

From Social Networking to Social Learning: Insights from a College Student Survey in the Srinagar district of Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of social networking sites (SNS) in enhancing interactive and collaborative learning among college students in Srinagar district, Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir, India. Given students' increasing reliance on SNS for communication and information sharing, the research explores the extent to which these platforms support academic engagement, peer interaction, and collaborative educational practices. A survey research design was adopted, and Cochran's sampling formula was used to determine the sample size. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, along with focus group discussions conducted to obtain in-depth insights and varied perspectives from participants. The findings reveal that most students perceive SNS as beneficial to their learning experiences. Students reported that SNS improve communication, interaction, academic discussions, and the sharing of study materials and ideas among peers. The study further demonstrates that SNS foster participative and collaborative learning environments by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, skills, and experiences, thereby helping students collectively complete assignments, projects, and other academic requirements.

Keywords: Social media, Social networking sites, Online learning, Interactive learning, Collaborative learning, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of social networking sites (SNS) has become a defining characteristic of contemporary society. Since their emergence, SNSs have significantly influenced multiple domains of human life, including politics, economics, marketing, healthcare, and education. “Boyd and Ellison (2007) describe social networking sites as web-based platforms that enable individuals to create public or semi-public profiles”, interact with other users, and

access information shared within the network. These platforms provide opportunities for people with common interests to form online communities where they can exchange ideas, information, knowledge, and experiences through various media formats such as text, audio, images, and videos (Hussain et al., 2017).

Among college students, “social media has become an integral part of daily life and

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communication” (Astleitner & Schlick, 2025). Young adults and college students demonstrate particularly high levels of SNS usage because they tend to adopt emerging digital technologies rapidly (Al-Jubayer, 2013; McCord et al., 2016). Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram are widely used by students for social interaction, entertainment, relationship building, and information sharing. Beyond these social functions, SNSs are increasingly utilized for academic purposes and educational enhancement (Al-Zedjali, Al-Harrasi, & Al-Badi, 2014).

Previous studies indicate that college students perceive SNSs as valuable educational tools that enhance reading habits and academic engagement (Hussain, Kubravi, & Loan, 2021). These platforms enable students to connect with institutions, teachers, mentors, and peers while facilitating access to academic resources, research materials, and knowledge-sharing opportunities. Such interactions help students broaden their knowledge base and intellectual development (Hussain, Loan, & Kubravi, 2021). Furthermore, the increasing academic use of SNS has transformed interactive and collaborative learning practices. Social networking platforms are now recognized as supportive learning environments that encourage communication, knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and collaborative decision-making among students (Kumar & Nanda, 2024).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Interactive and collaborative learning are widely recognized as important learner-centered educational approaches that encourage active participation, communication, and the construction of shared knowledge. According to Laal and Laal (2012), collaborative learning is a process in which learners work collectively in groups to solve problems, accomplish tasks, and achieve shared outcomes.” Chandra (2015) identified several defining characteristics of collaborative learning, including common learning objectives, small-group participation, cooperative behaviour, interdependence among learners, and individual

accountability. Whipple (1987) further described collaborative learning as a pedagogical approach that promotes cooperative efforts among students, teachers, and educational administrators. Collaborative learning may occur through peer-to-peer interaction or within larger groups, where students engage in discussions, exchange ideas, and jointly solve academic problems (Chandra, 2015).

The emergence of social networking sites (SNS) has transformed collaborative and interactive learning practices in higher education. Social networking platforms provide students with opportunities to construct, exchange, and share knowledge collaboratively while simultaneously supporting communication, self-expression, and social interaction (Yan Yu et al., 2010). These platforms have significantly changed the ways students interact, learn, and collaborate with peers and instructors. Greenhow (2011a, 2011b) observed that interactions and collaborations through SNS facilitate communication with mentors, improve access to course content, support personalized learning experiences, and help build student learning communities. Veletsianos and Kimmons (2013) similarly argued that SNSs have fundamentally altered “the patterns of interaction and collaboration among individuals and institutions.” Ansari and Khan (2020) further emphasized that social networking platforms support collaborative learning by encouraging knowledge sharing, communication, and learning-focused interactions among students and instructors.

