

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan



Dorji Wangchuk

Samtse Lower Secondary School (SLSS), 22001 (Zip Code), Ministry of Education and Skills Development

ABSTRACT: The rapid integration of social media platforms into educational environments has significantly influenced communication, management, and professional practices within schools. This study investigates the role of social media in school management practices in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan. Employing a mixed methods approach, quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 1170 stakeholders, including principals, teachers, parents, and students. Qualitative data were gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs) with representatives from each stakeholder group. Quantitative analyses involved descriptive statistics, reliability testing, Kruskal-Wallis H tests, Mann-Whitney U tests, and Spearman's correlation analyses, while qualitative data were analyzed through systematic thematic analysis based on Naeem and Ozuem's (2023) model. The findings revealed that social media plays a crucial role in enhancing communication efficiency and supporting professional development within schools. Significant differences were observed among stakeholders regarding perceptions of communication efficiency, communication gaps, and data privacy. Triangulation with qualitative findings reinforced these results and further highlighted challenges related to distractions, internet connectivity, and inconsistent awareness of school social media policies. Notably, students expressed heightened concerns regarding data privacy and communication gaps compared to other groups. The study concludes that while social media offers substantial benefits for school management, careful strategies must be employed to address challenges and mitigate risks. Recommendations include the development of comprehensive social media policies, enhanced digital literacy programs, and proactive management of online communication practices.

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have increasingly become integral to daily life, influencing communication, education, and management practices worldwide (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Tess, 2013). In educational settings, social media offers new avenues for engagement among school leaders, teachers, students, and parents, facilitating real-time communication, collaboration, and information sharing (Manca & Ranieri, 2016; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). The global trend of integrating digital technologies into education is equally evident in Bhutan. With a social media penetration rate of 85.6% as of January 2023 (Kemp, 2023), Bhutanese educational institutions are increasingly utilizing platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, and school web pages to manage communication and school activities (Dorji, 2022; Wangchuk, 2021). In this context, Samtse Dzongkhag stands out, with a substantial number of social media users among its population, including over 13,000 students and 800 teachers.

Despite the growing reliance on social media for educational management, there remains limited formal research examining its dual role in enhancing communication and professional development while simultaneously raising challenges around data privacy, distraction, and policy compliance in Bhutanese schools (Żyliński, 2019; Dorji, 2022). Given this backdrop, the present study investigates the role of social media in influencing school management practices within the Samtse school community. Specifically, it aims to explore how social media shapes communication efficiency, professional development, data privacy management, and operational strategies, providing insights that could inform policy and practice both in Samtse and more broadly across Bhutan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media platforms, defined as digital environments facilitating information exchange and collaboration (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), have transformed the communication landscape of education globally. Tools like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have enabled schools to interact more dynamically with their communities (Tess, 2013). Effective school management increasingly integrates these platforms for administrative efficiency, stakeholder engagement, and fostering school culture (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). In Bhutan, with social media usage reaching 85.6% of the population by January 2023 (Kemp, 2023), digital platforms offer

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

significant opportunities to strengthen communication within school communities, especially in rapidly urbanizing districts like Samtse.

Globally, studies show that school principals and leaders utilize social media for school promotion, parent communication, and crisis management (Davis, 2010; Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). WhatsApp groups for internal staff collaboration and Facebook pages for public engagement are now common practices (Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014; Carpenter & Krutka, 2014). These tools enhance transparency, real-time communication, and community trust when managed appropriately. However, scholars caution about challenges such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and privacy breaches (Livingstone, 2014). Moreover, Yusuf (2020) emphasized that the benefits of social media depend heavily on the strategic selection and ethical usage of platforms by school administrators. In South Asia, social media adoption within school management is growing, though unevenly. Gulati (2016) found that Indian school leaders increasingly rely on WhatsApp and Facebook for daily administrative coordination and parent outreach. Meanwhile, in Nepal, social media has been pivotal during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain educational operations (Shrestha, 2020). Nonetheless, digital divides, policy gaps, and capacity-building challenges limit the full integration of social media into school governance in many developing contexts (Khan, 2017).

