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## “Social Media as a Source of Academic Awareness and Opportunities among University Students”

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### **Abstract:**

*With the rapid growth of social media in recent years, students are now using these platforms as a regular part of their everyday lives. This increasing presence of social media has changed the way students come across and share academic information and opportunities. The present study focuses on understanding how social media works as a medium for spreading academic awareness and creating opportunities for university students. To investigate this, a survey was carried out with both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The study specifically looks at how popular platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, LinkedIn and YouTube are helping in students' academic development. These platforms are not only being used for communication or entertainment but also for gaining valuable information about scholarships, internships, online learning courses and upcoming academic events. The data was analyzed through statistical representation using charts. Overall, the results confirm the core idea of the study: social media is a powerful tool that positively influences students' academic awareness, learning, and career preparation. It not only provides access to information but also builds networks and supports holistic growth. This further emphasize that social networking sites are not just for social interactions but also serve as powerful and effective tools in supporting educational growth.*

### **Keywords**

Social media, academic, opportunities, academic, awareness.

## **Introduction**

In the present digital era, social media has grown to become an inseparable part of students' everyday lives shaping both their academic experiences and their social interactions. Unlike the earlier times, when details about important academic opportunities such as scholarships, internships, seminars, workshops and academic conferences were mostly circulated through college notice boards or sent through official institutional emails, the situation has now changed completely. Today, with the increasing dependence on digital platforms, students receive the same information in a faster and more accessible way through social media. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Telegram, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube are emerging as highly effective alternatives to the traditional means of communication. These platforms are no longer limited to casual chats or entertainment alone. University students actively make use of them for exploring different academic resources, identifying career-related opportunities, registering for online courses, participating in educational events and building direct connections with teachers, mentors, professionals and peers who can support their academic and career journeys.

The objective of this study is to analyze and understand the actual contribution of social media platforms in creating academic awareness and providing opportunities for university students. The study focuses on examining the positive role of social networking sites, a perspective that is often overlooked because much of the existing research highlights only the negative consequences of excessive social media usage such as distraction or loss of productivity. By shifting the attention to the constructive academic benefits, this research seeks to broaden the discussion and add value to the existing body of literature. The study emphasizes that when used with a clear purpose, social media platforms can act as powerful tools for academic growth, professional development and lifelong learning.

## **Literature Review**

Bosch (2009) explored how students use Facebook for educational purposes. The findings revealed that Facebook groups often acted like informal classrooms where students and teachers could post announcements, share learning materials and discuss academic topics. These groups also became platforms for sharing opportunities such as guest lectures, workshops and academic events happening on campus. The study showed that Facebook was not just for socializing but it also created a sense of academic community where students could stay informed and even find mentoring support from peers and teachers. However, the study also mentioned that issues like unequal internet access and lack of digital skills could create challenges. Despite this, Facebook

significantly supported students in becoming more aware of academic information and opportunities making it an important educational resource.

Junco et al. (2010) studied how Twitter can be used as a tool for learning among college students. In their research, some classes were encouraged to use Twitter for academic discussions, updates and asking questions while other classes did not use it. They found that the students who used Twitter were more engaged in their studies, communicated more with their classmates and teachers and even performed slightly better in their grades compared to those who did not use Twitter. The study clearly shows that when social media platforms are used in a structured and purposeful way, they can help students become more aware of academic information, stay updated with coursework and grab more learning opportunities. This highlights that social media can act as a bridge between students and valuable academic resources.

Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2012) explain that social media plays a very important role in creating a Personal Learning Environment (PLE) for students. They suggest that platforms like blogs, online groups and networking sites allow students to not only access information but also to create their own set of resources and communities. Students can use these tools to manage their learning goals, share useful content and connect with experts or peers beyond their classrooms. This makes them more aware of the opportunities available for academic growth such as webinars, online tutorials and peer study groups. The study also shows that these platforms improve self-learning habits which means that students become more independent and responsible in their academic journey.

Ainin et al. (2015) studied how Facebook use is related to the academic performance of university students. Their survey results showed that when students used Facebook for activities like group discussions, sharing study materials and keeping in touch with classmates, it had a positive impact on their studies. They found that Facebook helped students remain aware of important information such as exam schedules, assignment deadlines and useful academic resources. This awareness also encouraged collaboration and mutual support among peers which further improved academic performance. Although Facebook is often criticized for distracting students, the study proves that if used with a focus on education, it becomes a powerful tool to raise academic awareness and give students more opportunities to succeed.

Greenhow and Lewin (2016) present social media as something that not only supports classroom learning but also connects students to the wider world of knowledge. Their work explains that social media allows students to take part in online communities where they can follow academic discussions, keep track of experts in their field and

learn about opportunities like scholarships, online courses and internships. The researchers argue that these platforms increase students' academic awareness by showing them information and chances that they may not find in their college or university alone. The study also notes that social media encourages collaboration, knowledge sharing and interaction across borders which creates more pathways for academic development. Thus, when guided properly, social media can extend learning beyond classrooms and open up doors to many opportunities for students.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the role of different social media platforms in spreading awareness about scholarships, internships and academic events.
- To determine whether social media contributes to career growth and academic performance through awareness creation.