Several empirical studies have examined the educational benefits of social media and SNS in collaborative learning environments. Fisher and Braid (2006) demonstrated that social media platforms can create collaborative learning environments that facilitate the sharing of educational materials among students. Zhu (2012) reported that using online social media for collaborative learning positively influences students' academic performance and satisfaction. Voorn and Kommers (2013) found that social media interactions enhance collaborative learning and improve students' self-confidence. Sanders and Kabiri (2013) highlighted the

widespread acceptance of social networking platforms among younger generations as effective communication tools with significant educational potential.

Research also indicates that SNS create opportunities for active participation and engagement in academic and extracurricular activities. Gikas and Grant (2013) found that social media use enables learners to participate in collaborative learning and engage in diverse extracurricular activities. Rahmi, Othman, and Yousuf (2015) argued that integrating SNS into teaching practices can improve students' and researchers' academic performance by promoting collaboration and engagement. Similarly, Al-Bozanta and Mardikyan (2017) “found that social media use strengthens peer interaction, student engagement”, and communication with faculty members, thereby enhancing collaborative learning.

In discipline-specific contexts, Tooley et al. (2018) demonstrated that “social media-supported collaborative learning methods” are highly effective and purposeful in graphic arts education, helping students prepare for professional collaborative environments. Hiele et al. (2019) observed that SNS encourage students to share information and work collectively to improve learning outcomes. Otchie and Pedaste (2020) identified multiple educational uses of social media, including collaboration, communication, teaching, learning, interaction, entertainment, socialization, and resource sharing. Ansari and Khan (2020) further confirmed that social media facilitates collaborative learning by enabling resource transfer and interaction among students and teachers.

Recent studies have continued to highlight “the positive impact of social media on interactive and collaborative learning”. Liu et al. (2022) found that “social media-based collaborative learning increases active learning, interactive participation, idea exchange, positive attitudes toward learning, and achievement of academic goals”. Al-Rahmi et al. (2022) reported that “social media enhances student collaboration, engagement, and academic performance” through perceived usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, and social presence. However, the study also noted that cyberbullying and cyberstalking

negatively moderate these positive educational outcomes. Shodiyev (2022) emphasized the effectiveness of Facebook communities in promoting collaborative learning, discussion, and language-learning activities among adult learners.

Yen, Tu, Ozkeskin, Harati, and Sujo-Montes (2022) found that social networking interactions help students build stronger, more diverse learning communities through active sharing of values and resources. Wu, Lu, and Cheng (2022) observed that academic social networking platforms support research dissemination, strengthen social connections, and improve learning outcomes. Hussain, Kubravi, and Loan (2023) reported that students perceive SNS as valuable tools for interacting with researchers, accessing research content, understanding “research trends, and developing research aptitude and logical reasoning skills”.

More recent studies continue to demonstrate the growing educational significance of SNS. Boruzie et al. (2024) found that “perceived usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, subjective norms, and satisfaction positively shape students’ attitudes toward social networking platforms for collaborative learning”, thereby improving academic performance in higher education institutions. Zhang et al. (2024) reported that “social media use positively affects academic performance, while collaborative learning and family bonding significantly moderate this relationship”. Compson (2025) confirmed “the value of social media as an extension of classroom learning environments”, although challenges such as limited institutional support and unreliable internet connectivity remain barriers. Du and Ibrahim (2025) concluded that social media enhances “students’ learning participation, cooperation skills, and knowledge construction through instant communication, resource sharing, and online community building. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of collaborative learning” through social media varies depending on the platform, course type, and educational context.

