social media users on improvement and enhancement of communication skills through social media platforms.

4 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH STUDY

Gone are days when learning used to happen at a specific place and time. In the era of digitalization, all learning resources are easily accessible at a convenient time. Social media provide a unique platform for learners to sharpen and develop the required skills at ease. The results of the present study are of great help to educators as well as learners in making the best use of social media to improve and enhance communication skills.

5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To study the behaviour of selected students of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda on social media platforms.
- To understand the opinions of selected students of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda on improvement and enhancement of communication skills through the use of social media platforms.

6 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the quantitative approach to achieve the aforementioned research objectives and the research design was a descriptive in nature. While, the population of the research study consisted of 540 students enrolled in Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) Programme of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. Out of which, 190 students who use social media platforms were conveniently selected for the study.

Table 1 Gender-wise distribution of selected students (social media users)

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	77	40.53
Female	113	59.47
Total	190	100

The researcher attempted to carry out the present study by collecting the relevant primary data through a structured non-disguised questionnaire. The research instrument had two sections, the first section dealt with demographic and behaviour of selected students on social media platforms whereas the second section included the statements concerning to the opinions on improvement and enhancement of the communication skills through social media platforms. For reliability check, the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the questionnaire items. The derived value of the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.707 which was within the acceptable range. Furthermore, in order to analyze the data, the frequency distribution and percentage were used while to test the hypotheses, a Chi-Square test was applied.

7 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

8.1 Behavior of Selected Social Media Users

Table 2 Social media platforms used by the respondents

Social Media Platforms	Count	Percentage
Facebook	80	42.11
Instagram	165	86.84
WhatsApp	186	97.89
Snapchat	87	45.79
Twitter	29	15.26
Blog	5	02.63
YouTube	164	86.32
Helo	6	03.15
SlideShare	5	02.63
Other	25	13.16

The above statistics (Table 2) reveal that the majority of selected social media users use WhatsApp (97.89%) followed by Instagram (86.84%) and YouTube (86.32%). The fact surprises that the percentage of social media users using Facebook (42.11%) is lower than that of WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube. Besides, 13.16% of respondents use other social media platforms namely LinkedIn, Threads etc.

Table 3 Purpose of using social media platforms

Purpose	Count	Percentage
To stay connected with friends and relatives	173	91.05

To get an update on current affairs	148	77.89
To know as to what is brewing in the favorite celebrity's life	53	27.89
To get some entertaining stuffs	109	57.37
To gain some knowledge concerning education and career	133	70
Other	39	20.53

As depicted in the above (Table 3), 70% of students are there on social media to gain the knowledge pertaining to education and career, while 91% of them use social media with an intention to stay connected with friends and relatives. Moreover, 77.89% of students who want to get an update on current affairs while 57.37% of students are there for entertainment and 27.89% of respondents use social media to know about their favourite celebrities.

Table 4 People followed by students (social media users) on social media platforms

Type of People	Count	Percentage
Friends	177	93.16
Relatives (including family members)	149	78.42
Sports Personalities	80	42.11
Politicians	56	29.47
Fashion Personalities	69	36.32
Astrologers	09	4.737
Film Personalities	102	53.68
Motivational Speakers	95	50
Orators and Communication Experts	25	13.16
Artists (Singer, Dancer, Comedian etc.,)	118	62.11
Other	30	15.79

The table 4, there are 93.16% of students who follow their friends on social media where 78.42% of students follow their relatives. Interestingly, 62.11% of students follow artists of different genres (singer, dancer, comedian etc.,) on social media. While, 53.68% of students follow the personalities from the film fraternity. Furthermore, 42.11% of students follow sports personalities and 50% of students follow motivational speakers on social media platforms. However, only 13.16% of respondents follow orators and communication skill experts.

Table 5. Frequency of posting personal stuffs on social media

Frequency	Count	Percentage
Very Often	23	12.11
Occasionally	100	52.63
Rarely	67	35.26
Total	190	100

As shown in Table 5, there are 52.63% of students who occasionally post personal stuffs on social media while 12.11% of them keep their personal stuffs very often on social media.

Table 6 Types of posts shared and/or reshared on social media platforms

Types of Posts	Count	Percentage
Inspirational Story	48	25.26
Motivational Quote	85	44.74
Knowledge-based Stuff	54	28.42
Entertainment Stuff (filmy and humorous videos, songs, memes, reels etc.)	88	46.32
Poetry	23	12.11
Personal Achievement	68	35.79
Personal Moments / Memories	151	79.47

The Table 6 gives details on types of posts shared and/or reshared by the students on social media. There are 79.47% of the selected social media users (students) who post 'Personal Moments/Memories' on their respective social media pages while 46.32% of respondents share and post 'Entertainment Stuffs'. Besides, 28.42% of respondents share and/or post 'Knowledge-Based Stuff' whereas 12.11% of them would like to post 'Poetry'. Besides there are 44.74% of respondents who would like to post 'Motivational Quote' while 25.26% would prefer to post 'Inspirational Stories'. Apart from the entertainment, personal, and achievement stuffs, the rest of the posts would affect learning and enhance communication skills since they are literary in nature.

