



Impact of Social Media on Teacher Effectiveness: An Exploration of Connectivism

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of social media on teacher effectiveness, with a focus on pre-service teachers in Shimoga city. Employing a quantitative approach, the researcher administered a scale measuring the impact of social media on teacher effectiveness to a sample of pre-service teachers. The data was analyzed using statistical techniques to address key objectives, including assessing the level of impact social media has on teacher effectiveness and investigating whether gender academic stream influences this impact. Findings revealed that the majority (55%) of pre-service teachers experienced an average impact of social media on their effectiveness, while 35% reported a high impact, and only 10% indicated a low impact. No significant difference was found between male and female pre-service teachers or between those from the Arts and Science streams in terms of social media's influence on teacher effectiveness. The study highlights that while social media plays a beneficial role in connecting teachers and enhancing professional networks, it remains an accessory to teaching rather than a core component of the profession itself. The study concludes that social media facilitates collaboration, fosters informal leadership, and supports teachers' agency, wellbeing, and communication, thereby contributing positively to their professional development. However, it also cautions that teachers' engagement with social media should remain purposeful and grounded in the broader goals of professional growth and community building.

Keywords: Social media, Teacher effectiveness, Pre-service teachers, Shimoga city, Gender and academic stream.

Introduction:

Modern society, with its rapid scientific and technological advances, has seen an exponential rise in accessible knowledge and continuously changing and emerging technologies. The emergence of the internet has provided access to the views and opinions of a wide range of individuals opening up opportunities for new forms of communication and knowledge formation inside and outside of formal educational institutions. Previous ways of navigating and filtering available information are likely to prove ineffective in these new contexts. The ability to access relevant information and harness the resources offered by the views and opinions of others have become important skills particularly as the

need for lifelong learning, both formal and informal is increasingly recognized by individuals, organizations and institutions

The bottom line is that social media is a big part of our day to day life and there's no point of keeping it away from the education process. School, college and university staff should be encouraged to make use of technology for student and parent communication. This could easily turn into an argumentative essay topic for college. But the benefits are obvious, starting with healthier parent-teacher relationships and all the way to permanently changing the way our children will learn.

Social media platforms are providing opportunities for advocacy and agency for teachers as they now have wide scale forums where they can share their views and ask questions. In a time of increasing academic pressures, and in some instances increased isolation owing to the coronavirus pandemic, many teachers turn to social media for support and ideas.

Educators adapting to new learning environments may turn to learning theories to guide them. If existing theories no longer fully or only partially explain learning in these contexts new theories need to be developed. These may build on existing theories without discarding them or totally replace existing theories. Connectivism is one of the most prominent of the network learning theories that have been developed for e-learning environments. It first appeared in Siemens online publication "Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age", ideas which have been developed by Downes. It is beginning to be recognized by medical educators due to its claim to provide a lens through which teaching and learning using digital technologies can be better understood and managed.

Connectivism:

Connectivism is a conceptual framework which views learning as a network phenomenon influenced by technology and socialization. It is claimed to have roots in principles explored by chaos, network and complexity and self-organization theories (Siemens 2005). Downes, asserts it is also supported by connectionism, associationism and graph theory. Its epistemological framework, based on the concept of distributive knowledge, is considered distinct from the epistemological traditions of objectivism, pragmatism and interpretivism. Siemens considers these existing traditions limited due to their intrapersonal view of learning, their failure to address the learning that is located within technology and organizations and their lack of contribution to the value judgments that need to be made in knowledge-rich environments.

The principles of connectivism, after Siemens are:

- Learning and knowledge rest in diversity of opinion.
- Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources.
- Learning may reside in non-human appliances.
- Capacity to know is more critical than what is currently known.
- Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
- Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.
- Accurate, up-to-date knowledge (currency) is the aim of all connectivist learning activities.
- Decision-making is a learning process in itself.

In connectivism the starting point for learning occurs when knowledge is actuated by learners connecting to and participating in a learning community. Learning communities are defined as "the clustering of similar areas of interest that allows for interaction, sharing, dialoguing and thinking together". Participation results in conversations between learners and other members of the community

including more knowledgeable others. These conversations in the web 2.0 era consist not only of words but also of images, e.g. video and multimedia. With the advent of web 2.0 learners are able to create Personal Learning Environments (PLEs), which allow for the production as well as consumption of learning resources.