The existing literature demonstrates that social networking sites have become important tools for promoting interactive and collaborative learning in

higher education. Although previous studies have examined multiple dimensions of SNS use among college students, further research is needed to examine their specific impact on interactive and collaborative learning practices across diverse educational and regional contexts.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

College students have increasingly attracted the attention of researchers worldwide because of their extensive engagement with emerging technologies and digital communication platforms. Their activities and patterns of technology use are continuously examined to identify both the educational benefits and the potential adverse effects associated with these technologies. With the widespread adoption of SNSs among college students, it has become essential to investigate how these platforms influence various academic activities, particularly online interaction and collaborative learning.

Collaborative learning plays a significant role in enhancing students' academic performance, communication skills, participation, and knowledge-sharing practices. In this context, several important questions emerge: Do college students use social networking sites for collaborative learning? With whom do students collaborate through these platforms? How do social networking sites influence interaction, communication, and collaborative learning processes among students? The present study examines the impact of social networking sites on interactive and collaborative learning among college students.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives are:

- (i) To determine the frequency of social networking site usage among college students.
- (ii) To examine the impact of social networking sites on interactive learning among college students.
- (iii) To evaluate the influence of social networking sites on collaborative learning among college students.

5. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was conducted in nine degree colleges in Srinagar district, Jammu and Kashmir, India. A total sample of 900 college students was selected for the investigation. The study primarily examined the impact of social networking sites on interactive and collaborative learning among college students at the selected institutions.

Despite its relevance, the study has certain limitations. The research was geographically confined to Srinagar district and included only 9 colleges, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions or educational settings. Furthermore, the sample size, although substantial, may not fully represent the diverse experiences and perspectives of all college students in Jammu and Kashmir or across India.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Quantitative data were collected to measure students' perceptions and patterns of use of social networking sites. In contrast, qualitative methods were used to gain deeper insights into students' experiences, interactions, and collaborative learning practices. The combination of these approaches enabled the researchers to analyze the impact of social networking sites on interactive and collaborative learning more effectively.

6.1 Methods and Procedures

The study adopted a survey research design to gather quantitative data from college students regarding the variables under investigation. To ensure that the sample was representative of the target population, Cochran's sampling formula was employed to determine the appropriate sample size. Based on this calculation, a total of 900 college students were selected to participate in the study. Data were collected using a structured, carefully designed questionnaire prepared in Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed through

various social media groups created and managed by college authorities to ensure wider student accessibility and participation.

Data were collected using a self-reporting approach, whereby participants rated their level of agreement or disagreement with statements concerning social networking site (SNS) usage and its influence on collaborative learning. This method facilitated the systematic measurement of students' perceptions and experiences related to the educational use of SNSs.

To complement the quantitative findings and obtain deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions, qualitative data were also collected through focus group discussions. A total of nine focus group discussions were conducted, involving 54 students from different academic streams. Each college hosted one focus group consisting of six participants, including three male and three female students, to ensure balanced representation and diverse viewpoints.

6.2 Participants' Demographics

After a 3-month data collection period, 900 completed responses were received, yielding a 100% response rate. The demographic information collected from participants included sex, place of residence, and academic discipline.

Out of the 900 respondents, 414 participants (46.00%) were male, while 486 participants (54.00%) were female. Regarding residential background, 378 students (42.00%) were from rural areas, whereas 522 students (58.00%) were from urban areas.

The distribution of participants across academic disciplines revealed that 304 students (33.77%) belonged to the science stream, 316 students (35.13%) to the arts stream, 203 students (22.55%) to commerce, and 77 students (8.55%) to computer science. These demographic characteristics provided a diverse representation of college students from different educational and social backgrounds for the study.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographics	Value	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	414	46.00
	Female	486	54.00
Place of Residence	Rural	378	42.00
	Urban	522	58.00
Stream	Science	304	33.77
	Arts	316	35.13
	Commerce	203	22.55
	Computer Science	77	8.55

Source: Author's own work.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

7.1 Frequency of Use

The study found that all 900 participants (100%) used social networking sites, indicating widespread adoption of social media platforms among college students in the Srinagar district of Kashmir. The results suggest that the digital divide previously observed among college students in the region, as reported by Loan (2011), has significantly diminished over the past decade.