Table 7 Time spent on social media per day

<i>Time Spent</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Less than 1 Hour	33	17.37
1-2 Hours	72	37.89
3-4 Hours	48	25.26
More than 4 Hours	87	45.79
Total	190	100

The above given Table 7 reveals that 45.79% of selected undergraduate social media users spend more than four hours per day on social media platforms while 37.89% of students spend one to two hours per day. Similarly, 25.26% of respondents are there on social media for three to four hours per day while 17.37% of selected students use social media for less than an hour in a day.

Table 8 Social media platform or page for learning has been recommended by the teacher

<i>Whether social media platform or page for learning has been recommended by the teacher</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	112	58.95
No	78	41.05
Total	190	100

The Table 8 shows that according to 58.95% of students, their teachers recommend social media platforms or pages for learning purposes.

Table 9 Knowledge of the English language gained through social media platform

<i>Whether the knowledge of the English Language gained through Social Media Platform</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	171	90
No	19	10
Total	190	100

As indicated in the Table 9, as many as 90% of students believed that the use of social media helps them in acquiring the knowledge of the English Language

Table 10. Students who have subscribed any YouTube channel that provides the good contents for developing communication skills

<i>Whether students have subscribed any YouTube channel that provides quality contents for their developing communication skills</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	113	59.47
No	77	40.53
Total	190	100

The above statistics show that 59.47% of students have subscribed to a YouTube channel(s) that provide(s) quality contents for developing their communication skills.

8.2 Perception and opinions of selected students on Improvement and Enhancement of Communication Skills through social media platforms.

As indicated in the Appendix number I, there are 51.58% of respondents who just agreed that social media has completely changed the face of Communication and 42.11% respondents agreed to the statement that social media offers a liberty to users since one can give his/her opinion there without any hesitation. While 26.32% of respondents strongly agreed that social media helps the users build confidence when they talk with others via the social media platform. Similarly, 44.21% of respondents strongly opined that social media is the best way to express feelings and emotions via emojis, GIF, Stickers, etc, and 33.68% of respondents just agreed to the same. There are 57.37% of selected social media users who hold a strong opinion on a statement that social media gives chance to users to read a variety of material about education, politics, entertainment, tourism by the way of Blogs, SlideShare, etc. A group of 50.53% of respondents perceived that the videos of good orators, Podcasts and TED Talks on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TED App improve both the listening and speaking skills of social media users. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (57.37%) opined that social media enriches the vocabulary since one gets to know about new terms and words by reading the comments, contents of others on social media as well as blogs of well-known authors /freelance writers, influencers, content creators. Similarly, 56.32% of selected social media users agreed to the fact that social media develops copywriting skills/content writing (the art of writing creative material) among users of social media whereas 4.21% of respondents showed their disagreement. Besides, there was 53.16% of respondents who showed their agreement to the fact that social media improves writing skills of users since it offers an opportunity to write an inspirational quote, attention-seeking texts, caption, and catchy phrases when they post something on their respective social media page as well as comment to others' post and story. A strong agreement by 30.53% of respondents was reported on the statement 'Having watched videos uploaded on the social media platform,

users can develop an understanding about right gesture and posture required while addressing to audiences' and 51.05% of respondents also agreed on the same. Moreover, there was 56.84% of respondents who showed their agreement to the fact that social media posts and videos related to Grammar assist users to avoid any kind of grammatical mistake in any type of communication. In the same line, the Majority of (55.26%) selected social media users agreed that social media kinds of stuff offer excellent input to improve one's presentation skills.

8.3 Hypotheses Testing

H0₁: The opinions of selected students of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda on improvement and enhancement of communication skills through use of social media platforms and their *gender* are significantly independent.

H0₂: The opinions of selected students of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda on improvement and enhancement of communication skills through use of social media platforms and *time spent on social media platforms* are significantly independent.

NS- Not Significant if 'p' value of Chi-Square test is more than 0.05 (significance level) - Null hypothesis is accepted.

S - Significant if 'p' value of Chi-Square test is less than 0.05 (significance level) - Null Hypothesis is rejected.

To apply Chi Square test, the researcher has converted Interval Scale into Nominal Scale as below because responses were rated on 5-Point Likert Scale

Category 1 - Strongly Disagree

Category 2 - Disagree

Category 3 - Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Category 4 - Agree

Category 5 - Strongly Agree

Table 11 Chi-Square value for the opinions of students (social media users) on improvement and enhancement of communication skills through social media platforms vis-à-vis their gender and time spent on social media platforms.