There is no denying that, ever since social networks and social media made way into our lives, everything is different. Beginning with the way we socialize, interact, and plan for parties or even how often we go out. We won't go into a debate regarding the ethical aspects of the way Social Media is influencing our lives. Instead, this article proposes to focus on the numerous ways in which social media is changing the way the education system works. So, stay tuned to find out what effects does social networking have on the way our children are educated both at school and outside of it.

Social Media:

According to the Dictionary definition, "Social Media is websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking." Social media is not just limited to posting pictures about holidays online. Social media has gained credibility over the years as a reliable source of information and platform where organizations can interact with audiences. The use of **social media platforms** has permeated almost every aspect of our lives with billions of users worldwide. Everybody spends too much time scrolling through their feeds, whether it's Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and etc...,

We also communicate with one another differently now thanks to social media, from sharing photos from our vacation to sharing our thoughts. The **impact of social media on students** is both positive and negative. The purpose of this post is to examine the effects of social media on students.

By understanding the potential consequences, we can navigate the digital landscape responsibly and maximize the benefits while mitigating the risks.

The Positive Impact of Social Media on Students learning:

- 1. Access to Information and Educational Resources:** **Social media platforms** provide students with a wealth of educational content. It enables them to access information, news, and resources relevant to their studies. Online communities and forums can foster collaborative learning and knowledge sharing.
- 2. Enhanced Communication and Networking:** Social media platforms facilitate communication and networking among students. It allows them to connect with peers, mentors, and experts from around the world. This could lead to valuable collaborations, mentorship opportunities, and the exchange of diverse perspectives.
- 3. Expression of Creativity and Talent:** Social media provides a platform for students to showcase their creative work. The ability to receive feedback and recognition from a global audience boosts confidence and encourages the pursuit of creative endeavours.
- 4. Awareness and Activism:** Social media has played a pivotal role in raising awareness about important social issues and mobilizing students for activism. It enables them to share their voices, support causes they believe in, and initiates positive change within their communities.

The Negative Impact of Social Media on Students:

- 1. Mental Health Challenges:** Social media can contribute to increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among students. The constant exposure to carefully curated,

idealized online personas can lead to unhealthy social comparisons and a diminished sense of self-worth.

2. **Cyberbullying and Online Harassment:** Social media platforms provide a platform for cyberbullying. It could have severe psychological and emotional consequences for students. The anonymity and wide reach of social media can amplify the impact of bullying and make it difficult for victims to escape.
3. **Distraction and Reduced Productivity:** Spending excessive time on social media can lead to decreased focus, attention, and academic performance. The constant stream of notifications, updates, and addictive content interferes with students' ability to concentrate. As a result, it becomes hard for students to complete their tasks effectively.
4. **Sleep Disruption:** The use of social media, particularly before bed, could disrupt students' sleep patterns. The blue light emitted by screens and the engagement with stimulating content negatively impacts the quality and duration of sleep. It leads to fatigue and decreased cognitive functioning.

To navigate the impact of social media effectively, students must develop digital literacy and responsible online behaviour. Educators, parents, and schools play a crucial role in guiding students on safe and mindful social media usage. Strategies such as setting boundaries, practicing digital detox, and promoting open conversations. It helps students maintain a healthy relationship with social media. Media literacy programs and awareness campaigns equip students with the skills needed to critically evaluate and interpret online content.

Social media platforms have become an undeniable force in the lives of students. It's shaping their experiences and interactions in profound ways. While it presents both benefits and challenges, it is essential to foster responsible and mindful social media usage among students. By understanding the negative impact, leveraging the positive aspects, and adopting strategies to navigate the digital landscape. However, students can harness the potential of social media while safeguarding their well-being. Finally, empowering students as informed and responsible digital citizens will enable them to maximize the benefits of social media while minimizing its potential drawbacks.

Need and Significance of the Study:

The principles of connectivism characterize a shifting information landscape, the recognition that information is acquired constantly and changes quickly, and the ability to identify meaningful information is an essential skill (Siemens, 2005). Social media are a manifestation of connectivism's principles. They foster diverse connections as they are often a meeting ground between scholars, students, organizations, news outlets and a variety of other information providers.