Analysis of SNS usage frequency showed that 502 students (55.78%) used social networking sites daily. Additionally, 278 participants (30.89%) reported using SNS weekly, while 75 students (8.33%) reported using them monthly. A smaller proportion of respondents, 45 students (5.00%), indicated occasional use of social networking sites. Notably, none of the participants reported using SNS.

These findings demonstrate the extensive integration of social networking platforms into college students' daily lives and highlight their growing importance for communication, interaction, and academic engagement. The results are consistent with those of Saini (2020), who also reported that the "majority of college students use SNSs daily" (Table 2).

Table 2: Frequency of Using SNS

Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Frequency of use of SNS	Everyday	502	55.78
	Weekly	278	30.89
	Monthly	75	8.33
	Occasionally	45	5.00
	Never	0	0.00
	Total	900	100.00

Source: Author's own work

7.2 Impact of SNS on Interactive Learning

One of the primary objectives of developing SNSs was to enhance communication and social interaction among users. In the educational context, these platforms have significantly improved how students and teachers communicate and interact. Social networking sites enable college students to remain connected with classmates and faculty members at any time and from any location, thereby overcoming traditional barriers of time and distance.

The use of SNS has facilitated both teacher–student and student–student interaction by providing continuous opportunities for communication, discussion, information sharing, and academic support. Such interactions are considered important in the learning process because effective communication between teachers and students contributes to improved academic performance, increased student motivation, active participation, and greater academic success.

Given the growing importance of interactive learning in higher education, it became essential for the researchers to examine the role of SNSs in attractive interaction among students and teachers in degree colleges. The study therefore focused on evaluating how SNS contribute to interactive learning practices and support communication within the academic environment (Table 3).

Table 3: Impact of SNS on Interactive Learning

Statements	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SNS helps you to interact with your classmates	414 (46.00)	422 (46.89)	55 (6.11)	6 (0.67)	3 (0.33)
SNS helps you facilitate discussions with classmates and peers	349 (38.78)	459 (51.00)	68 (7.56)	21 (2.33)	3 (0.33)
SNS allows you to exchange material and thoughts with classmates	381 (42.33)	440 (48.89)	55 (6.11)	18 (2.00)	6 (0.67)
SNS facilitates interaction and open discussions with teachers	342 (38.00)	449 (49.88)	78 (8.67)	25 (2.78)	6 (0.67)
SNS allows you to exchange information and ideas with teachers	355 (39.44)	442 (49.11)	74 (8.22)	23 (2.56)	6 (0.67)

Note: Figures in parentheses are the percentage (**Source:** Author's own work)

7.2.1 Interaction with Classmates

The findings indicate that SNSs play a significant role in facilitating interaction among college students and their classmates. More than 92 per cent of the respondents either strongly agreed (46 %) or agreed (46.89%) that SNS help them interact with classmates. In contrast, 6.11 per cent of the respondents expressed a neutral opinion, whereas

only 1 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 3).

The focus group discussions further supported these quantitative findings. Most students reported that social networking platforms have become essential tools for maintaining communication and strengthening interaction with classmates and peers. Participants highlighted that

SNS provide an easy, convenient, and comfortable medium for communication, especially for students who may feel shy or hesitant in face-to-face interactions. Students also stated that these platforms help them remain updated about college-related activities and maintain continuous connectivity with classmates.

The findings indicate that the majority of degree college students perceive social networking sites (SNSs) as valuable platforms for facilitating communication and interaction with their classmates. This suggests that SNSs play a significant role in promoting interactive learning by enabling greater engagement, information exchange, and academic collaboration among students.