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the role of social media in creating academic awareness and opportunities among university students. The target population consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate students across different faculties including Arts/Humanities, Commerce & Management, Science & Technology and Other. 100 students were selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire through Google Forms. The questionnaire was divided into demographic details, social media usage patterns and items measuring academic awareness and opportunities. All items were framed on a homogeneous four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to ensure consistency and to avoid neutral responses. The analysis of data was done using statistical representations through pie chart and bar diagrams.

### **Findings and Discussion**

This finding is based on a survey of 100 university students conducted to explore how they use social media for academic awareness and opportunities. The findings suggest that social media is no longer limited to personal communication but is increasingly becoming part of the educational and career development process. A large majority of students (90%) expressed a positive view of social media's role in their academic growth. They identified networking, access to online courses and exposure to career opportunities as the main advantages. Platforms such as WhatsApp and YouTube were reported as the most commonly used for academic purposes, while Facebook and Twitter were found to have relatively limited academic use.

However, the study also highlights an important distinction between usefulness and reliability. Although students consider social media valuable for discovering

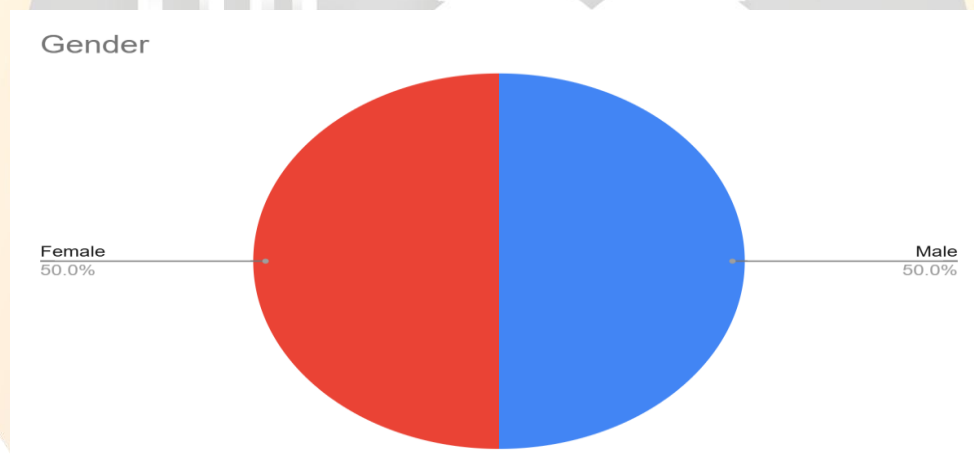


opportunities, about 18% of respondents questioned its reliability as a source of academic information. This indicates that students tend to use social media as a starting point for information but they also verify it from external and trusted sources. Such behaviour reflects a developing sense of digital literacy and underlines the need for institutions to guide students in evaluating online information.

Overall, the study points to a shift in how students engage with academic and professional spaces. Social media now functions as a shared academic environment where purposeful engagement allows students to access knowledge, resources and opportunities beyond the boundaries of traditional institutions.

### 1. Gender

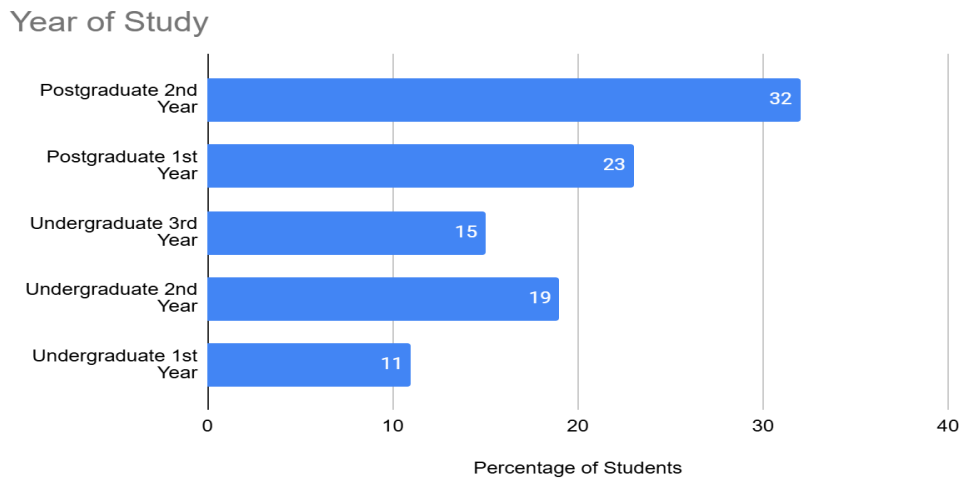
The survey included an equal number of male and female respondents with 50% participants from each gender. This equal representation helps avoid any bias that might occur if one gender was overrepresented. It also ensures that the findings are balanced and not influenced more by the views of one gender. Because of this balance, the analysis can concentrate on other factors without needing to adjust results based on gender differences.



