

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

This considers points to examine the part of social media stages in encouraging the professional advancement of educators. In later a long time, social media has gotten to be a necessarily part of communication and information-sharing, giving educators with modern opportunities for collaboration, learning, and organizing. The research explores the ways in which educators utilize social media for their professional growth, examining the benefits, challenges in teaching practices. The study employs a descriptive survey method in quantitative research of West Medinipur as population, taking 90 teachers as sample drawn from 10 undergraduate education level institutions by random sampling. Findings from this research enhance knowledge of the changing professional development scenario in education and offer practical recommendations for educators, administrators, and policymakers.

Keywords: Social media, Professional development, Teacher Education.

Introduction

social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for the professional development of educators. They provide a global, accessible, and customizable means of networking, learning, and collaboration. Educators are no longer limited to traditional modes of professional development; instead, they can curate their own learning experiences, engage with a diverse global community, and continuously enhance their teaching practices. Further investigation into this topic will focus on the particular ways that social media platforms are being utilized by educators, the benefits they offer, and the challenges they present in the context of professional development.

You can engage with various social networks to connect with educators and enhance your professional development:

LinkedIn: A professional platform for networking and reputation-building. It provides access to educational articles, tips, and global education updates.

Facebook: Allows individual or group connections, particularly for teachers. There are subject-specific, location-based, and curriculum-focused groups and pages to share information and content.

Twitter: Useful for quick news, asking questions, following interesting people, and participating in chats. It offers concise content and the ability to engage in discussions and debates.

Twitter chats, based on hashtags, connect educators worldwide for public conversations. You can join chats at specific times and follow hashtags for topics of interest. It's a way to learn from diverse perspectives and share your own expertise. You can use Twitter to find educators with similar interests, join chats when comfortable, use hashtags to discover topics, and engage by commenting or sharing content. Some popular education hashtags and chats include #aussieEd (Australian chat), #HALTNetwork (for highly accomplished or lead teachers), and #PSTchat (supporting new teachers). These platforms are valuable for professional growth and collaboration (<https://www.aitsl.edu.au>).

The accessibility of social media also contributes to its effectiveness in professional development. Educators can access a vast array of content at their convenience, making it possible to engage with new ideas and strategies as

time allows. Blogs, podcasts, webinars, and YouTube channels created by educators and educational experts provide an extensive library of resources that can be tailored to individual professional development needs. These digital resources cater to diverse learning preferences and can accommodate different learning styles, further enhancing their effectiveness.

The traditional landscape of professional development for educators has often been characterized by in-person workshops, seminars, and conferences. While these avenues remain valuable, the emergence of social media has provided a dynamic and versatile alternative for continuous learning and growth. Through platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, educators are not only connecting with their peers worldwide but are also accessing a treasure trove of resources and experiences that enrich their teaching methodologies.

Additionally, the visual and interactive nature of certain social media platforms lends itself to creative expression and idea sharing. Platforms like Instagram and Pinterest allow educators to showcase their classroom setups, innovative projects, and teaching materials. By sharing their work, educators can inspire and learn from one another, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in the education community.

One of the most significant effects of social media on professional development is its ability to break down geographical barriers. Educators can now collaborate and exchange ideas with colleagues from different corners of the globe without leaving their classrooms. This globalized approach to professional development exposes them to diverse teaching philosophies, cultural perspectives, and innovative practices, ultimately enriching their own pedagogical approaches.

Twitter, for example, has emerged as a powerful platform for educators to engage in professional learning networks (PLNs). Educators can participate in Twitter chats and follow relevant hashtags to discover and share resources, research findings, and best practices in education. These online communities provide a virtual space for educators to engage in meaningful conversations, share insights, and build relationships that extend far beyond their immediate surroundings.

