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SOCIAL MEDIA AND HIGHER EDUCATION- A STUDY OF STUDENTS IN LUCKNOW DISTRICT, UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an important part of the educational and social environment of higher education students. This revised paper focuses on Lucknow District, Uttar Pradesh, and examines social media use through educational, social, economic and digital-safety dimensions. The analytical structure is based on the supplied study of 190 higher education students, whose reported distributions are retained here as the numerical evidence base. The results show very high reported use of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube, while 43.2% reported 2–3 hours of daily use and 26.8% reported more than three hours. Entertainment was the leading stated reason for use (31.1%), followed by job-related information (20.5%) and academic needs (18.9%). Social media was also strongly embedded in daily routines: 84.2% reported checking it before sleep and 70.0% reported stronger contact through information and communication technology than in person. At the same time, respondents reported concerns about time waste/addiction, privacy, cyberbullying and e-crime. From a societal perspective, the findings suggest that social media is neither wholly beneficial nor wholly harmful; its outcomes depend on patterns of use, digital literacy, institutional guidance and responsible participation.

Keywords: social media; higher education; students; Lucknow District; society; digital citizenship; academic learning; cyber safety

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media refers to digital platforms through which individuals communicate, exchange information, share media and participate in online communities. For higher education students, these platforms increasingly overlap with academic work, peer communication, entertainment, career information and everyday social interaction. The supplied source study similarly presents social networking as an environment that supports communication, information exchange and learning while also creating social and digital risks.

In the Lucknow District context, the study of social media is relevant because higher education students interact with a wide range of institutions, peer groups, families, professional networks and online communities. The important research question is therefore not simply whether students use social media, but how it is incorporated into their educational and social lives, what value students derive from it, and what risks they perceive.

The present paper adopts a society-oriented perspective. It considers social media as both an educational resource and a social space. Such a perspective allows the findings to be connected with digital citizenship, information literacy, cyber safety, interpersonal relationships, employment awareness and responsible technology use.

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2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 Social Media and Higher Education

Social media can support higher education by facilitating distribution of study materials, sharing of links, collaborative communication, peer support, research interaction and access to supplementary learning content. The literature cited in the supplied study also associates platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube and Twitter with teaching, learning and academic interaction. However, educational value depends on purposeful use; access alone does not guarantee academic improvement.

2.2 Social Media as a Societal Space

Students use social media beyond the classroom. It can maintain relationships, expose users to public information, provide career and employment information, support leisure and connect students with communities beyond their immediate physical environment. This makes social-media behaviour relevant not only to educational institutions but also to families, communities and public policy.

2.3 Digital Opportunities and Social Risks

The same environment can generate distraction, excessive use, privacy concerns, cyberbullying, identity theft and exposure to harmful or misleading information. The supplied literature therefore supports a balanced approach in which digital participation is accompanied by information literacy, privacy awareness, responsible communication and cyber-safety education.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Afsana (2020). Discussed the socio-psychological impact of information and communication technology on youth, supporting the need to examine digital media beyond purely academic outcomes.

Akhter, Parveen and Shaheen (2021). Linked ICT with young people's perceptions of careers, education and employment, highlighting the occupational dimension of digital participation.

Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010). Identified both opportunities and challenges of social networking for youth education, supporting a dual-impact perspective.

Tess (2013). Reviewed the role of ICT in higher education classes and noted the growing use of technology to mediate active learning.

Moghavvemi et al. (2018). Showed how YouTube can supplement teaching and learning when videos are relevant to course content.

Al-Rahmi et al. (2019). Highlighted cyber stalking and cyberbullying as barriers to open learning, demonstrating the importance of digital safety.

Yebowaah and Asante (2020). Examined ICT use in higher education and its relationship with students' academic lives.

Lozano-Blasco et al. (2023). Discussed the influence of Instagram, Twitter and YouTube on young people, reinforcing the importance of platform-mediated social environments.

Literature synthesis. The reviewed studies collectively portray social media as a multidimensional phenomenon involving education, communication, entertainment, employment information and social risks. For the Lucknow-focused version of the paper, this

literature provides the conceptual basis for examining how students balance educational opportunity with social and digital risk.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the pattern and intensity of social media use among higher education students in Lucknow District, Uttar Pradesh.
2. To analyse the educational, social and economic uses and perceived benefits associated with social media.
3. To assess major behavioural and digital-safety risks perceived by students and discuss their implications for higher education and society in Lucknow District.

