

Social media learning preferences of medical students of first MBBS in a Medical College in India

AmrithPakkala¹, Ashwini K Shetty^{2*}

¹Dept of Physiology, Shridevi Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Hospital, Tumkur, India

²Dept of Physiology, MVJ Medical College & Research Hospital, Hoskote, Bengaluru, India

ABSTRACT

Background: Social media is a useful tool in medical education today. It can be effectively used to teach personality models, information processing models, social interaction models and instructional preference models. This study aims to gather information about social media preferences among first MBBS students in their academics.

It is important to know the students' felt needs in order to have a useful academic program. Research confirms that quality education tools have powerful positive effects on young people in a variety of personal, academic, and professional situations. This study was conducted to gauge the felt needs of a first MBBS student regarding use of social media in medical education.

This study is designed to evaluate and compare social media preferences of first year medical students in a peripheral medical college in India

Method: This study was conducted on first MBBS students in a group of 50 students. SIMS inventory version 8.1 was administered to determine the preferred instructional mode based upon various social media tools.

Results: The most preferred method among the study group was youtube videos, followed by whatsapp messenger. Most of the students (95%) responded with a score of above average level of satisfaction on all parameters classified as relevant to medical education. Relating well with others, professional advancement and relating meaningfully with local people were the preferred answers to the extent of 90% of the sample studied as far as utility of the said tools are concerned. Among the other methods used were sites dedicated to study of a particular topic like wikipedia, twitter etc.

Conclusion: With the passage of time in the medical course, students adapt to a multimodal method of instruction. It is therefore in the interest of students to strengthen, encourage and adopt a multimodal approach to medical teaching rather than resorting to conservative unimodal approach. Social media provides critical guidance to a young person on his or her path to success. We must develop and strengthen systems that identify young people most in need of a specialized tool.

Keywords: MBBS Students, First MBBS, Medical Education, Social Media

Introduction

Social media in the field of medical education is a newer tool to facilitate every individual has a specific innate learning style and learning is more effective if instruction is delivered by this method.^[1] This assumption has a physiologic basis depending upon the sensory modality students prefer to use while assimilating information. Teaching methodologies in medical colleges has to be in line with learning preferences of the present generation of medical students. The SIMS questionnaire was used for assessing instructional preferences in social media and is therefore a valuable tool in assessment of student learning preferences.^[2] It has been demonstrated by earlier workers that visual preference in the context of learning preferences includes use of diagrams and pictures, graphs and flow charts. Auditory preferences include hearing discussions, lectures and tutorials. Read/write preferred reading printed material. Simulation of real life experiences, field trips,

demonstrations, workshops and hands on experiences are preferred by kinaesthetic learners.

Unimodal learners in this study are that group of students who prefer a single method of information presentation, whereas multimodal learners prefer more than one method. Learning styles of students in the medical college is bound to change over a period of time. Students from a diverse background gain admission in a peripheral medical college in India. It would be interesting to know and compare their learning method preferences in the context of using social media tools for medical education. This study is designed to evaluate and compare social media preferences of first year medical students in a peripheral medical college in India.

Use of social media fosters growth among students in many areas of life. Society, at its core, guarantees young people that there is someone who cares about them,

assures them they are not alone in dealing with day-to-day challenges, and makes them feel like they matter. It is important to know the students' felt needs in order to have a useful mentorship program. Research confirms that quality education tools have powerful positive effects on young people in a variety of personal, academic, and professional situations. Ultimately, social media connects a young person to personal growth and development, and social and economic opportunity.

Material and Method

This study was conducted on medical students studying at Shridevi Institute of Medical Sciences. Students of the first semester (n= 50) participated in the study. Voluntary informed consent was obtained for the study. SIMS version 8.1 questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire consists of 16 multiple choice questions and it measures four perceptual social media preferences (Youtube, Whatsapp, Blogs, Twitter). Each question carried four options. Participants were permitted to choose one or more than one options as found suitable. 50 respondents completed the questionnaires.

Statistical analysis was done to calculate percentage of students with unimodal and multimodal preference in both sets, percentage of students in each category of learning style preference. This study was conducted to gauge the felt needs of a first MBBS student regarding mentorship program in the light of their previous exposure to such a program already conducted. It was intended to understand the needs of specialist social media tools.

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. Discover areas where social media may be useful
2. Consider the different type of social media that could be available
3. Usefulness of social media tools to stimulate personal growth

Results

The following questions were posed in the questionnaire administered:

1. How satisfied are you with the following social media tools in medical education? Youtube, Whatsapp, Blogs, Twitter
2. Most of the students (95%) responded with a score of above average level of satisfaction on all these tools. Question related to aspect of life and category of life where some guidance, training was needed: The answers varied from, handling major theory topics, practical demonstrations to tutorials

On the intellectual, emotional, relationships & family, profession and cultural adaptation fronts, language and cultural competence, freedom from anxieties. Relating well with others, professional advancement and relating meaningfully were the preferred answers to the extent of 90% of the sample studied.

