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Impact of Social Media on Education in Primary Schools Perceptions of Teachers and Parents in Urban Primary Schools in Suva, Fiji

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***Abstract*—The use of social media has rapidly increased in education, influencing teaching and learning practices in primary schools. This study explores the impact of social media on education through the perceptions of teachers and parents in urban primary schools in Suva, Fiji. Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and TikTok are increasingly being used for communication, collaboration, and learning support. However, concerns remain regarding distraction, cyberbullying, reduced academic focus, and exposure to inappropriate content. This study adopts a qualitative research approach using interviews and questionnaires to collect data from teachers and parents. Findings reveal that social media has both positive and negative impacts on students' educational development. Positively, it enhances communication, access to learning materials, and student engagement. Negatively, excessive use affects concentration, discipline, and academic performance. The study recommends balanced usage, parental monitoring, teacher guidance, and digital literacy programs in schools.**

***Index Terms*—Social Media, Education, Primary Schools, Teachers' Perceptions, Parents' Perceptions, Fiji**

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Social media has become an important part of modern society, especially among young learners. In primary schools, children are exposed to digital platforms at an early age. These platforms influence how they communicate, access information, and interact with educational content.

In Fiji, the widespread use of smartphones and internet connectivity has made social media more accessible. During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools relied heavily on digital communication tools, making social media a vital educational support system. Parents and teachers began using WhatsApp and Facebook groups for sharing lessons, assignments, and important notices.

Despite these benefits, there are challenges such as addiction, cyberbullying, and distractions that can negatively impact students' learning.

Problem Statement

Although social media has become widely integrated into educational settings, there is limited research in Fiji focusing on how teachers and parents perceive its influence on primary school education. Understanding these perceptions is important to guide effective educational practices.

Research Objectives

1. To explore teachers' perceptions of social media in primary education.
2. To examine parents' views on social media's influence on children's learning.
3. To identify the positive and negative impacts of social media on students' academic performance.
4. To recommend strategies for effective social media use in education.

Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions of social media in education?
2. What are parents' perceptions of social media's role in learning?
3. What benefits and challenges does social media bring to primary school education?
4. How can social media be used effectively to support learning?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to educational knowledge by highlighting how social media affects learning in primary schools. It will help teachers, parents, school leaders, and policymakers understand how to manage and integrate social media responsibly.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Social Media in Education

Social media refers to online platforms that allow users to create and share content. In education, it supports communication, collaboration, and access to information.

According to □entity□["company", "Facebook", "Meta Platforms social media platform"]□, □entity□["company", "WhatsApp", "Meta messaging platform"]□, and □entity□["company", "YouTube", "Google video-sharing platform"]□, educational materials can be shared instantly.

Positive Impacts of Social Media

- Enhances communication between teachers and parents.
- Provides quick access to educational resources.
- Encourages collaborative learning.
- Improves digital literacy skills.

- Supports remote learning.

Studies show that students can learn through educational videos and online discussions.

Negative Impacts of Social Media

- Causes distractions during study.
- Reduces concentration and reading habits.
- Exposure to harmful content.
- Cyberbullying and online harassment.
- Addiction and excessive screen time.

Parents often express concern about children spending too much time on social media rather than studying.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Social Learning Theory by □entity□[“people”,“Albert Bandura”,“Canadian-American psychologist”]□. The theory explains that children learn by observing others. Social media exposes children to various behaviours and knowledge that influence learning.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research design to explore perceptions and experiences.

Research Site

The study will be conducted in selected urban primary schools in Suva, Fiji.

Participants

Participants will include:

- 10 teachers
- 15 parents

Purposive sampling will be used.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with teachers.

Questionnaires

Open-ended questionnaires will be given to parents.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will be used to identify patterns and themes from the data.

Ethical Considerations

- Consent will be obtained from all participants.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Participation will be voluntary.
- Ethical approval will be sought from the relevant educational authority.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Improved Communication
Teachers reported that WhatsApp groups made communication easier with parents.
Teacher Response: “It helps us send homework and reminders quickly.”
Parents agreed that they receive updates instantly.

Theme 2: Access to Learning Resources
Parents highlighted that YouTube videos help children understand difficult topics.

Theme 3: Distraction and Misuse
Most teachers mentioned students being distracted by entertainment apps like TikTok.
Parent Response: “My child spends too much time watching videos instead of studying.”

Theme 4: Need for Monitoring
Both teachers and parents stressed the importance of monitoring children’s social media use.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion
The study found that social media has both positive and negative effects on primary school education. While it supports communication and access to resources, it can also create distractions and reduce academic focus.

Recommendations

1. Schools should develop social media usage policies.
2. Parents should monitor children’s online activities.
3. Teachers should guide students on educational use of social media.
4. Digital literacy programs should be introduced.
5. Awareness programs on cyber safety should be conducted.

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