Sr. No.	Selected Statements related to social media and Communication Skills	Gender			Time Spent on social media		
		'p' value	Df	Result	'p' value	Df	Result
1	Social Media (SM) has completely changed the face of Communication	0.565	2	NS	0.415	6	NS
2	SM fastens communication	0.255	3	NS	0.186	9	NS
3	SM makes communication an easy and a simple	0.030	4	S	0.818	12	NS
4	SM involves negligible costs of communication	0.003	4	S	0.057	12	NS
5	SM supplements face to face interaction	0.013	4	S	0.135	12	NS
6	SM offers a liberty to users since one can give his/her opinion there without any hesitation	0.059	4	NS	0.034	12	S
7	SM provides a platform to talk about innovative and eye-opening ideas	0.757	4	NS	0.653	12	NS
8	SM helps the users build confidence when they talk with others via social media platform.	0.418	4	NS	0.938	12	NS
9	SM is the best way to express feelings and emotions via emojis, GIF, Stickers, PoV etc	0.456	4	NS	0.035	12	S
10	SM gives chance to users to read variety of material pertaining to education, politics, entertainment, tourism by the way of Blogs, SlideShare	0.619	3	NS	0.389	9	NS
11	Videos of good orators, Podcasts and TED Talks on You Tube, Facebook, Instagram and TED App improve both listening and speaking skill of social media users.	0.213	4	NS	0.080	12	NS
12	SM enriches the vocabulary since one gets to know about new terms and words by reading the comments, contents of others on social media as well as blogs of well-known authors /freelance writers/content creators, influencers	0.175	4	NS	0.147	12	NS
13	SM develops copywriting skills / content writing (art of writing creative materials) among users of social media	0.761	4	NS	0.362	12	NS
14	SM improves the writing skills of users since it offers an opportunity to write an inspirational quote, attention-	0.141	3	NS	0.632	9	NS

	seeking texts, caption, and catchy phrases when they post something on their respective social media page as well as comment on others' posts and stories.						
15	Having watched videos uploaded on the social media platforms, users can develop an understanding of the right gesture and posture (body language) required while addressing to audiences.	0.875	3	NS	0.487	9	NS
16	SM posts and videos related to Grammar assist users to avoid any kind of grammatical mistake in any type of communication	0.014	4	S	0.898	12	NS
17	SM Stuffs offer an excellent input to improve one's presentation skill	0.020	4	S	0.058	12	NS

* Level of significance 0.05

The table 12 depicts that the opinions of students of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda on selected statements related to improvement and enhancement of communication skills through use of social media platforms and their gender are statistically independent Except five statements such as 'Social Media Make Communication an easy and a simple' (0.030), 'Social Media involves negligible costs of communication'(0.003), 'Social Media supplements face to face interaction'(0.013), 'Social Media posts and videos related to Grammar assist users to avoid any kind of grammatical mistake in any type of communication' (0.014) and ' Social Media Stuffs offer an excellent inputs to improve one's presentation skill'(0.020) because the corresponding 'p' value of these statements is lower than the assumed level of significance (0.05). Similarly, the opinions of students of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda on selected statements related to improvement and enhancement of communication skills through use of social media platforms and time spent on social media platforms are statistically independent except two statements such as 'Social Media offers a liberty to users since one can give his/her opinion there without any hesitation' (0.034) and 'Social Media is the best way to express feelings and emotions via emojis, GIF, Stickers, etc' (0.035) because the corresponding 'p' value of these statements is not greater than the assumed level of significance (0.05).

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research, the following is a list of recommendations.

- Students should be encouraged to spend quality time on browsing and referring useful contents posted on social media platforms enabling them to enhance their communication as well as presentation skill.
- Social media channels viz. SlideShare on varied topics, blogs of journalists, authors, travellers, etc should be followed by them to improve writing as well as reading skills.
- They should also be advised to thoroughly analyze the writing style of contents on social media platforms viz. Instagram, Facebook, Blogs, Twitter etc. This will help them develop creative content writing skill.
- Students should be inspired to follow fashion personality, motivational speakers, communication experts, and orators on social media and their style and art of communication should be observed meticulously so as to bring the behavioural changes.
- They should be advised to subscribe and watch YouTube channels focusing more on English Language and Communication Skills.
- Moreover, Podcasts, TED Talks and Rendezvous telecasted on YouTube channels should be recommended to the students because such types of shows will definitely offer a golden opportunity to them to bring improvement in their conversation and body language.
- Additionally, they should be persuaded not only to install Social Media Apps like Cake, Utter, Cambly, Duolingo, Hello English, TED, etc. but also to make the best use of those Apps for the sake of their benefits.

11 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH STUDY

The present study is confined to only students of Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) studying at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. Furthermore, the responses of the selected social media users might have been based on any biases or prejudice which may affect the results.

12 FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

For the generalization of results of the study, the students of other Bachelor Programmes of the varsity should be included. Besides, the impact of linguistic / communication-based apps on the improvement of

communication skills can also be studied. Similarly, a comprehensive study on positive as well as negative implications of social media on the use of communication skills can also be undertaken. Since an online learning management system (through MOOCs, MOODLE, and Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, etc.) has gained popularity during the pandemic situation, the effectiveness of these new platforms should be studied.

13 CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the use of social media in learning brings a lot of benefits to the learners and it is a good tool to improve and enhance communication skills if it is used effectively. Social Media Apps especially meant for improving communication skills should be recommended to learners by both educational institutes and corporate houses.

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