3. Question on what way one would like to be helped: Listening, providing growth opportunities and teaching specific skills was the majority reply in 92% of the sample studied.
Among the four general kinds of social media tools used that is Youtube, Whatsapp, Blogs, Twitter, students most of the time preferred Youtube.
4. On the specialist type of tools majority preferred the blogs
5. All general tools were found to be on equal footing in the opinion of the study group as far as acceptability was concerned. methods.

Table 1: Comparison of social media tools as instructional methods

MBBS	Youtube %	Whatsapp %	Blogs %	Twitter %
First Year	70	5	20	5

Discussion

The most preferred method among the study group was youtube videos, followed by whatsapp messenger. Most of the students (95%) responded with a score of above average level of satisfaction on all parameters classified as relevant to medical education.^[3] Relating well with others, professional advancement and relating meaningfully with local people were the preferred answers to the extent of 90% of the sample studied as far as utility of the said tools are concerned. Among the other methods used were sites dedicated to study of a particular topic like wikipedia, twitter etc.^[4]

Medical education is targeted at the following goals:

Helping set career goals and taking the steps to realize them

Using personal contacts to help young people network with industry professionals, find internships, and locate possible jobs.^[5,6]

Introduce young people to resources and organizations they may not be familiar with.

Skills for seeking a job, interviewing for a job, and keeping a job

The number of ways mentoring can help a young person are as varied as the people involved in each program.

While the lists and statistics can be impressive, personal stories can be even more impressive.^[7,8,9]

With input from industry stakeholders and thought-leaders, the report outlines opportunities for the public, private and philanthropic sectors to systemically integrate mentoring as a key youth development strategy. The report describes a series of paths forward that would lead to a society where all young people have access to a quality social media tools.^[10,11,12]

Training in a medical college encompasses multiple modes of teaching methodologies including tutorials and practical training. Hence there is more of a multimodal exposure in the medical college. Social media tools can play a more significant role in this aspect.

Conclusion

It is important to know the learning preferences of the present generation of medical students in order to understand the felt need of students. Preferences in instructional methods varies with the passage of time in the medical college. With the passage of time in the medical course, students adapt to a multimodal method of instruction. It is therefore in the interest of students to strengthen, encourage and adopt a multimodal approach to medical teaching rather than resorting to conservative unimodal approach. Social media provides critical guidance to a young person on his or her path to success. We must develop and strengthen systems that identify young people most in need of a specialized

Social media can provide critical guidance to a young person on his or her path to success. Incorporate newer tools into public policies and programs that promote education, youth development, and community service, and raise and allocate funding to mentoring programs.

References

1. Keefe JW , Learning style: theory and practice, Virginia; National association of secondary school principals; 1987
2. Fleming ND. VARK: A guide to learning styles; www.varklearn.com/english/page.asp?p_questionnaire; 2007
3. Manisha Jindal, Poonam Kharb, Samanta PP. Comparative analysis of instructional learning preferences of medical students of first and seventh semester; International Journal of Physiology 2013;1:32-36
4. Shah C, Joshi N, Mehta HB, Gokhale PA. Learning styles adopted by medical students. International Research Journal of Pharmacy. 2011; 2:227-229
5. Kumar L, Voralu K, Pani S, Sethuraman K. Predominant learning styles adopted by AIMST university students in Malaysia. South East Asian Journal of Medical Education. 2009; 3: 37-46
6. Nuzhat A, Salem RO, Mohammad SA, Nasir Al Hamdan. Learning style preferences of medical students: A single institute experience from Saudi Arabia. Int J Med Edu. 2011;2:70-73
7. Kennelly L, Monrad M - Approaches to Dropout Prevention: Heeding Early Warning Signs with Appropriate Interventions. American Institutes for Research, 2007
8. JP Tierney - Making a Difference. An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters. ERIC 1995
9. Thurlow ML, Sinclair MF, Johnson DF - Students with Disabilities Who Drop Out of School: Implications for Policy and Practice. Issue Brief: Examining Current Challenges in Secondary Education, 2002
10. Bruce M, Bridgeland J - The mentoring effect: Young people's perspectives on the outcomes and availability of mentoring. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises with Hart, 2014
11. Herrera C, DuBois DL, Grossman JB - The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles. MDRC, 2013
12. Wear II PW, Wilson LL - Bridging the great divide Educational Entrepreneurship, 2015

***Corresponding author:**

Dr. Ashwini K Shetty, MD, Associate Professor, Dept of Physiology, MVJ Medical College & Research Hospital, Hoskote, Bengaluru, India

Email: pan1832@gmail.com

Financial or other Competing Interests: None.