

Role of Economic-Related Groups in Enhancing Social Media Usage for Learning Economics among Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract:

Social media has emerged as an effective learning platform for academic collaboration among students. Economic-related groups such as peer study groups, online Economics forums, and subject-based discussion groups play a vital role in promoting meaningful learning through social media. The present study examines the role of economic-related groups in enhancing social media usage for learning Economics among higher secondary school students. A survey method was adopted, and the sample comprised 115 higher secondary school students studying Economics in Dharmapuri District. A self-developed tool was used for data collection. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) and differential analysis (t-test). The findings reveal a moderate level of influence of economic-related groups on social media usage for learning Economics. Significant differences were found with respect to gender and locality, while no significant difference was observed based on type of school. The study highlights the importance of structured academic groups in promoting productive use of social media for Economics learning.

Keywords: Economic-Related Groups, Social Media Usage, Economics Learning, Higher Secondary Students

Introduction

The rapid growth of social media has transformed traditional learning environments into collaborative digital spaces. Students increasingly rely on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, YouTube, and online forums to discuss academic concepts and exchange learning materials. In Economics education, economic-related groups—including peer study groups, online Economics communities, and subject-based discussion forums—play a crucial role in enhancing understanding and application of concepts. Economics learning requires discussion, critical thinking, and real-world application.

Social media-based learning supported by economic-related groups facilitates collaborative learning and promotes continuous academic engagement beyond classroom boundaries. Hence, it

is essential to study how these groups enhance students' use of social media for learning Economics.

Review of Related Literature

Liccardi et al. (2007) explored the role of social networks in students' learning experiences and reported that peer networks support collaborative learning, information exchange, and academic participation. The study emphasized that learning is strengthened when learners are connected through meaningful academic networks.

Al-Bahrani, Patel, and colleagues (2015/2016) discussed how social media-based activities and student-generated content can be used to enhance engagement and conceptual understanding in Economics courses. Their work shows that discipline-focused social media tasks can strengthen students' connection with economic concepts and promote active learning.

Need for the Study

The rapid integration of social media platforms into student learning demands an investigation into how peer networks and economic-related online groups shape academic learning in Economics.

- Increasing use of social media for academic learning
- Growing influence of peer and subject-based online groups
- Economics learning requires collaborative discussion and application
- Limited district-level studies on economic-related groups in social media learning

Statement of the Problem

In the present digital learning environment, higher secondary school students increasingly engage with social media platforms for academic purposes. Among these platforms, economic-related groups are emerging as collaborative spaces where students share information, clarify doubts, and exchange learning resources. However, the extent to which such groups influence students' learning of Economics remains underexplored. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the **role of economic-related social media groups in enhancing social media usage for learning Economics among higher secondary school students.**

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present investigation are as follows.

1. To find out the level of influence of economic-related groups on social media usage for learning Economics among higher secondary school students.
2. To find out whether there is a significant difference in the influence of economic-related groups based on the following demographic variables among higher secondary school students.

- Gender
- Locality
- Type of School

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the present study are framed based on the objectives.

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students in the influence of economic-related groups.
2. There is no significant difference between rural and urban students in the influence of economic-related groups.
3. There is no significant difference among Government, Govt. aided, and Self-finance school students in the influence of economic-related groups.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design of the study was very much helpful for the investigator to carry out the research successfully. The survey method is a research approach used to collect information from a large group of respondents through structured tools such as questionnaires or interviews, in order to describe attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of a population. The present study adopted the survey method.

Sample

The sample consisted of 115 higher secondary school students studying Economics in Dharmapuri District, selected using a simple random sampling technique.

Variables

Independent Variable The Independent variable of the present investigation is Economic-related groups on social media

Dependent Variable The dependent variable of the present investigation is Social media usage for learning Economics

Demographic Variables The study considered the following demographic variables: Gender, Locality, and Type of School.

Tool Used

A self-developed Economic-Related Group Influence on Social Media Usage Scale.

A self-developed “Economic-Related Group Influence on Social Media Usage Scale” was used to collect data from the respondents. The scale consisted of structured items measuring the extent

to which students participate in and benefit from economic-related groups on social media for learning.

The content and face validity of the tool was established through expert review from subject specialists and teacher educators.

The reliability of the scale was confirmed using the test and retest method, which revealed a high reliability coefficient, is 0.84.

Statistical Techniques

- Mean and Standard Deviation
- t-test, F test

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic economic-related groups

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Economic-Related Groups Influence on Social Media	115	71.26	8.94

The above table shows that the mean score of 71.26 for Economic-Related Groups Influence on social media among 115 higher secondary students indicates a high level of influence.