5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: Social media use among higher education students is substantial and is integrated into everyday communication and leisure routines.

H2: Social media provides meaningful educational, interpersonal and employment-related opportunities for higher education students.

H3: Higher education students simultaneously experience substantial social and digital-safety risks associated with social media use.

Note: These are analytical propositions. The supplied evidence reports descriptive frequencies and percentages and does not provide respondent-level data for inferential hypothesis testing.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

The source study used a descriptive survey design with a sample of 190 higher education students and questionnaire-based data collection. For this revised Lucknow District manuscript, the same analytical framework is retained. The numerical distributions are reproduced from the supplied source rather than presented as newly collected Lucknow observations.

6.2 Data Source and Variables

The analytical variables include platform use, daily time spent, basic reasons for use, integration into daily life, goals of social networking, perceived benefits and perceived risks. Analysis is based on reported percentages. Because individual respondent records are unavailable, the study does not calculate new t-tests, chi-square tests, correlations, regression coefficients or effect sizes.

6.3 Analytical Framework

The analysis is organised into four dimensions: (i) platform reach and usage intensity, (ii) purposes and goals of use, (iii) perceived educational and societal benefits, and (iv) perceived behavioural and digital-safety risks. Derived indicators are arithmetic summaries intended only to improve interpretation.

6.4 Ethical and Interpretive Note

No individual identities are reported. The findings are discussed at aggregate level and no causal relationship is claimed. For a genuine Lucknow empirical study, the researcher should

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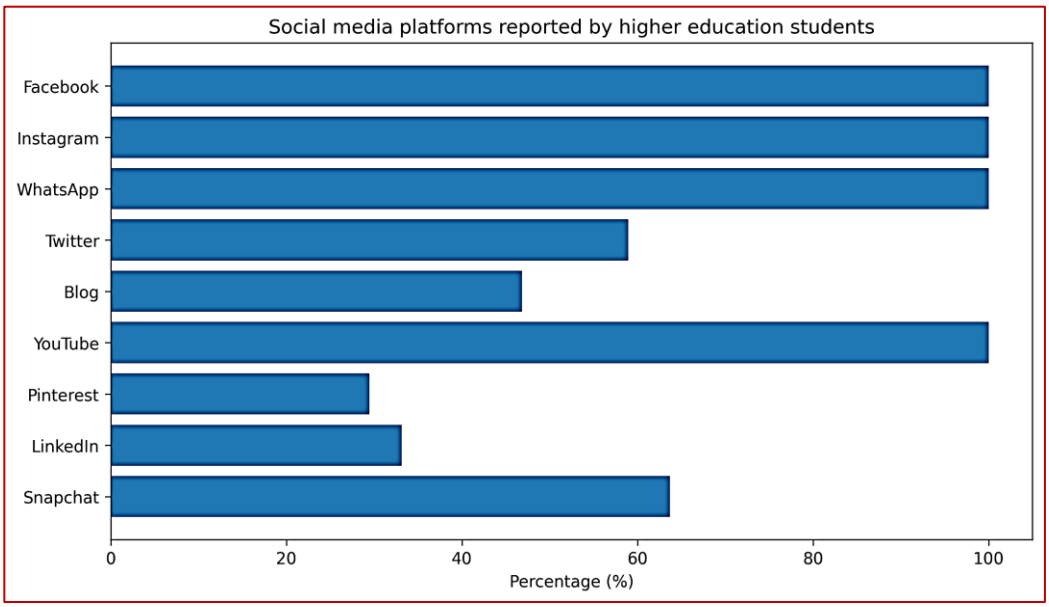
replace the retained source distributions with verified Lucknow respondent data before submission or publication.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 Platform Usage

Platform	Reported use (%)
Facebook	100.0
Instagram	100.0
WhatsApp	100.0
Twitter	58.94
Blog	46.84
YouTube	100.0
Pinterest	29.47
LinkedIn	33.15
Snapchat	63.68



SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS REPORTED BY HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube each show 100% reported use in the retained source distribution. Snapchat (63.68%) and Twitter (58.94%) follow, while Blog (46.84%), LinkedIn (33.15%) and Pinterest (29.47%) are lower. This indicates concentration around a small number of highly accessible platforms.