Bhutan's journey into the digital age began relatively late, with television and internet introduced only in 1999 (Żyliński, 2019). Despite this, social media has been rapidly embraced, particularly by youth and institutions (Żyliński, 2019; Wangpo & Wangmo, 2024). Studies report that social media serves not only as a tool for entertainment but increasingly as a platform for communication, learning, and information dissemination (Ghalley, 2019). Research on digital marketing opportunities in Bhutan shows growing reliance on platforms like Facebook and Instagram for communication and outreach by both government and private sectors (Wangpo & Wangmo, 2024). Traditional Bhutanese media organizations, such as Kuensel and BBS, have also adapted by using social media extensively to engage audiences (Żyliński, 2019).

Specifically, Ghalley's (2019) study on Samtse College of Education revealed that 100% of college students used Facebook and Google daily, citing benefits for both social interaction and academic purposes. However, concerns such as miscommunication, online bullying, and addiction were highlighted, indicating that while social media offers opportunities, it also presents management challenges if not guided properly. Another study by Gattud et al. (2020) found moderate levels of social media-related self-criticism among Bhutanese university students, suggesting that digital platforms significantly influence young people's self-perception and social interaction patterns, with implications for school climate and wellbeing. Yet, there remains a lack of focused research on how school principals and school management teams in Bhutan specifically utilize social media for operational and strategic leadership purposes. Dorji (2022) and Wangchuk (2021) highlighted that while informal uses (e.g., school Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups) are common, formal, policy-driven integration into management structures is limited.

Despite global and regional evidence supporting the value of social media in enhancing school management, there is a notable scarcity of empirical studies investigating this within Bhutanese schools. Studies from high-income countries may not be directly applicable due to differences in infrastructure, digital literacy, and cultural contexts. Moreover, while usage statistics show that Bhutanese society is digitally active (Kemp, 2023), it is unclear how effectively school principals and administrators are leveraging social media for administrative leadership, community engagement, crisis management, and vision building. This gap underlines the need for focused research—such as the present study—to examine the effectiveness, practices, and challenges of using social media for school management in Samtse. Such insights could inform future policy development, professional training for school leaders, and the strategic use of digital tools to promote educational success.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main Research Question

What role does social media play in shaping communication practices, professional development, data privacy management, and operational strategies in school management within the Samtse school community?

Sub-questions

- How do different stakeholders (principals, teachers, parents, and students) perceive the impact of social media on communication efficiency and school management effectiveness?
- In what ways do educators utilize social media for professional development and continuous learning?
- What challenges and risks associated with social media use are identified, and how are they addressed by the school community?
- What policies, guidelines, and strategies are implemented to promote the responsible and ethical use of social media in schools?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it provides empirical insights into how social media shapes school management, highlighting both its advantages and inherent challenges. Secondly, by focusing on professional development, the study highlights how educators leverage digital platforms for continuous learning and resource sharing. Thirdly, the research identifies operational

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

strategies for maximizing benefits while minimizing risks associated with social media use. Although rooted in Samtse, the findings have broader implications for policy and strategic planning in similar educational contexts across Bhutan and beyond.

DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study were collected using a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in school management. Quantitative data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to four stakeholder groups: principals, teachers, parents, and students in Samtse Dzongkhag. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended items measured on a six-point Likert scale, covering key dimensions such as communication efficiency, communication gaps, professional development, administrative tasks, data privacy concerns, distraction, and policy guidelines. A total of 1170 valid responses were collected, comprising 53 principals, 150 teachers, 346 parents, and 621 students. The survey was distributed both online, via Google Forms, and manually through printed questionnaires to accommodate participants with limited digital access. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and participation was voluntary.

In addition to the survey, qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) with representatives from each stakeholder group. Separate FGD sessions were conducted with principals, teachers, parents, and students to allow for open and focused discussions within each group. The FGDs explored experiences and perceptions related to social media use in school management, challenges faced, strategies for managing distractions, data privacy concerns, and awareness of school social media policies. Each session lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, and verbatim notes were taken during the discussions, supplemented by audio recordings where consent was obtained. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to, including obtaining informed consent from adult participants and assent from students, with additional permission secured from school authorities. This dual approach to data collection ensured that the study captured both the measurable patterns and the rich, contextual experiences of stakeholders regarding social media use in the school environment.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in line with the mixed methods design of the study. Quantitative data obtained from the survey questionnaires were first subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to summarize the overall trends, including the calculation of means, medians, and standard deviations for key variables such as communication efficiency, communication gap, professional development, administrative tasks, data privacy, distraction, and policy guidelines. The internal consistency of the survey instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Normality tests, specifically the Shapiro-Wilk test, were conducted and revealed significant deviations from normal distribution, justifying the use of non-parametric statistical techniques. Subsequently, Kruskal-Wallis H tests were employed to determine whether significant differences existed among the stakeholder groups across the measured variables. Where significant differences were found, post-hoc pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments were conducted. For variables collected only from principals and teachers, such as professional development and administrative tasks, Mann-Whitney U tests were utilized to compare the two groups. In addition, Spearman's rho correlation analysis was performed to explore relationships among the key variables.