### 2. Year of Study

The survey included both undergraduate and postgraduate students but most of the respondents were from the postgraduate level. Among them, 23% were first-year postgraduates and 32% were in their second year, making a total of 55% postgraduate students. The remaining 45% respondents were undergraduates, with 11% in the first year, 19% in the second year and 15% in the third year. Since postgraduate students are more advanced in their academic journey, they are often more career-focused and actively seek out academic and professional opportunities such as scholarships, research projects, conferences and internships. Their responses may therefore reflect a higher level of awareness and purposeful use of social media for professional growth

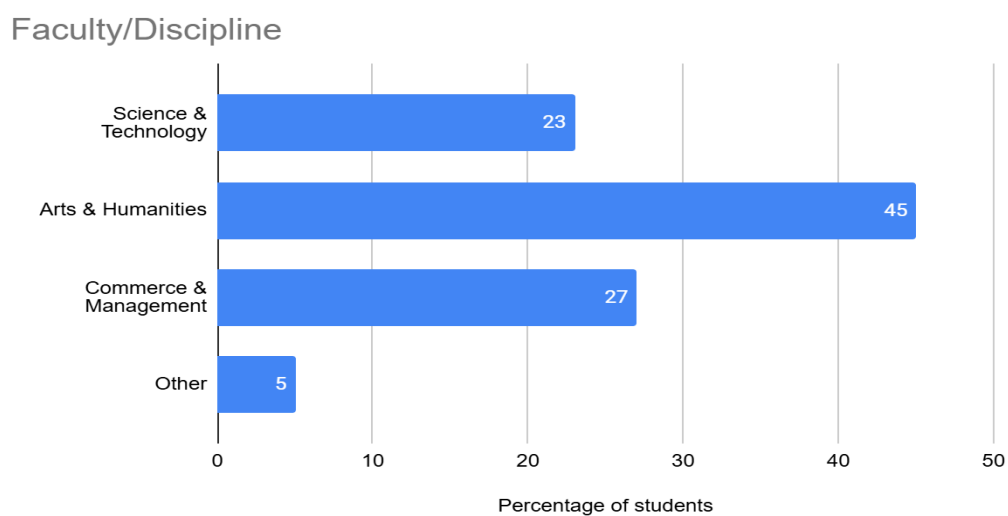
compared to undergraduates who are generally at an earlier stage of academic and career development.



### 3. Faculty/Discipline

The respondents in the survey come from different academic programmes which add variety to the demographic profile. The largest share of students is from the Arts & Humanities faculty making up 45% of the total. This is followed by students from Commerce & Management (27%) and Science & Technology (23%). A smaller group of 5% falls under the “Other” category.

The strong presence of Arts & Humanities students is an important factor to consider in understanding the results. Students from this discipline often depend on networking, collaboration and diverse learning resources beyond their regular curriculum. As a result, they may be more likely to use social media for building academic communities and informal learning, which could help explain the overall positive views found in the survey.

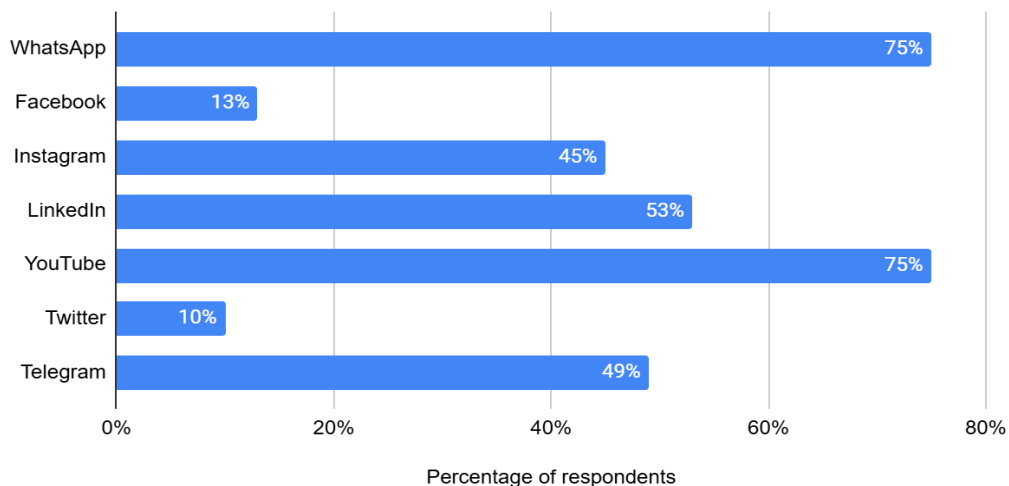


#### 4. Which social media platforms do you use most for academic purposes? (Multiple choice, tick all that apply)

The data on platform preference shows a clear pattern of how students use social media for academic purposes. WhatsApp and YouTube are the most popular each used by 75% of respondents. These are followed by LinkedIn (53%), Instagram (45%) and Telegram (49%). On the other hand, Facebook is used by only 13% of respondents and Twitter by just 10%.

These results highlight the different ways students use various platforms. The heavy use of WhatsApp reflects students' preference for direct communication with peers, small study groups and quick sharing of information. Similarly, the high use of YouTube shows the importance of video-based learning, where students access tutorials, lectures and other skill-based content. In contrast, the low use of Facebook and Twitter suggests that platforms designed for broad, public sharing are not as useful for academic needs. The findings show that students choose platforms based on their specific features and functions. Rather than treating social media as one general tool, they use different platforms strategically i.e. for private communication, collaboration or learning, depending on what suits their academic goals.