Using the principles of connectivism in conjunction with social media is not without its limitations. Friesen and Lowe argue that any for profit social media service is unsuitable for educational purposes because, to borrow the idea from Williams (Friesen & Lowe, 2012), when advertising is the purpose of the medium, it restricts the ability to use it for learning. A key example is the inability to "dislike" something on Facebook, which limits the academic discourse (Friesen & Lowe, 2012). The recent addition of reaction emojis on Facebook provides more opportunities for engagement, but still falls short of intellectual communication. However, information literacy instruction cannot exist in a vacuum, and using existing social media to critique the information shared within these networks can provide learning opportunities.

Numerous studies have documented social media tools in educational settings (Tess, 2013). Allen and Tay (2012) analyzed students reported use and actual use of wikis for college assignments. Boyd (2013) explored the use and limitations of blogs in the classroom. Mendez, Le and De La Cruz (2014) provided a case study to show the beneficial features and potential costs of using Facebook group in a college course. All of these studies discuss the limitations of using social media for educational purposes, as social network sites, blogs, wikis, and other social media tools were not developed for educational purposes. As Kimmerle, Moskaliuk, Oeberst and Cress (2015) point out, social media were developed to support communities rather than instruction classrooms, and that social media facilitate collective knowledge construction instead of individual learning.

Digital age venues that provide participants with a meeting place to exchange information, thoughts, and creations such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have begun to traverse from a purely social environment to one of collaboration and mutual growth. Social media venues have perpetuated a new way of synergistic real-time sharing of information. Constructivism and connectivism are socialized learning processes, whereas connectivist learning not only denotes a social interaction, but also interactions between networked nodes. In this way this study is very significant.

Objectives of the study:

1. To assess the level of impact of Social Media on teacher effectiveness.
2. To find whether there is any significant difference between male and female Pre-Service teachers impact of social media towards their Teacher Effectiveness.
3. To find whether there is any significant difference between Arts and Science Stream Pre-service teachers impact of social media towards Teacher Effectiveness.

Hypotheses of the study:

1. There is no significant impact of social media between male and female Pre-Service teachers with respect to their Teacher Effectiveness.
2. There is no significant impact of social media between Arts and Science Stream Pre-service teachers with respect to their teacher effectiveness.

Methodology:

The present study was taken up to investigate the impact of social media on teacher effectiveness of Pre-Service teachers and to find whether there is any difference in these variables with respect to gender and stream. Descriptive survey method of study was followed.

Variables of the study:

Dependent variable: Impact of Social media, Teacher effectiveness

Moderate variables: Gender and Stream

Sample of the study:

The study was conducted on a sample of 100 Pre-Service teachers of Shimoga city. The selection of teachers was done on the basis of stratified random sampling method.

TOOLS:

The following tools used to collect the data from the Pre-Service teachers:

- **“Impact of Social media on Teacher Effectiveness Scale”** constructed by Dr. Manju N. D was used. The scale contains 40 statements which represent the universe of content. Cronbachs Alpha method to determine the reliability of the tool and the reliability of the Cronbachs Alpha test is found to be 0.921.

Procedure for data collection:

Data for the study was collected by administering the impact of Social media on Teacher effectiveness Scale to the selected sample by the investigator. The obtained data with respect to different back ground variables were tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis employing statistical techniques.

Statistical techniques used for analysis of data:

The obtained data was analyzed using Percentage Analysis and ‘t’ test.

Analysis of the data and interpretation of the results:

The analysis of data interpretation and discussion of the results are presented below:

Objective 1: To assess the level of impact of Social Media on teacher effectiveness.

In pursuance of the objective 1 of the study the analysis is presented in table No 1.

Table No. 1: Table showing the percentage of the Pre- Service teachers with respect to their different levels of impact of Social media on their teacher effectiveness.

Pre-Service teachers	Level of impact of social media on Teacher Effectiveness (in %)			Total
	High Impact	Average impact	Less impact	
Frequency	35	55	10	100
Percentage	35	55	10	100

The table No.1 shows that 35 percent of the pre-service teachers have High impact of social media on teacher effectiveness. 55 percent of the pre-service teachers possess an average level of impact of social media on teacher effectiveness. There are only 10 percent of Pre-service teachers in the range of less impact of social media on teacher effectiveness.