7.2.2 Discussions with Classmates and Peers

The study findings reveal that social networking sites significantly facilitate discussions among classmates and peers. A majority of respondents either strongly agreed (51%) or agreed (38.78%) that SNS help them engage in discussions with classmates and peers. Meanwhile, 7.56 per cent of respondents remained neutral regarding the statement. Only a small proportion of participants disagreed (2.33%) or strongly disagreed (0.33%) with the view that SNS support peer discussions (Table 3).

Insights from focus group discussions indicated that students frequently use SNS for academic discussions, group interactions, and peer learning. Participants reported that these platforms make group discussions more accessible and convenient by enabling students to communicate instantly and collaboratively. Students also emphasized that SNS enhance interaction and discussion with classmates, thereby supporting collaborative learning and information exchange.

The findings suggest that most college students consider SNS effective tools for facilitating discussions, peer interaction, and collaborative academic engagement.

7.2.3 Exchange of Materials and Thoughts with Classmates

The results indicate that social networking sites serve as important platforms for students to exchange academic materials, information, and ideas. A majority of respondents either strongly agreed (42.33%) or agreed (48.89%) that SNS enable them to exchange materials and thoughts with classmates. In contrast, only 2.67 per cent of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while 6.11 per cent remained neutral (Table 3).

The focus group discussions revealed that students regularly use SNS to share academic resources, such as course materials, assignments, date sheets, academic calendars, and updates on college activities. Participants also expressed that SNS provide a comfortable environment for sharing ideas, opinions, and viewpoints freely with classmates and peers. Some students, particularly those who considered themselves shy in traditional classroom settings, reported that online platforms helped them express their thoughts more confidently and openly.

These findings indicate that students perceive SNS as valuable tools for exchanging academic content and for facilitating free expression and the sharing of ideas within the educational environment.

7.2.4 Interaction and Open Discussions with Teachers

The data further demonstrate that social networking sites facilitate interaction and open communication between students and teachers. A substantial proportion of respondents either strongly agreed (38%) or agreed (49.88%) that SNS supports interaction and open discussions with teachers and lecturers. Meanwhile, 8.67 per cent of participants remained neutral regarding the statement, whereas only 2.78 per cent disagreed and 0.67 per cent strongly disagreed (Table 3).

The focus group discussions provided additional insights into students' experiences of communicating with teachers through SNS. Participants stated that these platforms help them discuss assignments, assessments, academic difficulties, and other educational matters with

teachers more conveniently. Students also highlighted that SNS enable them to seek academic assistance and maintain communication even during circumstances such as illness or absence from college.

The findings suggest that SNS have created new and flexible channels of communication between students and teachers. These platforms help reduce geographical, social, and psychological barriers, thereby strengthening teacher–student interaction and supporting academic learning.

7.2.5 Exchange of Information and Ideas with Teachers

The study findings reveal that social networking sites also facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between students and teachers. Regarding the statement that SNS allow students to exchange information and ideas with teachers, 39.44 per cent of respondents strongly agreed, and 49.11 per cent agreed. In comparison, 8.22 per cent

remained neutral, while only 2.56 per cent disagreed and 0.67 per cent strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 3).

The focus group discussions confirmed that students use SNS extensively to communicate with teachers about academic matters, including assignments, projects, research activities, and career-related guidance. Participants reported that platforms such as WhatsApp provide opportunities to seek advice, share ideas, and communicate more confidently with teachers. Students also emphasized that SNS create supportive and comfortable spaces for expressing academic concerns and exchanging opinions freely.

The findings indicate that college students perceive social networking sites as valuable platforms for exchanging information, ideas, and academic guidance with teachers, thereby enhancing communication, confidence, and interactive learning experiences.