Which social media platforms do you use most for academic purposes?  
(Multiple choice, tick all that apply)

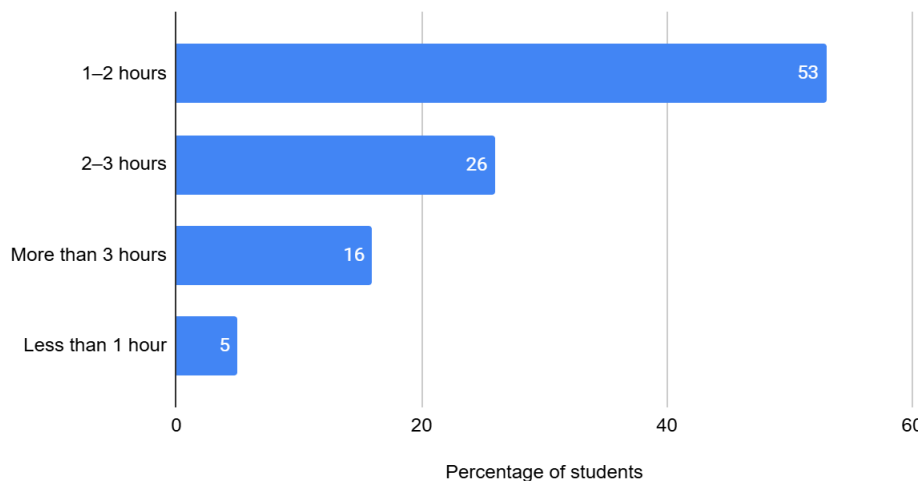


#### 5. Average daily time spent on social media

The survey shows that students spend a considerable amount of time on social media every day. More than half of the respondents (53%) reported using it for 1 to 2 hours daily. Another 26% spend between 2 and 3 hours, while 16% use it for more than 3 hours each day. Only 5% of students reported using social media for less than an hour.

These figures suggest that social media has become a regular and important part of students' daily lives. The amount of time spent indicates that social media is not just a casual activity but an integrated part of their routine. This level of engagement provides a strong base for using these platforms as channels for academic and professional purposes. Since many students spend a moderate to high amount of time online, it is likely that they are not just passive users but are actively engaging with content, making social media a powerful and influential source of information in their academic journey.

Average daily time spent on social media



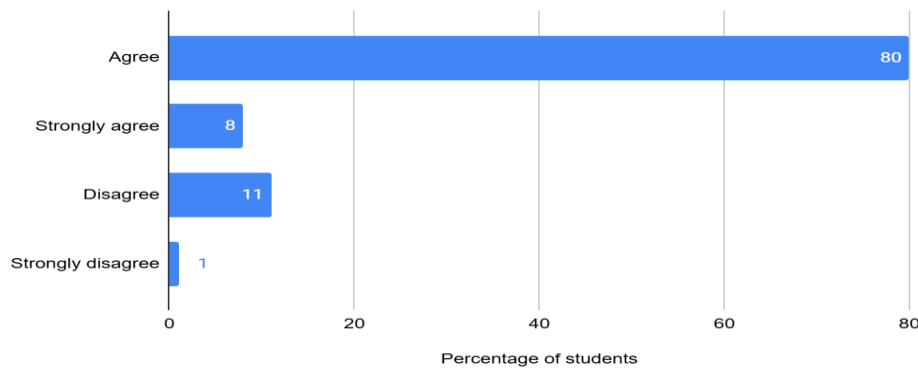
#### **6. I actively follow academic groups/pages/channels on social media.**

The survey results clearly indicate that students use social media with a specific academic purpose in mind. A large majority of respondents (88%) in total reported that they actively follow academic content on these platforms. Among them, 80% agreed and 8% strongly agreed with this statement. This shows that academic engagement through social media is a common and intentional practice among university students. Whereas, only 12% disagreed with the statement.

This high percentage highlights that students are not passively encountering academic content while browsing for leisure. Instead, they are consciously searching for and following educational resources, updates and opportunities. Such behaviour suggests that social media is functioning as a proactive tool for academic growth and information acquisition, rather than merely serving as a source of entertainment. This also reflects a growing level of digital literacy, where students know how to identify and access content that supports their academic and professional goals. The pattern emphasizes that social media, when used with intent has the potential to supplement classroom learning, provide exposure to global knowledge and connect students to career-oriented opportunities.



I actively follow academic groups/pages/channels on social media.

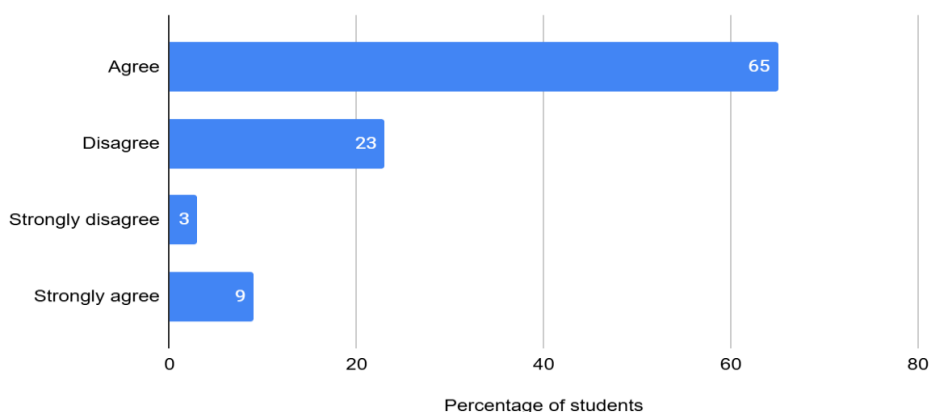


### 7. Social media has helped me learn about scholarships relevant to my academic level.

The data shows that social media plays an important role in helping students find financial opportunities. A total of 74% of respondents agreed that they had learned about scholarships through social media, with 65% choosing Agree and 9% selecting Strongly Agree. 26% of respondents still believe that social media has not helped them in learning about scholarships.

