

Exploring Secondary School Teachers' Perspectives on Using Social Media in Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

Social media integration in educational settings has attracted a lot of attention in recent years. The study aimed to ascertain how secondary school teachers perceive regarding the usage of social media in teaching and learning process. Phenomenological design was used in this research. It was conducted on 30 teachers of public sector secondary schools of district Lahore. Data was collected by using self-developed semi-structured interview protocol. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The study concludes that social media platforms, such as WhatsApp and YouTube, support instructional practices. However, challenges such as lack of facilities, privacy concerns, and unequal access to resources hinder effective integration. The study underscores the need for technological infrastructure and clear usage guidelines to maximize the educational potential of social media.

Keywords: Social media, Phenomenological study, Secondary school

Introduction

Social media's influence on contemporary, technology-based society is undeniable. It is a phenomenon that changes the communication habits of people, creates opportunities for business, provides publicity for various organizations and individuals, encourages sharing of information and affects life in other ways.

This study focused on exploring different perspectives of teachers regarding the use of social media for teaching-learning. It provides an overview of the different ways provided by social media and its challenges for teachers and students. According to Karim et al. (2022), social media usage is inserted in society's life. Social media plays a vital role in the lifestyle of society; it impacts how people live, how they work, and what they learn today.

The use of social media usage is rapidly increasing in educational settings. Social networking is being used by instructors in classrooms to engage students for inclusive education and to promote their educational progress. To put it briefly, social media plays a useful role in facilitating and moulding students' learning. The usage of social media as a teaching tool is steadily gaining popularity in Pakistan. Social media platforms are growing in popularity as a communication and educational tool due to the growing use of cell phones and internet connectivity, especially in cities.

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According to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), internet users in the country crossed the 125 million marks in 2024, reflecting the growing digital connectivity (PTA, 2024). Young people that regularly use social media, notably students, make up a sizable portion of these users.

Social media is utilized in a variety of ways to enhance teaching and learning in the educational setting. Teachers in cities like Lahore are using Facebook and WhatsApp more and more to communicate with students, share information, and hold online classes. According to Jankauskaitė (2015) at least 25% of people are actively using social media. Social media is extremely significant and influential. Social media, for instance, influences how people communicate with one another and gives businesses a way to communicate. The idea that educators should use social media to strengthen the teaching-learning process rather disregarding it.

Ahmed (2016) examined the suitability of social media's incorporation in Pakistani secondary schools and emphasized the significance and requirement of social media in secondary schools. This study made it easier to comprehend the advantages and drawbacks of incorporating social media in the class and to analyse the extent to which social media enhances academic growth, classroom performance, and student learning. Prince's study (as cited in Qureshi, Khaskheli, Qureshi, Raza, & Yousufi, 2021) stated that the most beneficial kind of active learning is collaborative learning. Teachers use collaborative learning as a strategy to speed up learning and enhance student performance. According to a survey by Gul et al. (2023), the majority of schools have an adequate number of digital devices, and teachers are somewhat proficient in using technology to teach. They do, however, encounter significant obstacles such as inadequate teacher training, poor internet connections, limited electricity, and a lack of funding. Participants in the interviews voiced dissatisfaction with the programme due to the textbooks' poor suitability for online learning. Numerous suggestions were put up to address these problems. In another study conducted by Chugh and Ruhi (2018), it was found that social media platforms facilitate peer-to-peer connection and allow teachers to share resources that are customized to meet the needs of each individual student through social media, which facilitates differentiated education.

According to Raut and Patil (2016), majority of teachers and students use social media in the class and own cell phones. Social media is now available in an educational setting through apps and web tools, and teachers use a variety of software solutions and free online applications to improve participation, communication, and learning. In contrast to traditional approaches that offer few opportunities for learner autonomy, social media-based learning platforms give students more influence over their educational journeys. In a recent study by Andleeb et al. (2023) it was found that social media has brought many advantages, which include increased access to information, facilitating collaborative and enhanced social interaction. However, it has also been associated with a number of negative effects, including reduced

academic performance, decreased attention period, and increased obstructions among students.