Differential Analysis:

H₀: 1 There is no significant difference between male and female students in the influence of economic-related groups.

Table 2: Difference based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Result
Male	58	69.40	9.12	2.21	0.029*	Significant
Female	57	73.14	8.51			

***0.05 level of Significant**

From the above table, since $p < 0.05$, there is a significant difference between male and female students. Female students show a higher influence of economic-related groups on social media usage for learning Economics. This finding is supported by earlier research, such as Kim et al. (2000) and Telli et al. (2003), who reported that female students tend to perceive and engage more positively in collaborative learning environments and online academic networks than male students.

H₀: 2 There is no significant difference between rural and urban students in the influence of economic-related groups.

Table 3: Difference based on Locality

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Result
Rural	63	69.52	9.06	2.24	0.027*	Significant
Urban	52	73.37	8.58			

***0.05 level of Significant**

From the above table, since $p < 0.05$, there is a significant difference between rural and urban students. Urban students ($M = 73.37$) show a higher influence of economic-related groups on social media usage for learning Economics than rural students ($M = 69.52$). This aligns with previous studies such as Nair & Fisher (2001) and Koul (2003), who found that students in metropolitan/urban settings report more favourable perceptions of learning environments due to greater digital access, exposure, and interaction opportunities. Similarly, Soerjaningsih (2001) observed that students with better technology access demonstrate more positive online learning engagement.

Table 4: Difference in the Influence of Economic-Related Groups on Social Media Usage for Learning Economics based on Type of School (ANOVA)

Type of School		N	Mean	SD		
Government		46	70.10	9.03		
Govt. Aided		34	71.84	8.90		
Self-finance		35	72.35	8.81		
Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value	Result
Between Groups	96.24	2	48.12	0.88	0.418	Not Significant
Within Groups	6098.56	112	54.45			
Total	6194.80	114				

From the above table, the calculated F-value (0.88) is not significant at the 0.05 level, as the p-value ($0.418 > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no significant difference in the influence of economic-related groups on social media usage among students studying in Government, Govt. Aided, and Sel-finance schools. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

This finding supports earlier studies such as Margianti (2001) and Nair & Fisher (2001), which reported that school type does not strongly determine students' perceptions of the study environment or digital learning contexts when students have equal access to learning resources.

Similarly, Kember and Leung (2006) found that learning engagement depends more on teaching and student motivation than on institutional category, suggesting that students across different school types can benefit equally from subject-based online communities and social media learning spaces.

Major Findings

The findings obtained in the present investigation have been analysed and interpreted based on the survey method.

- The influence of economic-related groups on social media among higher secondary students indicates a high level of engagement.
- Influence of economic-related groups on social media varies significantly by gender. There is a statistically significant difference between male and female higher secondary students ($p < 0.05$), with female students showing a higher influence of economic-related groups on social media usage for learning Economics.
- Based on locality, students showed varied levels of influence from economic-related social media groups. Urban students demonstrated significantly higher influence ($M = 73.37$) of economic-related groups on social media usage for learning Economics compared to rural students ($M = 69.52$), as the difference was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).
- Influence of economic-related groups on social media does not differ by school type. The calculated F-value (0.88) is not significant at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.418 > 0.05$), indicating no significant difference in the influence of economic-related groups among students studying in Government, Government Aided, and Self-finance schools.

Educational Implications

The findings of the study highlight several actionable implications for teachers, schools, and stakeholders in enhancing Economics learning through social media engagement.

- Economics teachers should encourage and integrate academic economic-related online groups to support classroom learning.
- Schools can establish and moderate official Economics discussion forums to ensure safe and focused academic interaction.
- Digital academic support initiatives should be strengthened for rural students to minimize access gaps and participation barriers.
- Students must be guided towards responsible, purposeful, and academic use of social media platforms instead of casual or distracting engagement.

Conclusion

The study concludes that economic-related groups play a significant role in enhancing social media usage for learning Economics among higher secondary school students. The findings revealed that the overall influence of these groups is high, demonstrating that

structured online discussions help learners collaborate, clarify concepts, and broaden their understanding.

A significant difference was observed between male and female students, with female students showing greater academic engagement through economic-related groups. Similarly, a significant difference was found between rural and urban students, where urban students reported higher influence due to increased access and exposure to digital platforms. However, no significant difference emerged across Government, Government-Aided, and Self-finance schools, indicating that school type does not limit students' opportunity to benefit from online learning environments.

Overall, the study confirms that integrating academic social media groups within instructional practice can support peer learning, strengthen motivation, and enrich Economics education, especially when guided by teachers and supported by schools.

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