This finding highlights the usefulness of social media as a reliable source of practical and career-related information. By providing easy access to scholarship updates, these platforms serve as important tools that support students' academic growth and professional development. It also shows that students are not only using social media for communication or entertainment but are relying on it to access opportunities that directly benefit their future. At the same time, this trend also suggests a potential awareness gap i.e. students who are less active on social media may miss out on such opportunities compared to their peers. This makes it important for educational institutions and faculty to encourage balanced and informed use of social media so that all students can benefit equally from the opportunities available.

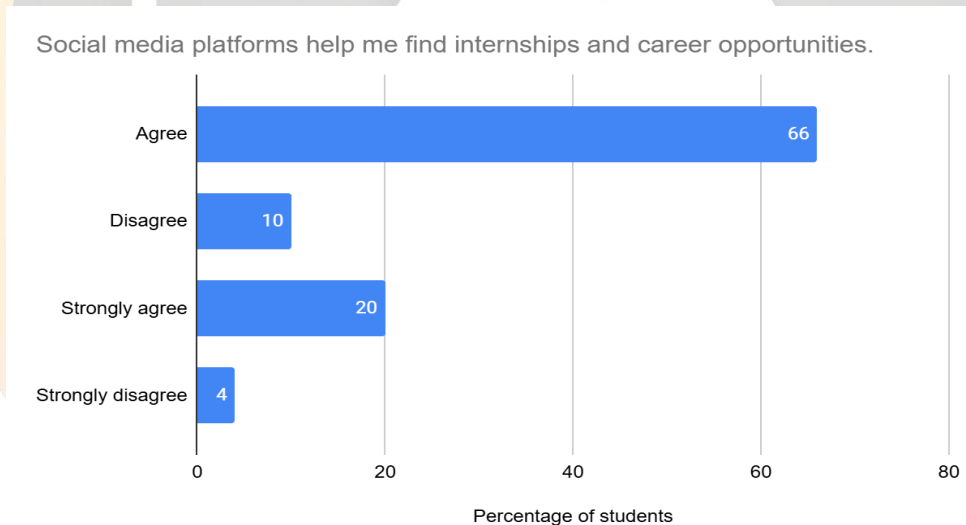
Social media has helped me learn about scholarships relevant to my academic level.



### 8. Social media platforms help me find internships and career opportunities.

The data indicates a clear agreement among students about the role of social media in professional development. A large majority (86%) of respondents said that social media platforms help them discover internships and career opportunities. Of these, 66% selected Agree and 20% chose Strongly Agree. Only 14% disagreed on role of social media in finding internships and career opportunities.

This strong consensus shows that social media has become an important resource for students in shaping their career paths. Many now view these platforms as essential tools for finding internships, job openings and professional growth opportunities. In some cases, students may even consider social media more effective or accessible than traditional university career services, since it provides faster updates and a broader range of opportunities. Platforms such as LinkedIn, with its professional networking and job listings or Telegram groups dedicated to internships and academic opportunities are widely used by students to stay connected with relevant career information. This reflects a shift in how students approach professional development, relying on digital platforms not just as supplementary tools but as central resources in their career journey.



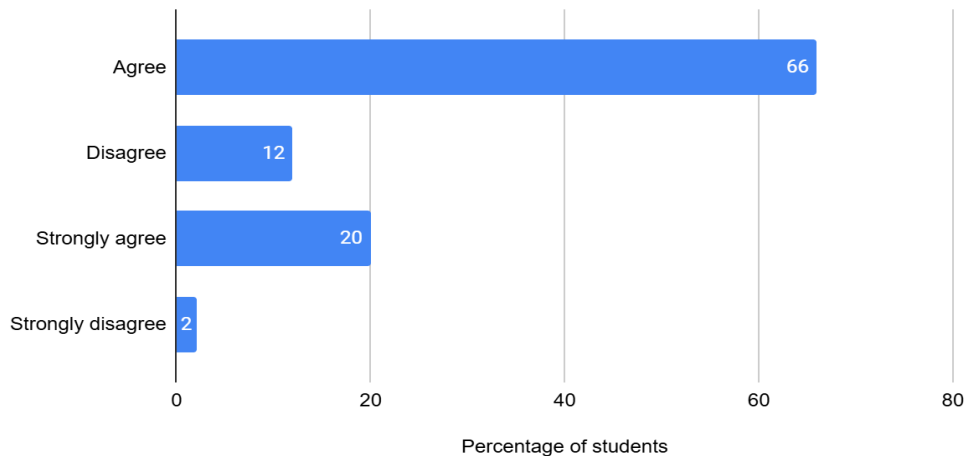
### 9. I have come across academic competitions or conferences through social media.