Review Of The Related Literature

(Ohara, 2023) explored how social media impacts education. It's a qualitative study that gathered information and analyzed it. Social media is found to play a vital role in education by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, teamwork, involvement, and career advancement. (Xu et al, 2023) looked at how social media apps like DingTalk, WeChat, and TikTok affect pre-service teachers' learning in STEM education. They collected 383 surveys and found that social media applications offer advantages as well as disadvantages effects on education. (Kotsidis & Anastasiades, 2023) explored how teachers feel about using social networks for their training, focusing on a new one called Learning Social Network (LSN). They surveyed 45 trained teachers participating in a distance learning program. The findings show that social networks, like LSN, can be used for communication, collaboration, interaction, and participatory learning, and social networking environment. (Fancera, 2020) looked at how school leaders in the United States use social media, especially Twitter, for professional growth. The study suggests that the future utilized of social media for career development may depend on whether teachers receive credit for it. (Goodyear et al., 2019) examined a Twitter-based professional learning community and its impact on teacher learning and practice. Findings revealed that #pechat functions as a community where participants engage in discussions, facilitated by moderators. The study suggests that online professional development experiences like #pechat can positively impact teacher practices and should be considered in future design. (Macia & Garcia, 2018) "bridging teachers" are involved, proactive, and actively disseminate knowledge. The research used teacher interviews, blogs, webpages, and Twitter activity to understand their practices. These teachers use participatory methods with technology in their classrooms, actively use social networking sites, and prefer Twitter for professional purposes. (Bruguera et al., 2017) examined studies conducted between 2013 and 2017 on social media and professional development. It was discovered that there is an increasing amount of interest in this subject, and that surveys are being used in many of the studies. The fields with the most research were education and health. The social media platform with the most research was Twitter. Because social media is flexible and open, it seems to be a useful tool for professional development. (Gleddie et al., 2016) suggested that for technology in education to be effective, there should be genuine networks for teachers, an understanding of power dynamics on social media, and cultural awareness. It emphasizes the importance of self-improvement and relates it to historical practices. Joey represents the increasing use of social media by physical education teachers. (Donelan, 2016) looks at how academics in the UK use social media is used professionally in higher education. Interviews and a survey were used

to study how academics use social media. They found that the more active academics are on social media, the more reasons they have to use it, including for career advancement. To improve participation, the study suggests providing training and discussing the career benefits of social media within institutions. (Davis, 2015) focused on how US school teachers view using Twitter for professional development. They used tweet data, interviews, and Twitter profiles to understand teachers' perceptions. The findings revealed that Twitter serves as a platform for teachers to share knowledge, connect with colleagues, and gain professional development. The study suggests that social network sites like Twitter can support educators and students, including those with disabilities.

Objective

1. To reanalyze the benefits of use the social media platform for professional development of Educators.
2. To find out the challenges of social media platform for professional development of Educators.

Research Questions

1. What are the benefits of use the social media platforms of educator's professional development?
2. What is the challenges face by educators when using social media for professional development?

Methodology

The study was descriptive study in which primary data was collected under descriptive survey research including the population of Educators of undergraduate education level institutions of West Medinipur district sample of 90 Educators under Random Sampling technique were taken from 10 undergraduate education level institutions at West Medinipur district in West Bengal. Data collected was tabulated in MS Excel and SPSS 22.0 was used for Items analyses, percentage and depicted using the tables and graphs.

Results And Findings Of The Study

In the present study data analysis was done as per the objective.

Objective 1: To reanalyze the benefits of use the social media platform for professional development of Educators.

To analyse the first objectives the benefits of use the social media platform for professional development of educators. The researcher used a questionnaire on Educators.