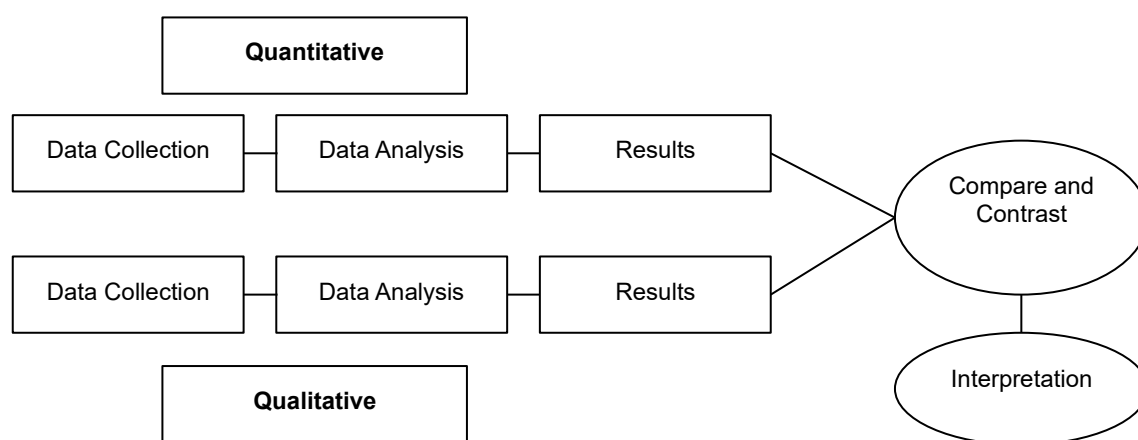


Figure 1: Mixed methods research design approach (Adopted from Creswell 2012)

Qualitative data obtained from FGDs were analyzed using a systematic thematic analysis approach based on Naeem and Ozuem's (2023) model. Thematic analysis involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for patterns,

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

developing themes, reviewing and refining themes, and defining and naming final themes. Triangulation was conducted by comparing qualitative findings with quantitative results to enrich the interpretation of data, strengthen validity, and offer a comprehensive understanding of how social media impacts school management practices in Samtse. This integrated data analysis approach ensured that the study captured both statistical patterns and the nuanced lived experiences of school stakeholders.

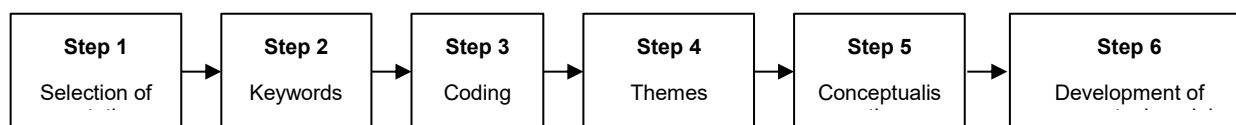


Figure 2: A systematic thematic analysis process: A novel six-step process for conceptual model development in qualitative research (Naeem and Ozuem, 2023)