The survey results show that social media plays a strong role in connecting students with the wider academic community. A large majority (86%) of respondents said they had come across academic competitions or conferences through these platforms with 66% selecting Agree and 20% choosing Strongly Agree. 14% respondents disagreed on coming across academic competitions or conferences through social media.

This finding highlights how social media helps students move beyond the boundaries of the classroom and their local institution by providing access to broader academic opportunities. Through these platforms, students become aware of competitions,

seminars and conferences that they might not have discovered otherwise. Participation in such activities not only enhances academic learning but also gives students valuable exposure to professional networks. By attending events promoted through social media, students can interact with peers, researchers and experts from different regions which strengthen both their academic growth and career prospects. This shows that social media functions as a bridge between academic engagement and professional development, positioning it as an essential tool in students' overall educational journey.

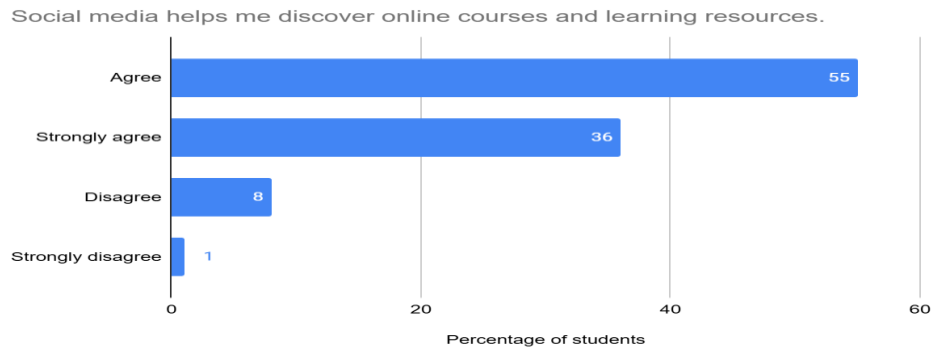
I have come across academic competitions or conferences through social media.



#### **10. Social media helps me discover online courses and learning resources.**

One of the most important findings of the survey is the usefulness of social media in helping students discover learning materials. 91% of respondents agreed that social media supports them in finding online courses and educational resources. Among them, 55% chose Agree and 36% selected Strongly Agree. Notably, the Strongly Agree responses (36%) represent the highest level of strong agreement recorded across all attitude-based questions in the survey. Only 9% disagreed about social media helping to discover online courses and learning resources.

This exceptionally high level of agreement shows that students see social media as a powerful tool for discovering new learning opportunities. Its role as a source of online courses and educational content highlights the shift toward continuous and on-demand learning. In today's era of lifelong education, such platforms make it easier for students to access knowledge beyond the traditional classroom, allowing them to develop new skills and stay updated in their fields. This confirms that social media is not just an accessory in education but a central resource for independent and flexible learning.

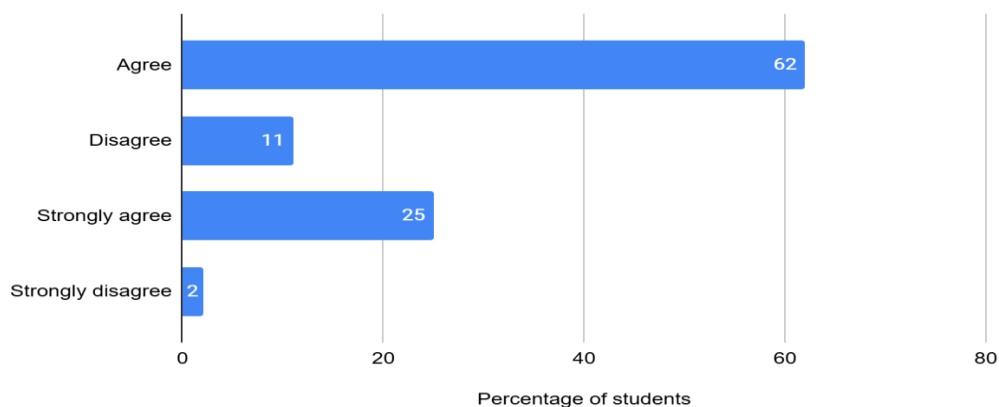


### 11. I believe that social media improves my academic and career-related awareness.

The general attitude-based questions in the survey support the positive trend already shown in the usage data. A large majority (87%) of respondents believe that social media improves their academic and career-related awareness. Of these, 62% selected Agree and 25% chose Strongly Agree. 13% respondents did not believe that social media improves their academic and career-related awareness.

This strong positive response strengthens the earlier findings and confirms that students see social media as a valuable part of their academic journey. It shows that they do not just use these platforms out of habit but also recognize their role in improving knowledge, awareness and opportunities. The results suggest that students view social media as a supportive tool for their overall growth, contributing to both their academic learning and career development. Moreover, this perception highlights the growing digital confidence among students as they are able to use online platforms in a purposeful way rather than only for casual interaction. Their belief in social media's academic and professional benefits reflects an evolving understanding of digital spaces as productive environments, which has important implications for how universities and educators can integrate social media into formal learning and guidance systems.