According to Moran, Seaman, and Tinti-Kane's study (as cited in Hussain, Cakir, & Candeger, 2018), users differ from one another on a social and psychological level and utilize social media for a variety of goals. Variances in how people use the platform appeared to be acceptable. Facebook was the most used social media site overall based on the volume of postings it received. The second most visited website, YouTube, appeared to be gaining ground on Facebook. The study highlighted that 66% of academicians use social media in classrooms, instructional sessions, or activities. Over 40% suggested their students use social networking sites for assignments, 30% offered course materials through these sites, and 20% demanded that students comment on certain social media posts. A significant majority (80%) recommended that their students watch educational videos online to improve learning and broaden their horizons.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to explore the perspectives of teachers regarding the use of social media as a tool for teaching and learning in secondary schools of district Lahore. There are limited qualitative research studies in this area in Pakistani context. Therefore, by adopting a qualitative approach, the study goes through deeply into teachers' experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward integrating social media into educational practices. The findings of the study may provide valuable insights not only for teachers and school administrators but also for policymakers, curriculum developers, and education technology planners. Understanding teachers' perspectives can help shape more informed and effective strategies for professional development, resource allocation, and policy formulation. Ultimately, this research contributes to enhancing the quality of education by highlighting how social media can be used to support more engaging, accessible, and student-centered learning environments.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the types of social media sites used by teachers in their instructional practices.
2. To understand teachers' perceptions about social media's potential for improving teaching-learning processes.
3. To assess the challenges teachers encounter while using social media for teaching and learning purposes.

Research Questions

1. What are the types of social media sites used by teachers in their instructional practices?
2. What are teachers' perceptions about social media's potential for improving teaching-learning processes?

3. Which challenges teachers encounter while social media's usage for teaching and learning purposes?

Research Methodology

This study was conducted to explore the use of social media for teaching-learning and the perspectives of teachers regarding its use in secondary schools of district Lahore. So, according to the nature of this study, qualitative research was used. The study employed a phenomenological design to explore and understand the lived experiences and perspectives of secondary school teachers. This design was used to explore how teachers used social media in their teaching and learning, what were their views about social media, and which challenges or benefits they faced?

Secondary school teachers from all public sector of district Lahore were the population. Data was collected from both male and females. Detail of the population is given in table 1.

Table 1: *Detail of Population of Secondary Schools (Public) of Lahore*

Sr. No.	Tehsils	No. of Schools		Teachers (SSTs+SSEs)
		Boys	Girls	
1.	Lahore Cantt	26	28	246
2.	Lahore City	64	84	1075
3.	Model Town	44	48	570
4.	Raiwind	17	20	213
5.	Shalimar	37	49	555
	Total	188	229	2658

Source: <https://open.punjab.gov.pk/schools>

Table 1 shows the number of secondary schools and teachers according to five tehsils of district Lahore. There were 417 secondary schools and teachers were 2658 who were teaching classes IX and X.

Purposive sampling technique was used to collect qualitative data from 30 teachers (15 male and 15 female) teaching classes IX and X in secondary schools of district Lahore who were using social media in their teaching process. The sample size of this study was 30 because it was suitable for qualitative research. The main goal in this research was not to generalize results to a larger population but to gain deeper insights into the experiences and opinions of teachers.

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed by the researcher to explore opinion of teachers about how they used social media platforms for teaching and learning purposes, keeping in view the objectives of the study. The questions were formulated after the review of related literature. The interview questions were open-ended in order to provide the opportunity for the participants to response freely about their opinions. Two experts' opinion was taken to ensure content validity of the instrument. Their suggestions were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the questions. A mock interview was also conducted for further refinement. Interview answers were recorded with the consent of interviewee and then

transcribed for analysis. Thematic analysis approach was used for the analysis of qualitative data.

Data Analysis and Results

Qualitative data analysis included the data from interviews of teachers which was transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis. First, the recordings were transcribed and read multiple times. After that, the recurring words, phrases, or ideas were identified and coded. Similar codes were grouped into broader themes that aligned with the research objectives.

Table 2: *Themes and Sub-Themes*

Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Types of Social Media Platforms Used by Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of social media usage • Encouragement of students' usage
2. Perceived Effectiveness of Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing knowledge and awareness • Improving critical thinking • Support for collaborative learning • Practical and pedagogical applications
3. Challenges of Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor Facilities

Theme 1: Types of Social Media Platforms Used by Teachers

Teachers used distinct social media sites for entertainment and instructional purposes such as, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google, TikTok, and Skype. One of the respondents answered: "I use YouTube and WhatsApp." Another respondent answered that: "I use YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter."