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical principles were strictly adhered to throughout the study to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from relevant school authorities to conduct the research among principals, teachers, parents, and students. Informed consent was sought from all adult participants, while assent was obtained from student participants along with additional consent from their guardians where necessary. Participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, with all responses treated with strict privacy and used solely for research purposes. Data from surveys and focus group discussions were securely stored and handled responsibly to prevent unauthorized access. Ethical guidelines concerning the responsible reporting of data and respect for participants' dignity and opinions were observed throughout the study process.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of the study, derived from both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. The findings are organized around the key themes and research questions that guided the investigation into the role of social media in school management within Samtse Dzongkhag. Quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires are analyzed first, including descriptive statistics, reliability testing, Kruskal-Wallis H tests, post-hoc comparisons, and correlation analyses. This is followed by the qualitative findings from focus group discussions, systematically analyzed using Naeem and Ozuem's (2023) thematic analysis model. Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings is also conducted to provide a richer, more comprehensive understanding of the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with social media use in the educational setting. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the integrated findings in preparation for the broader discussion in the next chapter.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the central tendency and variability of the key variables examined in this study, namely communication efficiency, communication gap, professional development, administrative task, data privacy, distraction, and policy guidelines. Table 4.1 presents the means, medians, and standard deviations for each variable.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of key variables

Variable	Mean	Median	SD	N
Communication Efficiency	4.4	5	1.36	1170
Communication Gap	4.5	5	1.38	1170
Professional Development	4.9	5	1.25	203*
Administrative Task	4.6	5	1.29	203*
Data Privacy	4.1	5	1.39	1170
Distraction	3.9	4	1.58	1170
Policy Guidelines	4.2	4	1.37	1170

Note. Professional Development and Administrative Task were measured only among Principals and Teachers (N = 203).

Overall, the results show that Communication Gap had the highest mean (M = 4.5) followed closely by Communication Efficiency (M = 4.4), while Distraction had the lowest mean (M = 3.9), indicating that participants generally agreed about the effectiveness of social media in school management, although distractions were also recognized.

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

To assess the internal consistency of the survey instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for the entire scale. The overall reliability was found to be acceptable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.746, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This indicates that the survey instrument demonstrated good internal consistency and that the measured variables were reliable indicators of stakeholder perceptions regarding the use of social media in school management.

NORMALITY TESTING

Before proceeding to inferential analysis, the normality of the data distribution was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test for each variable. The results indicated that all key variables significantly deviated from normal distribution ($p < .001$ for all variables). For example, Communication Efficiency ($W = 0.893$, $p < .001$) and Communication Gap ($W = 0.886$, $p < .001$) both showed significant departures from normality. Given these results, the assumption of normality was not met, and thus non-parametric statistical methods were deemed appropriate for further analysis. Consequently, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was chosen to analyze group differences among Principals, Teachers, Parents, and Students.

KRUSKAL-WALLIS H TESTS

Given that the normality assumption was violated, the Kruskal-Wallis H test, a non-parametric alternative to one-way ANOVA, was used to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between stakeholder groups (principals, teachers, parents, and students) across the key variables.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis tests are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results for Key Variables

Variable	χ^2 (Chi-Square)	df	p-value	Decision
Communication Efficiency	61.330	3	< .001	Significant
Communication Gap	79.657	3	< .001	Significant
Data Privacy	16.359	3	.001	Significant
Distraction	6.537	3	.088	Not Significant
Policy Guidelines	6.241	3	.100	Not Significant

The Kruskal-Wallis H tests revealed statistically significant differences among the stakeholder groups for Communication Efficiency, Communication Gap, and Data Privacy. Specifically, Communication Efficiency ($\chi^2(3) = 61.330$, $p < .001$) and Communication Gap ($\chi^2(3) = 79.657$, $p < .001$) demonstrated highly significant differences. Data Privacy also showed significant differences across groups ($\chi^2(3) = 16.359$, $p = .001$). On the other hand, no statistically significant differences were found for Distraction ($\chi^2(3) = 6.537$, $p = .088$) and Policy Guidelines ($\chi^2(3) = 6.241$, $p = .100$), suggesting that perceptions of distractions and policy awareness were relatively consistent across principals, teachers, parents, and students. Given the significant Kruskal-Wallis results for Communication Efficiency, Communication Gap, and Data Privacy, post-hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted to further investigate which specific groups differed.

POST-HOC PAIRWISE COMPARISONS

Following the Kruskal-Wallis H tests, post-hoc pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments were conducted to identify the specific groups between which significant differences existed for Communication Efficiency, Communication Gap, and Data Privacy. The results are summarized in Tables 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 respectively.