I believe that social media improves my academic and career-related awareness.

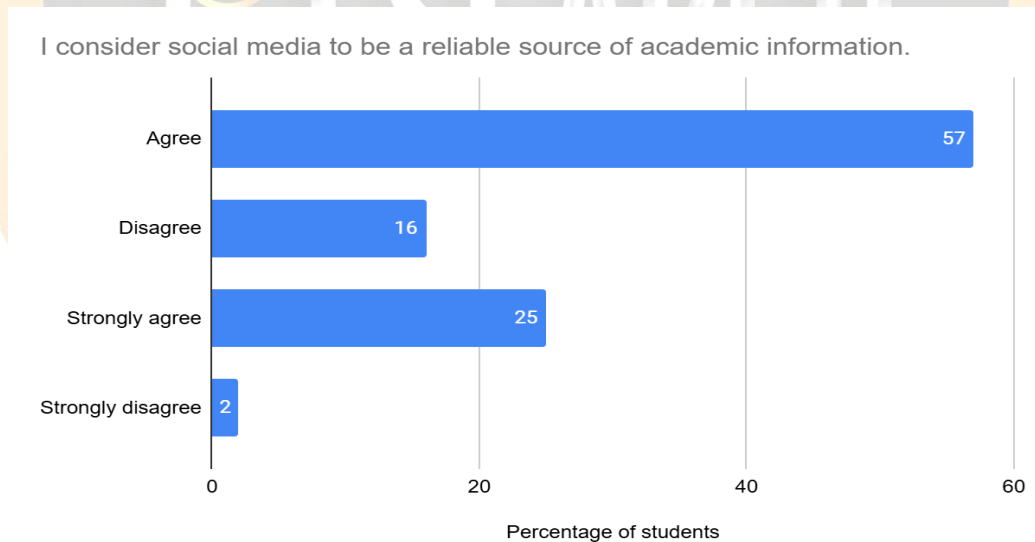




### 12. I consider social media to be a reliable source of academic information.

Although students show strong confidence in the usefulness of social media, the data reveals some caution when it comes to reliability. A total of 82% of respondents consider social media a reliable source of academic information, with 57% choosing Agree and 25% selecting Strongly Agree. However, 16% of students disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed with the statement.

The difference between the very high scores for usefulness (such as 91% agreeing that social media helps them find online courses) and the relatively lower score for reliability suggests that students have a careful and balanced understanding of digital information. Instead of blindly trusting what they find online, students seem to use social media mainly as a starting point to discover opportunities and resources. After that, they verify the information through more credible and official sources like university websites, academic databases or company portals. This shows a responsible and mature approach to digital literacy where students recognize the strengths of social media as a discovery tool but also understand its limits as a source of final, authoritative information. Linking back to the earlier finding on intentional engagement, this suggests that students are not only active seekers of academic content but also critical evaluators, combining exploration with verification to make the best use of digital platforms.



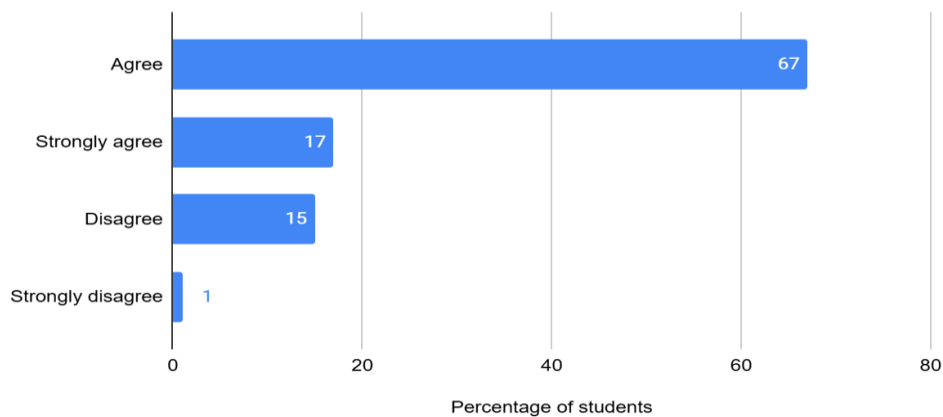
### 13. Academic opportunities shared on social media are often useful and relevant to me.

Along with using social media to discover opportunities, students also rate the content they find as being of good quality. A total of 84% of respondents agreed that the academic opportunities shared on these platforms are often useful and relevant to them.

Of these, 67% chose Agree and 17% selected Strongly Agree. 16% respondents disagree on social media being often useful and relevant for academic opportunities.

This finding shows that students are not just exposed to a large amount of information on social media but are also finding content that matches their academic and professional needs. The strong positive response connects the earlier high utility scores to the quality of the material available suggesting that social media provides both meaningful and relevant opportunities. This supports the idea that students view these platforms not simply as information sources but as spaces where reliable and useful content supports their academic growth.

Academic opportunities shared on social media are often useful and relevant to me.