Table 4: Impact of SNS on Collaborative Learning

Statements	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SNS facilitates participative and collaborative learning	188 (20.89)	517 (57.44)	162 (18.00)	28 (3.11)	5 (0.56)
SNS helps you to learn new skills and knowledge from other members of a group	234 (26.00)	517 (57.45)	108 (12.00)	39 (4.33)	2 (0.22)
SNS helps you to exchange ideas and thoughts with group members	297 (33.00)	491 (54.56)	79 (8.78)	30 (3.33)	3 (0.33)
SNS helps you to complete the syllabus and projects jointly	262 (29.11)	476 (52.86)	116 (12.89)	30 (3.33)	16 (1.78)
SNS develops reciprocity and cooperation among students	221 (24.56)	481 (53.44)	151 (16.78)	36 (4.00)	11 (1.22)

Note: Figures in parentheses are the percentage (**Source:** Author's own work)

7.3. Impact of SNS on Collaborative Learning

7.3.1 Participative and Collaborative Learning

The findings reveal that social networking sites significantly support participative and collaborative learning among college students. A majority of respondents either agreed (57.44%) or strongly agreed (20.89%) that SNS facilitate participative and collaborative learning. In

comparison, 18 per cent of participants remained neutral, while only 3.66 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 4).

The focus group discussions further confirmed these findings. Students reported that SNS became particularly important during the pandemic period, when online interaction and collaborative study emerged as essential components of learning.

Participants highlighted that social networking platforms enabled them to seek academic assistance from classmates and friends, especially during examinations. Students also stated that features such as video calls, group chats, and audio notes enhanced collaborative learning by allowing them to study collectively and share academic support more effectively.

The findings indicate that most college students perceive SNS as valuable tools for participative and collaborative learning, particularly in supporting group study and improving academic performance during examinations.

7.3.2 Learning New Skills and Knowledge in a Group

The survey results demonstrate that social networking sites help students acquire new skills and knowledge through group interaction and collaborative learning. A majority of respondents agreed (57.45%) or strongly agreed (26 %) that SNS assist them in learning new skills and knowledge from other members within a group. In contrast, 12 per cent of respondents remained neutral, whereas only 4.53 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 4).

The findings from focus group discussions supported the survey results. Participants explained that SNS provide opportunities to continue learning even during periods of absence from college due to personal or health-related reasons. Students emphasized that these platforms help them access lecture materials, learn from classmates, and stay academically connected. Participants also acknowledged that collaborative learning through SNS enables the sharing of experiences, skills, and knowledge among group members.

The findings suggest that SNS play an important role in facilitating group-based learning and supporting students' acquisition of new knowledge and academic skills.

7.3.3 Exchange of Ideas and Thoughts with Group Members

The data reveal that social networking sites encourage students within learning groups to

exchange ideas and opinions. A majority of respondents either agreed (54.56%) or strongly agreed (33 %) that SNS help them exchange ideas and thoughts with group members. Meanwhile, 8.78 per cent of respondents remained neutral, whereas only a small proportion disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 4).

The focus group discussions confirmed that students perceive SNS as useful platforms for group learning, communication, and the sharing of academic materials and viewpoints. Participants stated that these platforms allow them to express their thoughts and opinions freely while engaging in collaborative academic discussions with classmates and friends. Students also highlighted the usefulness of SNS during examinations and day-to-day academic activities.

These findings indicate that SNS facilitate the free exchange of ideas, promotes collaborative communication, and strengthens group learning practices among college students.

7.3.4 Completion of Course Work Jointly

The findings further indicate that social networking sites help students complete academic tasks collaboratively. A substantial majority of respondents either agreed (52.89%) or strongly agreed (29.11%) that SNS help them complete syllabi, assignments, and projects jointly. In contrast, 12.89 per cent of participants remained neutral, while only 5.11 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (Table 4).

The focus group discussions revealed that students consider SNS highly effective for group work, collaborative assignments, and project completion. Participants reported that social networking platforms enable them to communicate with classmates, seek guidance, and work together more efficiently on academic tasks. Students also acknowledged that online interaction through platforms such as WhatsApp supports problem-solving and assignment completion when they encounter academic difficulties.

The findings demonstrate that SNS provide supportive environments for collaborative academic

work and helps students complete course requirements collectively and effectively.