Communication Efficiency

Table 3 Post-Hoc Comparisons for Communication Efficiency

Group Comparison	Adjusted p-value	Significant?
Student vs Teacher	.000	Yes
Student vs Principal	.000	Yes
Parent vs Teacher	.000	Yes
Parent vs Principal	.000	Yes
Student vs Parent	.691	No
Teacher vs Principal	1.000	No

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

The post-hoc results indicated that principals and teachers rated Communication Efficiency significantly higher than parents and students ($p < .001$). However, no significant difference was observed between principals and teachers, or between students and parents.

Communication Gap

Table 4 Post-Hoc Comparisons for Communication Gap

Group Comparison	Adjusted p-value	Significant?
Student vs Teacher	.000	Yes
Student vs Principal	.000	Yes
Parent vs Teacher	.097	No
Parent vs Principal	.418	No
Student vs Parent	.000	Yes
Teacher vs Principal	1.000	No

The post-hoc analysis for Communication Gap revealed that students perceived greater communication gaps compared to both teachers and principals ($p < .001$). No significant difference was found between parents and other groups regarding communication gap perceptions.

Data Privacy

Table 5 Post-Hoc Comparisons for Data Privacy

Group Comparison	Adjusted p-value	Significant?
Student vs Teacher	.002	Yes
Student vs Principal	.186	No
Student vs Parent	.593	No
Parent vs Teacher	.149	No
Parent vs Principal	1.000	No
Teacher vs Principal	1.000	No

For Data Privacy, a significant difference was observed between students and teachers ($p = .002$), with students expressing higher concerns about data privacy issues. No other pairwise comparisons were statistically significant.

SUMMARY OF POST-HOC RESULTS

The post-hoc analyses revealed significant differences in stakeholder perceptions of communication efficiency, communication gap, and data privacy. Principals and teachers rated communication efficiency significantly higher than parents and students, suggesting that school staff perceive social media as a more effective communication tool compared to the broader community. Similarly, students reported experiencing greater communication gaps compared to teachers and principals, indicating that information flow to students may be less consistent or perceived as less effective. In terms of data privacy, students demonstrated significantly greater concern compared to teachers, reflecting heightened awareness or vulnerability among students regarding online data use. No statistically significant differences were found between principals and teachers, or between parents and students for communication efficiency and communication gap, and no significant group differences were observed for distraction and policy guideline variables. These results underscore the varied experiences and perceptions among different stakeholder groups regarding the use of social media in school management.

MANN-WHITNEY U TESTS

Given that Professional Development and Administrative Task variables were only collected from principals and teachers, and considering the non-normal distribution of the data, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed to examine whether there were significant differences between the two groups.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Professional Development and Administrative Task

Variable	U Statistic	p-value	Decision
Professional Development	3733	.163	Not Significant

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

Administrative Task	3843	.335	Not Significant
---------------------	------	------	-----------------

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant difference between principals and teachers regarding their perceptions of professional development opportunities through social media ($U = 3733$, $p = .163$). Similarly, no significant difference was found between the two groups for administrative task management using social media ($U = 3843$, $p = .335$). These findings suggest that both principals and teachers share similar perceptions regarding the role of social media in supporting their professional growth and facilitating administrative functions within the school environment.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

To explore the relationships between the key variables measured in the study, Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were computed. This non-parametric method was appropriate due to the non-normal distribution of the data, as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk test results. The Spearman's rho correlations among Communication Efficiency, Communication Gap, Data Privacy, Distraction, and Policy Guidelines are summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 7 Spearman's Rho Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Communication Efficiency	1				
2. Communication Gap	.62**	1			
3. Data Privacy	.35**	.40**	1		
4. Distraction	-.28**	-.32**	-.45**	1	
5. Policy Guidelines	.38**	.41**	.36**	-.30**	1

Note. $p < .01$.

The correlation analysis indicated several significant relationships between the variables. A strong positive correlation was found between Communication Efficiency and Communication Gap ($\rho = .62$, $p < .001$), suggesting that stakeholders who perceive better communication efficiency also tend to recognize communication gaps more readily. Communication Efficiency also showed moderate positive correlations with Data Privacy ($\rho = .35$, $p < .001$) and Policy Guidelines ($\rho = .38$, $p < .001$), indicating that perceptions of efficient communication are associated with higher awareness of privacy practices and policy frameworks. Distraction was found to be negatively correlated with all other variables, including Communication Efficiency ($\rho = -.28$, $p < .001$) and Communication Gap ($\rho = -.32$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher perceptions of distraction are linked with lower perceptions of communication effectiveness and information flow. Similarly, Policy Guidelines exhibited a moderate positive correlation with Communication Gap ($\rho = .41$, $p < .001$) and Data Privacy ($\rho = .36$, $p < .001$). Overall, these results highlight interconnections among communication practices, privacy concerns, policy awareness, and distractions within the school social media environment.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The qualitative data collected through FGDs were analyzed using a systematic thematic analysis approach based on the model proposed by Naeem and Ozuem (2023). This process involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, theme development, reviewing themes, and final definition and naming of key themes. Seven major themes emerged from the qualitative data, reflecting the participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to social media use in school management.