Sub-Theme 1.1: Purpose of social media usage

Social media is a way of learning new skills and knowledge. Most of the participants used social media for academic purposes, while others were using it for entertainment only. When the participants were asked about social media's purpose, mostly responded positively, that social media is very useful when used in a right way. One of the participants responded: "I use different social media platforms for teaching and learning purpose, such as YouTube. I learn new skills for teaching and some activities to make my lesson more engaging for students." Another participant responded that: "I use social media platforms to learn new strategies for teaching and also for entertainment purpose."

Sub-Theme 1.2: Encouragement of student usage

Some of the male as well as female teachers were in favour of students' use of social media, while others were against it. Teachers were concerned about the privacy of students, because they do not have a sense to use social media in a positive way at secondary level.

When participants were asked about the usage of social media applications by students, one of them responded: "I encourage students to use social media platforms such as WhatsApp to have group discussions with their class fellows about their homework and YouTube for learning through watching video lectures." Another

teacher responded: “I am not in the favour of students to use social media because they do not have enough knowledge to use it properly.”

Another respondent answered this way: “I prefer students to use these platforms because they learn more when they see rather than just verbal explanation of topics. Like, I teach science to the students, and I want to explain the topic heart. The students can see videos related to this topic on YouTube and learn more easily rather than just listening as passive participants.”

Theme 2: Perceived Effectiveness of Social Media

The interviews provided valuable insights into the apparent efficacy of the social media as teaching-learning tool. Respondents acknowledged its potential, their perspectives varied based on their experiences and usage patterns. When teachers were asked about the part that social media plays in teaching-learning process, one of them answered: “I think social media plays a vital role in teaching and learning. It is very effective when used positively.” Another respondent said that: “I think it is effective because one can see the content again and again to clear his/her misconceptions.”

Sub-Theme 2.1: Enhancing knowledge and awareness

Both the genders recognized social media as a platform to access diverse and extensive information. For some teachers, platforms like YouTube were instrumental in acquiring general knowledge, learning from expert opinions, and staying updated with current affairs. This suggests that social media is perceived as a rich resource for broadening both teachers’ and students’ understanding of various topics.

A number of teachers focused on social media’s effectiveness because they can watch and learn different concepts related to science, available online. This reflects the utility of these platforms in making abstract or complex subjects more accessible and engaging for students. When teachers were asked about enhancing knowledge and awareness, the respondents answered: “Social media has made learning effective and enjoyable. Students should have proper awareness about the usage of social media.” The other said that: “Students can watch videos related to science subject or sometimes geography.”

Sub-Theme 2.2: Improving critical thinking

The role of social media in fostering critical thinking received mixed feedback from both males and females. Some of the male and female teachers believed that exposure to diverse perspectives and global viewpoints through social media could stimulate students’ analytical skills. However, they also emphasized the importance of a balanced approach, cautioning against the potential influence of negativity.

In contrast, some of the teachers (both males and females) did not perceive social media as a significant contributor to critical thinking, relying instead on traditional school-provided platforms for this purpose. This divergence highlights that perceptions of effectiveness may depend on the teacher’s familiarity with and trust in social media usage as an instructional tool. The respondents said that: “Social media has positive and negative impact. It improves critical thinking skills if students watch

and learn educational content.” Another said that: “If students have no proper guidelines, check and balance then it can be used negatively.” Another interviewee suggested that: “Critical thinking skills could be improved but, school provides the opportunity and not social media.”

Sub-Theme 2.3: Support for collaborative learning

Some instructors stressed on effectiveness of social media usage in promoting collaboration between students. Platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube enable students to share resources, engage in discussions, and learn collectively. Some of the teachers were not in favour of collaborative learning. One of them answered: “Social media is a way of interaction between students, but mostly it is a waste of time for students.” Another answered that: “Social media makes collaboration among students easier. It provides the platform such as WhatsApp, for the students to have group chats with one another at any time.”

Sub-Theme 2.4: Practical and pedagogical applications

Social media is useful for visual as well as practice learning but due to the lack of resources in public schools, teachers were unable to use technology in their classes. Some respondents said that: “There is no direct integration of social media in public schools.” The other one said that: “Teachers do not face any difficulty in the use of social media as public schools do not have these facilities.”