7.3.5 Reciprocity and Cooperation among Students

The data show that social networking sites foster reciprocity and cooperation among students. A majority of respondents either agreed (53.44%) or strongly agreed (24.56%) that SNS promote cooperative attitudes and reciprocal relationships among students. Meanwhile, 16.78 per cent remained neutral regarding the statement, whereas only a small proportion disagreed (4.00%) or strongly disagreed (1.22%) (Table 4).

The focus group discussions supported these findings, with most participants emphasizing that SNS strengthen teamwork, communication, and mutual support among classmates. Students stated that these platforms encourage collaborative problem-solving, sharing of academic materials, and active participation in group activities. Participants also observed that sharing course content and college-related updates within online groups naturally fosters cooperation and stronger interpersonal relationships among students.

The findings suggest that SNS serve as effective platforms for promoting teamwork, reciprocity, and cooperative learning practices within higher educational environments.

8. DISCUSSION

The present study revealed that all degree college students in the sample used social networking sites. This finding contrasts with the earlier study by Loan (2011), which reported a considerable digital divide among college students in Kashmir. The current findings suggest that “the digital divide among degree college students in Srinagar district, Kashmir, has substantially diminished over time. The study further showed that the majority of students use SNSs daily”, while no respondent reported never using these platforms. These findings are consistent with those of Saini (2020), who also found that most college students use social networking sites daily.

The study demonstrates that SNSs play a significant role in facilitating interaction among degree college students. A large proportion of students reported using SNS to communicate and remain connected with friends, classmates, and peers. Students perceived these platforms as easy and convenient tools for enhancing discussions and exchanging academic materials with classmates. The findings further indicate that students use SNS to share academic information, ideas, documents, date sheets, and course schedules. In addition, the majority of respondents agreed that social networking sites facilitate communication with teachers and help students discuss assignments, assessments, and other academic concerns more effectively. Students also reported that SNS provide opportunities to exchange ideas and information confidently with teachers while enabling them to seek academic guidance and career-related suggestions.

The study also revealed that social networking sites significantly enhance collaborative learning among degree college students. Most respondents agreed that SNS facilitate participative and collaborative learning and supports collaborative study practices, particularly during examinations. Students perceived these platforms as useful tools for learning new skills and acquiring knowledge from peers and group members. The findings further showed that SNS encourage the exchange of ideas and thoughts within groups and helps students complete assignments, projects, and course-related tasks collectively. Additionally, the majority of respondents acknowledged that social networking sites foster reciprocity, cooperation, teamwork, and supportive relationships among students.

The study's findings have several important implications for education, research, and society. Social networking sites offer opportunities for students to engage in socialization, academic interaction, and collaborative learning in virtual environments. The study demonstrates that interactive and collaborative learning can effectively take place through online platforms without requiring physical proximity. Furthermore, during pandemics, natural disasters, or other crises that restrict physical interaction, social networking sites can serve as

important channels for the transmission of ideas, information, and knowledge among students, teachers, researchers, and other stakeholders. In such circumstances, SNS can function as an effective bridge connecting students and teachers and ensuring continuity in the teaching-learning process.

9. CONCLUSION

The study examined the role of social networking sites in promoting collaborative learning among degree college students. Based on findings from the online survey and focus group discussions, the study revealed that social networking sites facilitate both student–student and student–teacher interaction and communication. The majority of respondents agreed that SNS support participative and collaborative learning, encourages the exchange of ideas and thoughts within groups, assists students in learning new skills and knowledge from peers, and enables the joint completion of assignments, projects, and syllabi. The findings further indicate that SNS promote reciprocity, cooperation, and teamwork among students.

Finally, the study concludes that social networking sites have become important tools for interactive and collaborative learning among degree college students. Therefore, students should be encouraged to utilize social networking platforms for academic interaction and collaborative learning to enhance their educational experiences and academic performance. At the same time, awareness regarding the responsible, ethical, and balanced use of social networking sites is essential to prevent misuse and minimize potential negative effects associated with excessive or inappropriate use.

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