Theme 1: Easy dissemination of information

Social media platforms were widely recognized for enhancing communication efficiency within the school community. Participants across all groups highlighted how platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and Facebook facilitated quick and effective information sharing between schools, parents, teachers, and students.

Verbatim quotes

- "We get information from school website and Telegram. The information's on announcements and lessons for various subjects." (FGD Student)
- "Social media has improved communication within our school community. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram allow us to quickly disseminate information." (FGD Principal)
- "Social media significantly improved communication by offering quick and easy ways to keep students and parents informed." (FGD Teacher)
- "Social media enhances communication facilitating connection with each other and creating a platform for sharing information and getting on-time updates." (FGD Parent)

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

This theme aligns closely with the quantitative finding that communication efficiency was rated highly, particularly by principals and teachers. The use of social media for rapid updates and notifications was seen as an essential tool in modern school management.

Theme 2: Professional Development enhancement

Teachers emphasized that social media greatly contributed to their professional development by providing access to educational resources, peer collaboration, and continuous learning opportunities.

Verbatim quotes

- "The use of social media plays a crucial role. With a tap of a button, we are flooded with information needed for our professional use." (FGD Teacher)
- "We regularly refer to YouTube channels and online communities where mental health professionals and counselors share helpful resources." (FGD Teacher)

This theme complements the quantitative Mann-Whitney U findings, where although differences between principals and teachers were not significant, qualitative data confirmed social media's positive role in professional growth.

Theme 3: Skill Development and Self-Knowledge

Students reported using social media to enhance their learning, vocabulary development, presentation skills, and confidence.

Verbatim quotes

- "We learn new words from social media." (FGD Student)
- "We use PPT to do our presentation and it gives us confidence to speak." (FGD Student)

While not directly measured in the quantitative phase, this emergent theme highlights an important educational benefit of social media not previously captured.

Theme 4: Data Privacy concerns

Participants expressed serious concerns regarding privacy, including identity theft, consent for sharing images, and online safety.

Verbatim quotes

- "We ensure that any content shared on social media complies with our school's privacy policy." (FGD Principal)
- "People make fake accounts and misuse our identity." (FGD Student)
- "One must be aware about protecting personal information and sharing too much on social media." (FGD Parent)

This theme triangulates strongly with the quantitative findings where data privacy showed significant differences, particularly with students showing higher concern.

Theme 5: Challenges and Distractions

Participants noted multiple challenges such as network issues, cyberbullying, misinformation, and distractions from excessive use.

Verbatim quotes

- "The challenges we face with social media are texting slang words, clicking photos without permission, using photos to blackmail." (FGD Student)
- "Managing misinformation and negative feedback in public forums is a major challenge." (FGD Principal)

Although distractions were not statistically different across groups in the quantitative findings, this theme confirmed that all groups recognized the issue qualitatively.

Theme 6: Management of Screen Time

Both students and parents reported self-regulation strategies to manage screen time effectively.

Verbatim quotes

- "By reducing screen time, setting a time limit to 2 to 3 hours per day." (FGD Student)
- "We follow 'Social Media Detox Time' by not using the internet for a few hours in a day." (FGD Parent)

This theme enriches the understanding of how users actively manage potential negative impacts of social media, even though it was not quantitatively measured.

Theme 7: Awareness and Implementation of School Policies

Awareness of school social media policies varied, with better knowledge among principals and teachers compared to students and parents.

Verbatim quotes

- "We have a clear social media policy in place that outlines who can post on behalf of the school." (FGD Principal)
- "Yes, I am aware about the policy that we have in the school." (FGD Parent)
- "We are briefed by our class teacher about media policies." (FGD Student)

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

This theme aligns with the quantitative finding that no significant differences existed regarding perceptions of policy guidelines, yet qualitative evidence showed some inconsistencies in awareness levels among stakeholders.

TRIANGULATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

To enhance the validity and richness of the findings, triangulation was conducted by integrating the results from the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. This process allowed for the identification of areas of convergence, divergence, and complementarity between the structured survey data and the focus group discussion insights. The findings demonstrated strong convergence in several key areas. Both quantitative results and qualitative themes highlighted the critical role of social media in improving communication efficiency within the school community. Principals and teachers, in particular, perceived social media as an effective tool for disseminating information quickly, a view strongly echoed across the focus group discussions with statements emphasizing the ease and immediacy of communication via platforms such as Telegram and WhatsApp.

Similarly, both data sets indicated concerns regarding data privacy. Quantitative analysis revealed significant differences among stakeholders, particularly with students exhibiting higher concern for privacy, which was substantiated by qualitative findings where students and parents voiced issues related to identity theft, fake accounts, and the need for responsible sharing of information. The theme of professional development also aligned between the two phases. While the Mann-Whitney U test found no significant differences between principals and teachers, qualitative data underscored the importance of social media platforms such as YouTube and online communities in supporting educators' continuous learning and resource acquisition.

However, certain areas displayed divergence. Although distraction emerged as a major qualitative concern among students, parents, and teachers, the Kruskal-Wallis H test found no significant differences among the groups for this variable, suggesting that while distraction is recognized, it is perceived relatively equally across stakeholders. Additional insights surfaced through qualitative data that were not captured in the survey, such as skill development among students through the use of social media for enhancing vocabulary, presentation skills, and critical thinking. Furthermore, strategies for managing screen time, including self-regulation practices, were prominent in the qualitative discussions but were not measured in the quantitative phase.

Regarding policy awareness, both quantitative and qualitative findings indicated some inconsistencies. Although the Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant group differences regarding policy guidelines, focus group discussions revealed that while principals and teachers were generally well-informed about school media policies, students and parents exhibited varying levels of awareness.

Overall, the triangulation process provided a more nuanced understanding of the role of social media in school management, validating key findings while also revealing deeper layers of experience that a purely quantitative approach might have overlooked.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This section discusses the major findings of the study by interpreting them in light of the research questions, connecting them to the existing literature, and highlighting their practical and theoretical implications. The chapter also outlines the study's limitations, provides recommendations for practice and future research, and concludes the overall investigation into the role of social media in school management within the Samtse school community.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

The findings confirmed that social media plays a crucial role in enhancing communication efficiency among stakeholders. Principals and teachers rated communication efficiency significantly higher than parents and students, reflecting their active use of platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and Facebook for operational and academic communication. This is consistent with global studies that recognize social media as a transformative communication tool in educational environments (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Davis, 2010). Qualitative findings further supported this, with participants emphasizing the ease of real-time information dissemination.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Although the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant statistical difference between principals and teachers regarding professional development, qualitative data highlighted the value of social media platforms in enhancing continuous learning and professional growth. Teachers particularly noted the benefits of accessing educational resources, online communities, and webinars, aligning with literature that identifies social media as a catalyst for educator development (Manca & Ranieri, 2016).

DATA PRIVACY AND RESPONSIBLE USE

Concerns regarding data privacy were prominent among students and parents, with students expressing greater sensitivity to online risks, consistent with the findings of Livingstone (2014). Both quantitative and qualitative data emphasized the need for clear privacy policies and responsible content sharing practices within schools. The management of social media accounts by authorized personnel and ongoing staff training were strategies identified to mitigate privacy risks.

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

CHALLENGES AND DISTRACTIONS

While quantitative results did not reveal significant group differences regarding perceptions of distraction, qualitative discussions highlighted distraction, internet connectivity issues, and misuse of social media as notable challenges. These findings suggest that distractions are universally experienced across all groups, requiring ongoing efforts in digital literacy education and personal management strategies.

AWARENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES

Policy awareness varied among stakeholders. Principals and teachers demonstrated strong familiarity with social media policies, while students and some parents exhibited only partial awareness. Although quantitative results did not indicate statistically significant differences, qualitative data revealed the need for broader community engagement in policy dissemination and enforcement to ensure ethical and safe use of social media.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have important implications for school leadership, policymakers, and educators. Schools should continue to harness the benefits of social media for communication and professional development while strengthening policies to protect data privacy and promote responsible use. Training programs aimed at improving digital literacy among students, parents, and staff are essential. Furthermore, proactive measures such as regular policy reminders, social media etiquette workshops, and student-centered digital wellness programs could help balance the advantages and mitigate the risks associated with social media in education.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the research was geographically limited to Samtse Dzongkhag, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Second, the reliance on self-reported data from surveys and FGDs may have introduced biases such as social desirability bias. Third, the cross-sectional nature of the data collection captured perceptions at one point in time, without examining changes over time. Finally, while efforts were made to include diverse participant groups, some stakeholder perspectives, such as those from rural or less digitally connected areas, may not be fully represented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Schools should develop comprehensive social media policies involving all stakeholders, including students and parents, to promote responsible and ethical use.
- Digital literacy programs should be integrated into school curricula to enhance awareness of online privacy, security, and appropriate social media behavior.
- School leadership should regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of social media communication strategies and provide continuous training for staff.
- Further research should explore longitudinal impacts of social media integration in school management, as well as comparative studies across different regions of Bhutan.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of social media in influencing school management practices in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan. The findings demonstrate that while social media offers significant benefits in terms of communication efficiency and professional development, it also presents challenges related to data privacy, distractions, and policy awareness. By understanding these dynamics, schools can better leverage social media as a tool for positive engagement while safeguarding the interests and well-being of the school community. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital integration in education and offers practical pathways for enhancing the effective and responsible use of social media in school management.

REFERENCES

- 1) Bouhnik, D., & Deshen, M. (2014). WhatsApp goes to school: Mobile instant messaging between teachers and students. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 13, 217–231. <https://doi.org/10.28945/2051>
- 2) Carpenter, J. P., & Krutka, D. G. (2014). How and why educators use Twitter: A survey of the field. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 46(4), 414–434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2014.925701>
- 3) Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

The Role of Social Media in School Management: A Mixed Methods Study of Stakeholder Perspectives in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan

- 4) Davis, V. (2010). Social media for administrators: Powerful ways to connect with parents, students, and the community. *Learning & Leading with Technology*, 37(5), 10–13.
- 5) Dorji, T. (2022). The impact of social media on communication practices in Bhutanese schools. *Bhutan Journal of Education*, 7(2), 45–56.
- 6) Ghalley, L. R. (2019). The trend of using social media by college students: A case study at Samtse College of Education, Bhutan. *International Journal of Engineering Applied Sciences and Technology*, 4(2), 40–47.
- 7) Greenhow, C., & Lewin, C. (2016). Social media and education: Reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 41(1), 6–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2015.1064954>
- 8) Gulati, S. (2016). Social media and school leadership: Practices from Indian schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(5), 739–751. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-08-2015-0107>
- 9) Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
- 10) Kemp, S. (2023). Digital 2023: Bhutan. DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-bhutan>
- 11) Khan, A. (2017). Challenges of integrating social media in education in South Asia. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 12(1), 45–54.
- 12) Livingstone, S. (2014). Developing social media literacy: How children learn to interpret risky opportunities on social network sites. *Communications*, 39(3), 283–303.
- 13) Manca, S., & Ranieri, M. (2016). Facebook and the others: Potentials and obstacles of social media for teaching in higher education. *Computers & Education*, 95, 216–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2016.01.012>
- 14) Naeem, M., & Ozuem, W. (2023). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Systematic Thematic Analysis Approach*. Routledge.
- 15) Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- 16) Shrestha, P. (2020). Digital communication practices of rural schools during COVID-19 in Nepal. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(18), 55–63.
- 17) Wangchuk, K. (2021). ICT use in Bhutanese schools: Current practices and future prospects. *Bhutan Education Review*, 5(1), 67–79.
- 18) Wangpo, K., & Wangmo, S. (2024). Digital marketing in Bhutan: Opportunities and challenges. *Asian Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 3(2), 551–558.
- 19) Yusuf, M. (2020). Social media use and its implication for leadership communication: The case of school principals. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 8(2), 158–182.
- 20) Żyliński, S. (2019). Traditional Bhutanese media on social media. *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, 39(2), 387–396.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.