7.2 Daily Time Spent

Daily time	Percentage (%)
1–2 hours	30.0
2–3 hours	43.2
More than 3 hours	26.8

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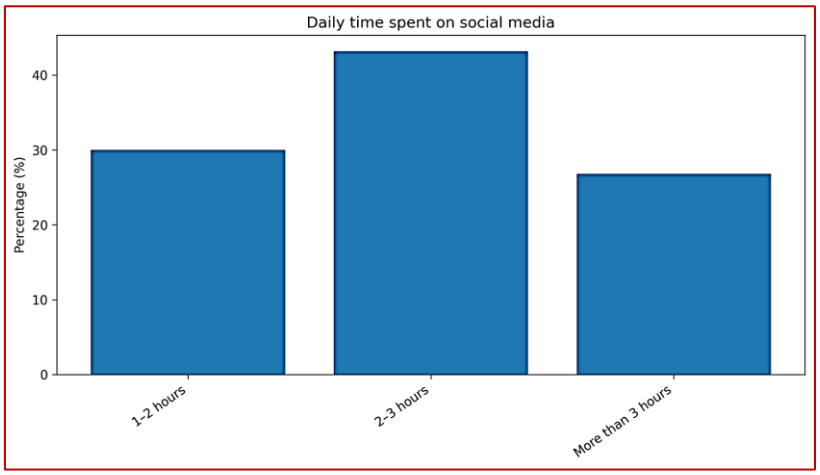
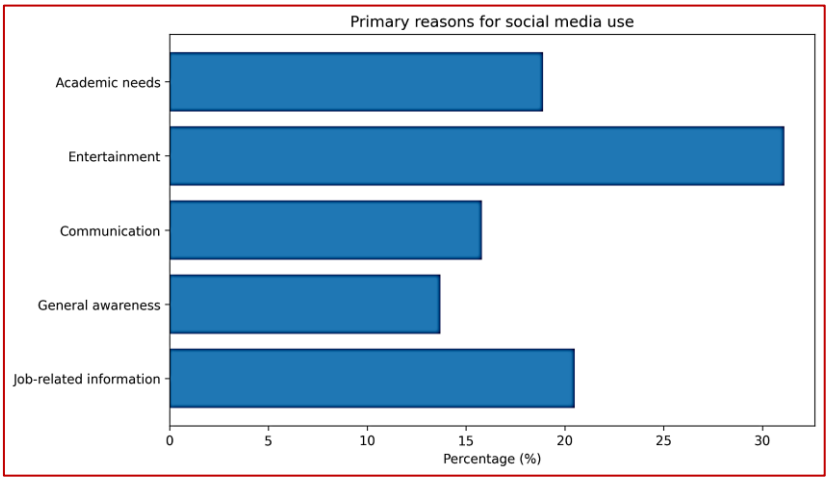


DAILY TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The largest category is 2–3 hours (43.2%). A further 26.8% report more than three hours, meaning that over one-quarter of the retained sample falls into the highest reported use category. This pattern makes digital-wellbeing and time-management education relevant to student development.

7.3 Basic Reasons for Social Media Use

Reason	Percentage (%)
Academic needs	18.9
Entertainment	31.1
Communication	15.8
General awareness	13.7
Job-related information	20.5



PRIMARY REASONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Entertainment is the leading stated reason (31.1%), followed by job-related information (20.5%) and academic needs (18.9%). The pattern demonstrates that social media serves recreational, occupational and educational purposes simultaneously.

7.4 Social Media in Daily Life

Daily-life indicator	Yes (%)	No (%)
Check after waking	58.9	41.1
Check before sleep	84.2	15.8