Theme 3: Challenges of Social Media Usage

Despite its perceived benefits, certain challenges impact the effectiveness of social platforms. Both male and female teachers highlighted infrastructural limitations, such as a lack of devices (e.g., projectors) and unreliable internet access. These barriers prevent the seamless integration of social media in classroom settings, limiting its overall potential. When instructors were inquired about the drawbacks of social media, they answered that: “There are many challenges related to the use of social media. The students sometimes use it for only entertainment purposes. Like, they watch videos or play games on the internet and waste their time.” The other said that: “Sometimes we see irrelevant or unsuitable ads on these platforms which are a source of inconvenience.”

Sub-Theme 3.1: Poor facilities

Social media’s usage or other technological facilities are not available in public sector schools. There is no direct integration of social media in public sector schools of district Lahore. When participants were asked about the challenges or difficulties, they face related to the usage of social media, one of them responded that: “There are very limited resources in public schools. Both teachers and students use internet at home. Parents should have an eye on their children for a positive use of social media.”

Discussion

This study explored the perspectives of teachers for using of social media platforms as a teaching-learning instrument. Study’s findings show that social media

is very effective for academic purposes, if used positively. Teachers find social media very effective for multiple reasons such as, connectivity, collaboration, and access to diverse educational resources. However, there are some challenges such as lack of facilities in public sector and privacy issues.

The current study shows that teachers prefer social media sites such as WhatsApp for communication and YouTube for learning different instructional skills. A similar study was conducted by Ahmed (2016), who focused on the integration of social media in secondary schools of Pakistan. He also stressed on the effectiveness of social media for students. Similarly, Basil et al. (2020) focused on the platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp for finding subject related materials and learning new teaching skills.

The findings are also similar to Gul, Tahir, and Ishfaq (2023), who stated that teachers have the knowledge of using social media sites productively. Engagement and motivation for using social media in this study align with Ansari and Khan (2020), who stated that social media and mobile phones could be very effective and could fill the gap between instructional and resources in educational institutions. The study found out that students use social media for group learning, which encouraged and motivated them to communicate online with their teachers and class fellows. Similarly, the findings of the study conducted by Kumar and Nanda (2022) also support the current study's findings in that social networks are means for effective learning, especially when it comes to the sharing of knowledge.

Male and female teachers stressed on the effective usage of social media sites. YouTube was mentioned as a very useful site for learning new skills, learning from other teachers and learning new knowledge. Similar finding was revealed in a study conducted by Jankauskaitė (2015), who stated that social media is very important and useful for teachers as well as students.

Despite its advantages, teachers expressed concerns about limited digital literacy and inadequate training. A similar study was conducted by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), who highlighted that both students and educators' express apprehensions about the potential misuse of personal information on social media platforms.

This study's findings are also aligned with Andleeb, Rafique, and Quratulain's (2023) study which stated that social media has been associated with a number of negative effects including reduced academic performance, decreased attention period, and increased obstructions among students. Another study by Awoke and Zikargae (2023) showed similar concerns that the main disadvantages of social media usage in classrooms were academic dishonesty, confusion, and no feedback, architecture issues, and distractions from non-educational content.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study highlights the transformative potential of social media and perspectives of teachers in their teaching and learning process. The teachers recognize

the advantages of social media in enhancing instructional approaches, fostering engagement, and providing access to diverse educational resources. However, challenges such as, poor technological facilities, infrastructural limitations, and privacy concerns should be addressed to fully realize its potential.

The analysis indicated that social media can enhance the teaching techniques by offering visually stimulating and captivating content, but its efficient application is mostly dependent on the availability of internet connectivity, and digital competence among educators and learners. Concerns regarding internet availability, security threats, and the lack of specialized equipment such as projectors in classrooms are voiced by the teachers.

A significant insight from the discussions was that, social media can help teachers learn new teaching strategies that they could use in their classrooms and when social media is utilized strategically and methodologically, it may help students to develop their critical thinking and collaborative learning skills. The study focused on the technological facilities, training programs for teachers and supporting rules for the teachers and supporting rules for the integration of social media usage in public schools. Platforms such as YouTube and WhatsApp are very important and could play a positive role in the process of teaching and learning. If social media is used in a positive manner reducing its challenges, it could be very effective. For these purposes, policymakers, teachers, and parents should work together.

Following recommendations are provided based on the findings of the study.

1. Schools should provide trainings to teachers for effective use of social media.
2. There should be proper rules to handle the challenges such as privacy issues, in schools.
3. Policymakers, teachers, and parents should work together to use social media effectively.
4. Teachers should motivate students to use social media platforms that only provide instructional and academic material.
5. Researchers could explore the perspectives of teachers and students regarding the use of social media at primary level.

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