



Positive Impact of Social Media on Early Childhood Education

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life, extending its reach into education. While much of the discourse around social media and young children has centred on concerns related to screen time and online safety, emerging research suggests that these platforms can also offer significant educational benefits, particularly in the early years of schooling. Social media platforms such as YouTube and WhatsApp are increasingly being utilised to complement traditional learning methods, offering interactive and engaging content that supports cognitive and language development in young learners.

This study explores the positive impacts of social media on the education of LKG and UKG students, as perceived by their mothers. By examining the experiences and insights of 25 mothers, this research aims to highlight the ways in which social media can enhance early childhood education and provide recommendations for optimising its use in this context.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the constructive role that social media can play in the educational development of young children. While the potential risks of social media are often highlighted, this research provides a balanced perspective by examining the positive outcomes that can result from its use in early childhood education. The findings are intended to inform parents, educators, and policymakers about the benefits of integrating social media into early learning environments, while also addressing the challenges that need to be managed to maximize these benefits.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the specific positive impacts of social media on the learning experiences of LKG and UKG students
2. To understand the extent to which mothers perceive social media as a beneficial tool for their children's education.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does the use of social media influence children's engagement and interest in learning activities?
2. How do mothers perceive the impact of social media on their children's education, and what are their primary concerns regarding its use?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design, using a survey to gather data from 25 mothers of LKG and UKG students. A structured questionnaire was distributed, focusing on mothers' perceptions of the positive impacts of social media on their children's education. The questionnaire included multiple-choice and open-ended questions to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. Responses were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify common trends and themes.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected from 25 mothers of LKG and UKG students provides valuable insights into the usage of social media for educational purposes and its perceived positive impacts on early childhood education.

General Information and Usage of Social Media

The majority of respondents indicated that their children are actively engaged with social media platforms for educational purposes. Most of the children were reported to be in the age group typically associated with LKG and UKG, and both boys and girls were equally represented in the sample. Specifically, 80 percentage of the mothers reported that their children use social media for educational activities. Among these, 72 percentage of the children were found to use YouTube the most, followed by WhatsApp at 40 percentage. These platforms are favored due to their accessibility and the availability of age-appropriate educational content. Additionally, 40 percentage of the mothers mentioned that their

children use social media daily for learning, while 32 percentage reported usage several times a week, indicating a high level of engagement with these digital tools.

Perceived Impact of Social Media

When asked about the positive impact of social media on their child's learning, a substantial majority of mothers expressed strong agreement. Specifically, 64 percentage of mothers observed that social media had significantly increased their children's interest in learning. Furthermore, 48 percentage noted improvements in their children's language skills, which they attributed to the diverse and engaging content available on platforms like YouTube. Additionally, 36 percentage of the mothers reported that their children showed better engagement with educational content when it was delivered through social media. The interactive nature of social media was also highlighted as a key factor in enhancing children's creativity and overall engagement with learning material.

Mothers also acknowledged the role of social media in supporting their own efforts to facilitate learning at home. An overwhelming 72 percentage of mothers felt that social media helped them support their children's learning by providing access to diverse educational resources. This was seen as particularly beneficial for reinforcing concepts taught at school and offering additional learning opportunities at home.

Parental Concerns and Suggestions

Despite the positive feedback, 40 percentage of mothers expressed concerns about their children's use of social media for educational purposes. Common concerns included the potential for distraction, exposure to inappropriate content, and the challenge of regulating screen time. Those who had these concerns often suggested the need for stricter parental controls and the development of more age-appropriate content that aligns with educational goals.

When asked for suggestions to enhance the positive impact of social media on early childhood education, many mothers emphasized the importance of curating content that is both educational and safe for young children. They also advocated for the integration of social media into formal educational frameworks, with guidance from educators on how to use these tools effectively. The majority of mothers, 68 percentage, indicated that they would recommend the use of social media for educational purposes to other parents, provided that appropriate measures are taken to ensure its safe and effective use.

KEY FINDINGS

Major findings of this study were as follows;

- Most mothers reported that their children use social media for educational purposes, with YouTube being the most commonly used platform, followed by WhatsApp.
- A significant number of mothers indicated that their children use social media daily for learning activities, suggesting that social media is well integrated into their educational routines.
- Many mothers observed that social media significantly increased their children's interest in learning, making education more engaging for young learners.
- Several mothers noted improvements in their children's language abilities, attributing this to the diverse and interactive content available on platforms like YouTube.
- Some mothers reported that their children were more engaged with learning materials when presented through social media compared to traditional methods.
- Many mothers felt that social media helped them support their children's learning at home by providing access to diverse educational resources, making it easier to assist with schoolwork and offer additional learning opportunities.
- Some mothers expressed concerns about their children's use of social media for educational purposes, with common worries including potential distractions, exposure to inappropriate content, and difficulties in managing screen time.
- A majority of mothers indicated that they would recommend the use of social media for educational purposes to other parents of young children, provided it is used safely and effectively.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

This study underscores the significant potential of social media to enhance early childhood education by making learning more engaging and interactive. The positive impact of social media on increasing children's interest in learning suggests that educators should consider incorporating digital content into their teaching strategies. Platforms like YouTube, which offer interactive and visually stimulating materials, can complement traditional methods and make educational experiences more appealing. Additionally, the observed improvements in language skills among children using social media highlight its potential as a valuable resource for language development. Teachers and parents can

utilize social media content to reinforce language lessons and expose children to diverse linguistic inputs, aiding in the development of vocabulary and communication skills.

However, the study also reveals important concerns that need to be addressed, such as managing screen time and ensuring content appropriateness. To maximize the benefits of social media, educational institutions must work closely with parents to develop strategies for overseeing children's digital use, ensuring that content is educational and age-appropriate. Integrating social media into the curriculum in a structured and supervised manner can enhance learning outcomes, while promoting digital literacy from an early age will equip children with the skills to navigate online environments safely and responsibly. By balancing the positive aspects of social media with effective management strategies, educators and parents can create a dynamic and supportive learning environment for young children.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that social media can have a positive impact on early childhood education by enhancing children's engagement and interest in learning. The findings reveal that platforms such as YouTube and WhatsApp can be valuable tools for making educational content more interactive and accessible, thereby supporting language development and fostering a greater enthusiasm for learning. The ability of social media to provide diverse and engaging resources offers significant advantages for reinforcing educational concepts outside the classroom.

Nevertheless, the study also highlights crucial concerns regarding the use of social media, including the potential for distraction and the need for appropriate content management. Addressing these concerns requires a collaborative approach involving educators, parents, and policymakers to ensure that social media is used effectively and safely. By implementing strategies to manage screen time and curate content, and by incorporating social media thoughtfully into educational practices, it is possible to maximize its benefits while mitigating potential risks. Overall, the integration of social media into early childhood education holds promise for enriching the learning experience, provided that its use is guided by careful consideration of its impact on young learners.

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