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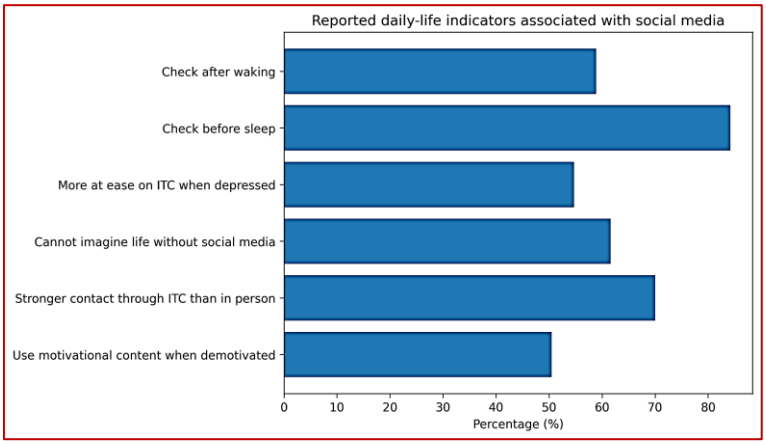
More at ease on ITC when depressed	54.7	45.3
Cannot imagine life without social media	61.6	38.4
Stronger contact through ITC than in person	70.0	30.0
Use motivational content when demotivated	50.5	49.5



REPORTED DAILY-LIFE INDICATORS ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Checking social media before sleep is the strongest indicator at 84.2%, followed by stronger contact through ITC than in-person contact (70.0%) and the statement that respondents cannot imagine life without social media (61.6%). These patterns suggest that digital activity has moved into routine and socially meaningful parts of student life.

7.5 Goals of Social Networking Use

Goal	Agree (%)	Sometimes (%)	Disagree (%)
Online learning	23.2	53.7	23.1
Finding friends online	24.2	39.5	36.3
Communicating/interacting with friends	29.5	47.9	22.6
Leisure/personal socialization	40.5	36.8	22.7
Academic purposes	20.4	51.6	28.0
Watching movies	46.3	39.5	14.2
Profiles/private messages/media	26.3	54.2	19.5
Sharing study materials	34.2	37.4	28.4
Online shopping	25.8	49.5	24.7
Online earning	39.5	36.3	24.2

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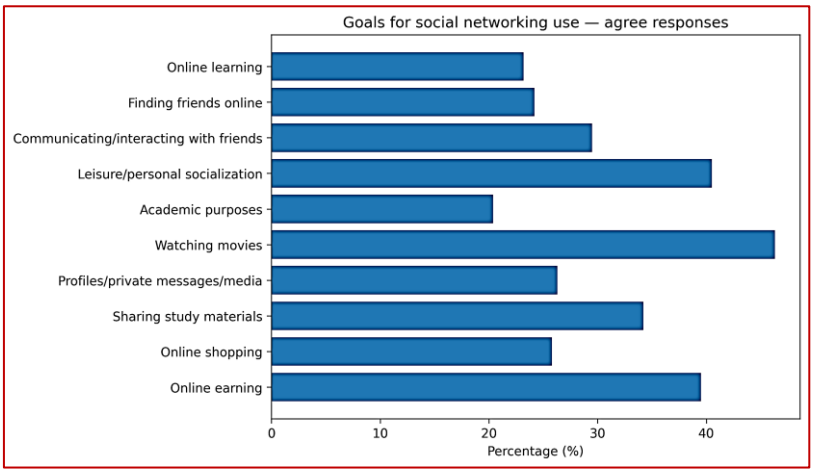
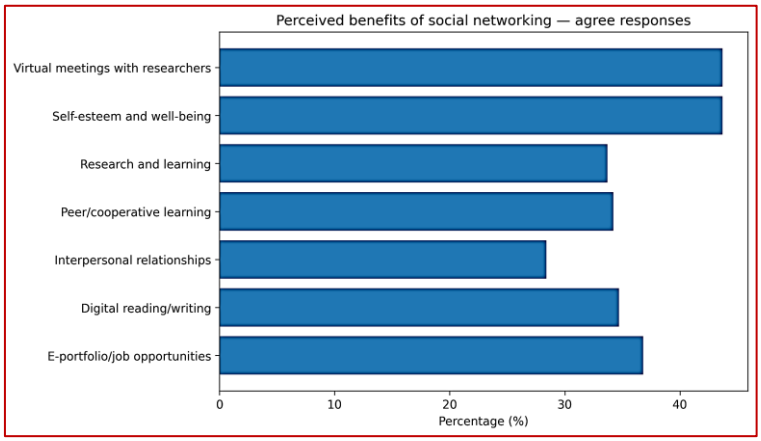


GOALS FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING USE — AGREE RESPONSES

Watching movies has the highest direct agreement (46.3%), followed by leisure/personal socialization (40.5%) and online earning (39.5%). Sharing study materials is 34.2%, whereas academic purposes and online learning are 20.4% and 23.2%. The relatively high 'sometimes' responses for educational uses suggest that academic value exists but may not be consistently prioritised.