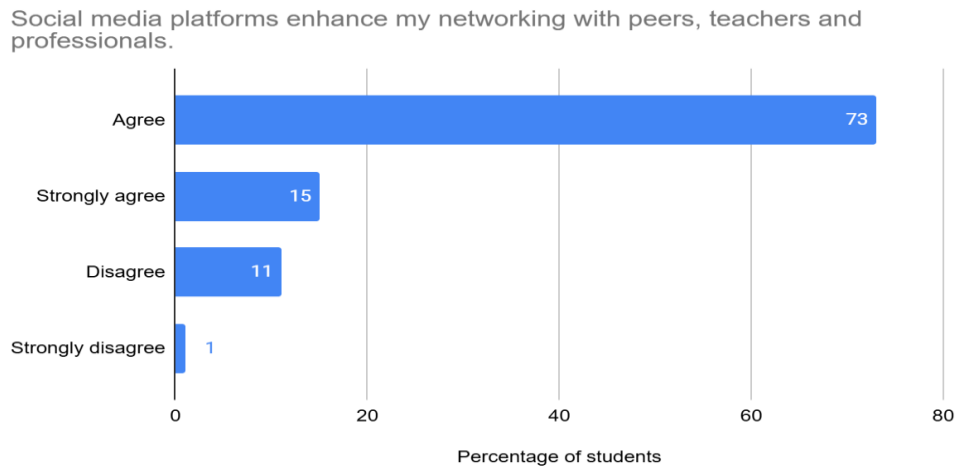


#### **14. Social media platforms enhance my networking with peers, teachers and professionals.**

The survey results show that networking is one of the most important and widely recognized benefits of social media. A large majority (88%) of respondents believe that these platforms improve their networking with peers, teachers, and professionals. Of these, 73% selected Agree and 15% chose Strongly Agree. 12% respondents still disagree on the statement that social media platforms enhance their networking with peers, teachers and professionals.

This strong response highlights that the greatest value of social media lies in its ability to create and strengthen connections. By making communication easier and faster, these platforms help students build both academic and professional networks. The popularity of tools like WhatsApp further supports this finding, as such platforms are widely used for group discussions, information sharing and maintaining regular contact with peers and mentors. Beyond communication, these connections often lead to practical outcomes such as internships, collaborative projects and mentorship opportunities. This demonstrates that social media is not only a source of information

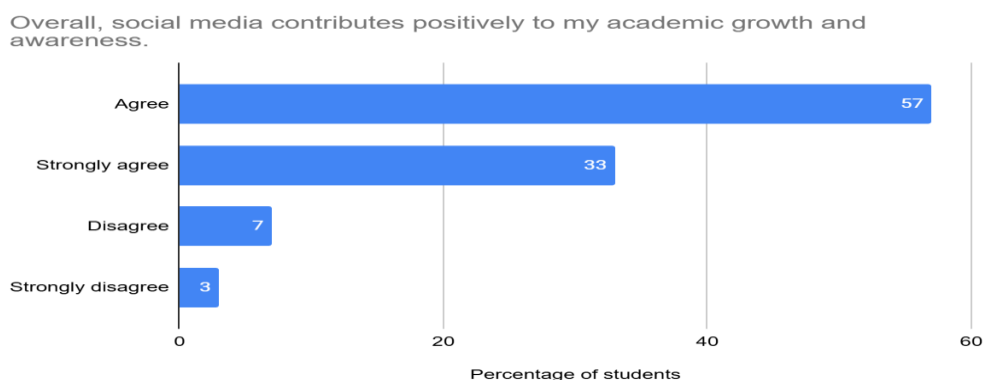
but also a space where meaningful academic and career-oriented relationships can grow ultimately supporting students' long-term professional development.



### 15. Overall, social media contributes positively to my academic growth and awareness.

The last question of the survey clearly sums up how students feel. A total of 90% of respondents believe that social media has a positive impact on their academic growth and awareness, with 57% saying they Agree and 33% saying they Strongly Agree. This almost unanimous agreement strongly supports the main idea of the study, showing that social media is not just widely used but also plays a meaningful and positive role in the academic lives of students. Only 10% respondents do not agree with the statement of social media contributing positively to academic growth and awareness.

Taken together with the earlier findings, this result highlights that social media is more than a space for casual interaction, it has become an important educational resource. Students are using it not only to stay updated with learning materials and opportunities but also to build professional networks, discover scholarships and prepare for their future careers. Social media has developed into a trusted partner in the academic journey of students, shaping their growth in ways that extend well beyond the classroom.



The survey highlights that an overwhelming 90% of students view social media as a positive influence on their academic growth and awareness. This strong agreement confirms that social media is not just a platform for communication but also an essential space for learning, networking and discovering opportunities. It has become an integral part of students' educational journey, supporting both their academic development and career aspirations.

### **Conclusion**

The study shows that social media has become an important tool for university students, both academically and professionally. Students use platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube most actively for learning and communication while LinkedIn and Telegram are also valuable for academic and career purposes. The findings reveal that students do not treat social media as one single space but use different platforms for specific needs such as group discussions, accessing learning materials, discovering scholarships or internships and participating in academic events.

At the same time, students show awareness about reliability, using social media mainly as a starting point and verifying information through trusted sources. The strong agreement on its role in networking, awareness and overall academic growth confirms that social media is deeply integrated into their educational journey. The study concludes that social media is not just a source of entertainment but a meaningful and practical medium that supports learning, professional opportunities and holistic student development.

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