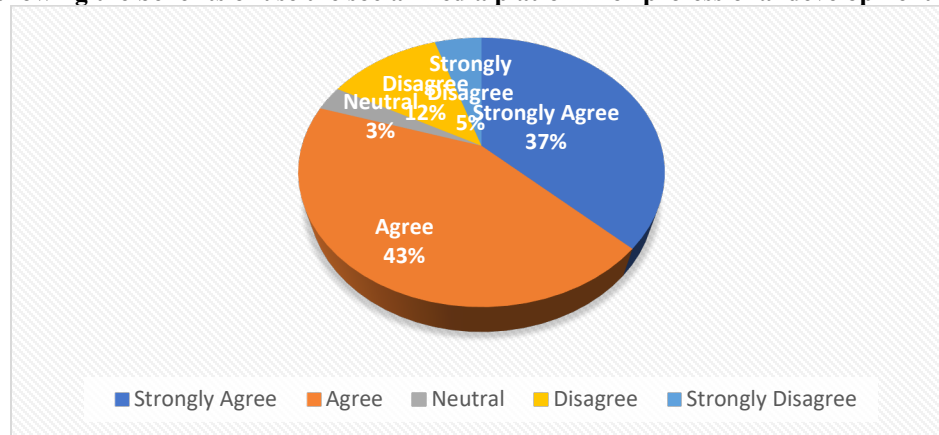
Table-1 showing the benefits of use the social media platform for professional development of Educators.

Level of Usability	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	558	37.2%
Agree	642	42.8%
Neutral	45	3%
Disagree	180	12%
Strongly Disagree	75	5%
Total	1500	100

By the observation of Table-1 it was found that 37.2% Educators from 10 undergraduate education level institutions were Strongly Agree towards the use of Social Media Platforms and 42.8% Educators were belonging to Agree position and were 3% were Neutral and 12% Educators from undergraduate education level institutions were Disagree and 5% were belonging to Strongly Disagree towards social media platforms used by educators for their professional development.

So, it concluded that Educators from undergraduate education level institutions were also highly used the Social Media Platforms for professional development and for better understanding a graph is generated from the obtained data showing the use of Social Media Platforms for professional development of Educators.

Figure-1: showing the benefits of use the social media platform for professional development of Educators



Objective 2: The challenges of social media platform for professional development of Educators.

In the present study, 90 Educators from 10 undergraduate education level institutions at West Medinipur district in West Bengal were randomly selected who were provide we open-ended questionnaire. This response often is described in this below.

While social media platforms offer numerous benefits for educators, they also present several challenges that can impact their professional development. Social media can be a significant distraction for educators. The constant influx of notifications and content may divert their attention from more productive professional development activities. Not all educators have equal access to technology or high-speed internet. This creates a digital divide that can limit some educators' ability to participate in online professional development via social media. Certain social media platforms may not be conducive to fostering an inclusive environment. Educators must navigate potential biases and exclusivity within online communities.

To address these challenges, educators should undergo training on responsible social media use, establish clear guidelines for their online presence, and stay informed about the evolving landscape of social media and education. Additionally, colleges and districts should provide support and policies to help educators navigate these challenges effectively.

Educational Implication

- Educators can access a vast array of educational resources, research, and best practices on social media platforms.
- Educators can engage in continuous learning, adapting quickly to new educational technologies and methodologies.
- Social media platforms can serve as a space for educators to reflect on their teaching practices and receive constructive feedback.
- This access enhances their knowledge base, keeping them updated on the latest pedagogical trends and strategies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the utilize of social media platforms in the career development of educators is both significant and multifaceted. Social media has emerged as a dynamic and powerful tool that can positively impact educators' growth, collaboration, and engagement in the educational community. However, it also presents challenges that require careful consideration and strategic management. The positive aspects of social media in professional development include the accessibility of diverse resources, the establishment of global professional learning communities, and the amplification of educators' voices. These platforms offer opportunities for continuous learning, collaboration, and the exchange of innovative ideas that can enhance teaching practices and contribute to a vibrant educational landscape. Despite these benefits, challenges such as maintaining professional boundaries, addressing privacy concerns, and managing time effectively must be navigated. The potential for digital distractions, misinformation, and cyberbullying underscores the importance of thoughtful guidelines, training, and a strong

emphasis on digital literacy. Ultimately, use of social media in professional development is dynamic and evolving. With a balanced and strategic approach, educators can harness the potential of social media to foster a culture of continuous learning, collaboration, and innovation in the field of education.

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