7.6 Perceived Benefits

Perceived benefit	Agree (%)	Sometimes (%)	Disagree (%)
Virtual meetings with researchers	43.7	42.1	14.2
Self-esteem and well-being	43.7	38.4	17.9
Research and learning	33.7	44.7	21.6
Peer/cooperative learning	34.2	51.6	14.2
Interpersonal relationships	28.4	53.2	18.4
Digital reading/writing	34.7	40.5	24.8
E-portfolio/job opportunities	36.8	41.6	21.6



PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING — AGREE RESPONSES

Virtual meetings with researchers and self-esteem/well-being have the highest agreement (43.7% each). Peer/cooperative learning, research and learning, digital reading/writing and

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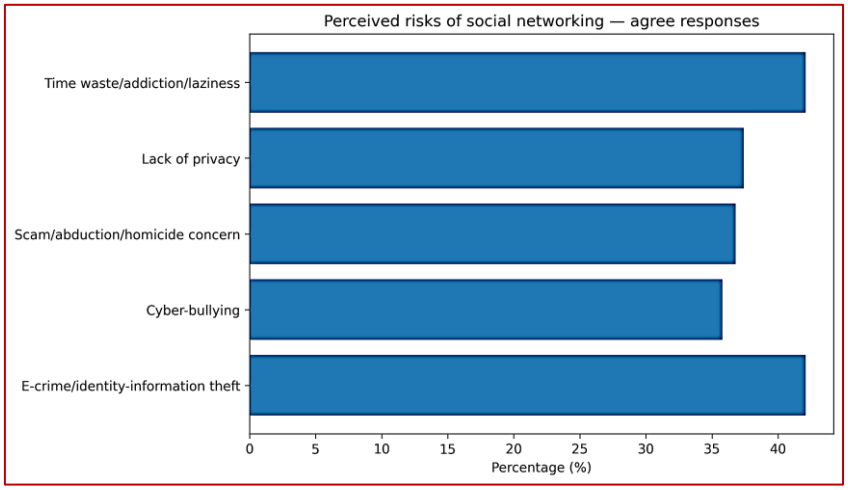
career-related opportunities are also recognised. However, agreement levels remain moderate, suggesting that access to social media does not automatically translate into purposeful educational or professional value.

7.7 Perceived Risks

Perceived risk	Agree (%)	Sometimes (%)	Disagree (%)
Time waste/addiction/laziness	42.1	48.9	9.0
Lack of privacy	37.4	46.8	15.8
Scam/abduction/homicide concern	36.8	39.5	23.7
Cyber-bullying	35.8	40.0	24.2
E-crime/identity-information theft	42.1	41.6	16.3



PERCEIVED RISKS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING — AGREE RESPONSES

Time waste/addiction/laziness and e-crime/identity-information theft have the highest agreement (42.1% each). Lack of privacy (37.4%), serious online-offence concerns (36.8%) and cyberbullying (35.8%) are also substantial. Considering 'agree' together with 'sometimes', every listed risk affects a large proportion of the retained response distribution.

7.8 Derived Descriptive Indicators

Indicator	Derived value	Interpretive meaning
Weighted midpoint of daily-use categories	2.47 hours/day	Approximate descriptive midpoint; not a respondent-level mean
Mean agreement across listed benefits	36.46%	Average of reported 'Agree' percentages
Mean agreement across listed risks	38.84%	Average of reported 'Agree' percentages
Mean agreement across listed goals	30.99%	Average of reported 'Agree' percentages

The weighted midpoint of the reported daily-use categories is approximately 2.47 hours/day when category midpoints of 1.5, 2.5 and 3.5 hours are used. The mean agreement across benefits is 36.46%, compared with 38.84% across risks and 30.99% across goals. These are simple arithmetic summaries of published percentages and must not be interpreted as validated scale scores or causal effect estimates.

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8. INTEGRATED DISCUSSION

The findings support a dual-impact interpretation of social media. On the opportunity side, students use platforms for academic information, research interaction, study-material sharing, employment information, online earning and interpersonal communication. On the risk side, high routine use coexists with concerns about time loss, privacy, cyberbullying and e-crime.