Ho. 2: There is no significant impact of social media between male and female Pre-Service teachers with respect to their Teacher Effectiveness.

Table No. 2: Summary table of ‘t’ test of impact of social media on teacher Effectiveness of male and female Pre-Service Teachers.

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value	df	Significant level
Male	15	172.47	33.02	0.170	98	N S at 0.05 level
female	85	172.38	32.22			

The table 2 shows that the obtained ‘t’ value of 0.170 is less than the table value of 1.980 at 0.05 significant level for degree of freedom 98. It is inferred that there is no significant difference in the impact of social media on Teacher Effectiveness of male and female Pre-Service Teachers. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Ho.2 : There is no significant impact of social media between Arts and Science Stream Pre-service teachers with respect to their teacher effectiveness.

Table No. 4: Summary table of 't' test of impact of social media on teacher effectiveness of pre-service teachers of different Streams.

Streams	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error of mean	t- value	df	Significant level
Arts	40	183.59	24.20	3.45	0.817	98	N S
Science	60	178.17	33.82	4.73			

The table 3 shows that the obtained 't' value of 0.817 is less than the table value of 1.980 at 0.05 significant level for df 98. It is inferred that there is no significant deference between the impact of social media on teacher effectiveness of Arts and Science Stream Pre-service teachers. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

It is found that:

1. Nearly of more than half of the pre-service teachers in Shimoga city i.e., 55.0% of them possess an Average impact of social media on Teacher Effectiveness and 35% possess high impact of social media on teacher effectiveness, and only 10% of the pre-service teachers possess less impact of social media on teacher effectiveness.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers in their impact of social media on teacher effectiveness.
3. There is no significant difference between Arts and Science Pre-serviced teachers in their impact of social media on teacher effectiveness.

Educational Implications:

1. Starting from elementary school up until university graduation, social media has the role to empower parents, students and teachers to use new ways of sharing information and build a community. Statistics show that 96% of the students that have internet access are using at least one social network. What's even more extraordinary is that, even though some of the students use the social networks for entertaining and other purposes, there are a lot of them that actually use it to promote a lot of positive and useful activities. From finding a summer internship, promoting a success story about how to win the student-loan battle or collaborate on international projects, everything is made possible.
2. Today, we can see education institutions adapting these developments into their systems and relying on group resources and mechanisms to improve student life. The use of social media in education helps students, teachers and parents to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. Social network tools afford students and institutions with multiple opportunities to improve learning methods. Through these networks, you can incorporate social media plugins that enable sharing and interaction. Students can benefit from online tutorials through YouTube, online courses delivered by universities abroad through Skype and a wide array of resources that are shared through social networks.
3. Social media has the ability to broaden your perspective on various subjects and gives illuminating, instant content that is new. You have the opportunity of engaging experts to get answers on topics that you may need help in.

4. Learning colleges have the ability to connect with students through social media networks such as Face book, Google Plus groups, and YouTube. These channels can be used to communicate campus news, make announcements and provide students with useful information. This builds engagement between the college and students which help tackle many student issues through the group interactions.
5. Institutions can share supportive and positive posts that reach all students that are connected to the networks and pages. You can initiate hash tags on social media to engage students and online discussions that are helpful. A video is a prominent tool in social media trends that is effective and you can use it to share useful videos that inspire students and help them in their course subjects.

Conclusion

Although social media can be used positively within the teaching profession, it must be remembered that it is an accessory to a teaching career, not the career itself. It is a platform, or a forum, a space where experience and language co-emerge. The Heideggerian-orientated hermeneutic phenomenology theoretical perspective of this study makes salient the phenomenon of teachers' desires and action to be *in* professional community *outside* of employment systems. Although employing bodies offer support of wellbeing, including access to external providers, teachers have proactively sought out ways to connect with each other and form online communities outside the boundaries of their systems of employment. Their experiences in these online platforms show desires for wider collegiality and collaboration than possible within local school contexts. Proactive and positive social media engagement expands teachers' professional networks and provides them with opportunities for informal leadership and a forum to test-drive ideas. In this way, teachers generate meaning about their ideas and practices *in* collaborative contexts and social media is shaped by their agency. Struggles can be normalised without damaging the reputation of one's school and wins celebrated. While this platform interaction supports agency, wellbeing and communication, links to 'greater' social and public good motives are also evident.

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