The daily-life indicators are particularly important. The 84.2% reported checking before sleep suggests that social media is incorporated into routine behaviour, while 70.0% reporting stronger ITC contact than in-person contact points to changing patterns of interpersonal interaction. These results do not establish that social media causes weaker face-to-face relationships, but they indicate an area that deserves further study in the Lucknow higher-education context.

The relatively modest direct agreement for online learning and academic purposes indicates that digital access does not automatically become academic productivity. Higher education institutions can therefore move beyond simply allowing technology use and develop students' abilities to curate information, verify sources, collaborate online, protect privacy and use digital platforms for career development.

From a societal perspective, the issue is one of balanced digital citizenship. Students are simultaneously connected to families, peers, teachers, employers and wider online communities. Responsible online behaviour can strengthen educational and social opportunities, whereas poor digital practices may increase exposure to misinformation, harassment, privacy loss and cybercrime.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube each show 100% reported use in the retained source distribution.
- 43.2% reported 2–3 hours of daily social media use and 26.8% reported more than three hours.
- Entertainment was the leading basic reason for use (31.1%), followed by job-related information (20.5%) and academic needs (18.9%).
- 84.2% reported checking social media before sleep, indicating strong routine integration.
- 70.0% reported stronger contact through ITC than in-person contact.
- Watching movies, leisure/personal socialization and online earning were among the highest-agreement networking goals.
- Virtual meetings with researchers and self-esteem/well-being had the highest agreement among listed benefits (43.7% each).
- Time waste/addiction/laziness and e-crime/identity-information theft had the highest agreement among listed risks (42.1% each).
- The overall pattern demonstrates simultaneous educational/social opportunity and behavioural/digital-safety risk.

10. SOCIETAL, EDUCATIONAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Stakeholder	Recommended response
Students	Develop time management, privacy awareness, source verification and

	responsible communication habits.
Higher education institutions	Integrate digital citizenship, cyber-safety, information literacy and purposeful academic social-media use into student-development programmes.
Teachers	Use relevant social platforms for collaborative learning, study resources and professional networking while maintaining clear academic boundaries.
Families and community	Encourage balanced digital routines, respectful online behaviour and open discussion of cyber risks.
Policy and support systems	Strengthen awareness of privacy, cyberbullying, identity theft and safe reporting mechanisms.

For Lucknow District, these implications are particularly useful for colleges and universities seeking to convert widespread digital access into educational and career value while protecting students from avoidable online harms.

11. LIMITATIONS

- The source study is descriptive and based on self-reported questionnaire responses.
- The supplied evidence reports frequencies and percentages rather than inferential tests.
- Respondent-level data were not available, so no new inferential analysis or causal claims are made.
- The numerical distributions in this revised Lucknow version originate from the supplied Namsai study and should not be described as newly collected Lucknow data without field verification.
- Some source terminology uses 'ITC' in contexts referring to information and communication technology/social networking; this manuscript preserves the intended meaning while using terminology carefully.

12. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Conduct a fresh Lucknow District survey with a verified and representative sample of higher education students.
- Collect respondent-level data to permit chi-square, t-test, ANOVA, correlation and regression analyses where appropriate.
- Compare students by gender, age, institution type, discipline, year of study and urban–peri-urban background.
- Examine whether intensity of use is associated with academic engagement, well-being, sleep, interpersonal interaction and career awareness.
- Study platform-specific effects rather than treating all social media as one homogeneous category.
- Include qualitative interviews or focus groups to understand why students shift between academic, social and recreational uses.
- Assess digital-literacy and cyber-safety interventions through pre-test/post-test or longitudinal designs.

CONCLUSION

Social media has become a significant component of the higher education environment and wider social life of students. The retained evidence shows extensive platform use, substantial

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daily engagement and multiple purposes ranging from entertainment and communication to academic needs, employment information and online earning. At the same time, students report concerns about privacy, cyberbullying, e-crime and excessive use.

For Lucknow District, the central lesson is that social media should neither be treated only as a distraction nor assumed to be automatically educational. Its value depends on how students use it, how institutions guide digital participation and how communities respond to emerging online risks. A stronger culture of digital citizenship, information literacy, cyber safety and purposeful academic use can help transform social media from an unstructured habit into a constructive resource for higher education and society.

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