

Improving the Quality and Credibility of Educational Content on Social Media Platforms in Bangladesh

Published: September 19, 2024

Hasnat Ahmed, Wahid bin Ahsan
Department of Human-centered Design
Userhub

Abstract

This study investigates the quality and credibility of educational content on social media platforms learners in Bangladesh use. Using a mixed-methods approach, 80 survey responses and 30 in-depth interviews were analyzed to assess how learners engage with educational content, the challenges they face in verifying authenticity, and potential solutions. Findings show that Facebook is the primary platform for educational purposes, but users struggle with misinformation, weak content verification, and distracting advertisements. Although 63% of participants cross-referenced information, many infrequently verified content, exposing them to unreliable materials. Participants recommended implementing stronger fact-checking mechanisms, promoting digital literacy, and incentivizing the creation of high-quality content. This study contributes to ongoing discussions about enhancing content credibility on digital platforms and emphasizes the need for robust verification tools to support learners in developing countries like Bangladesh.

Keywords: Social media education, educational content credibility, content verification tools, misinformation in education, digital literacy programs, fact-checking mechanisms, misinformation mitigation, Bangladesh, developing countries.

Open-access under CC BY 4.0

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

© 2024 Userhub. Publisher: Userhub.

Please cite as:

Ahmed, H., & bin Ahsan, W. (2024). Improving the Quality and Credibility of Educational Content on Social Media Platforms in Bangladesh. Userhub. <https://doi.org/10.58947/journal.xtcq54>

Introduction

Social media has become a significant medium for sharing information and facilitating learning globally. In developing countries like Bangladesh, where formal education systems face infrastructural challenges, platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram offer alternative avenues for accessing educational content. With over 52.9 million active social media users in Bangladesh (Kemp, 2024), the potential for social media to enhance learning is considerable. However, this rise in usage brings into question the quality and credibility of educational content, as misinformation and a lack of regulation pose risks to effective learning.

The abundance of content on social media creates challenges in ensuring the trustworthiness of information. Misinformation and unverified sources can undermine the educational value of these platforms, particularly for learners in developing contexts where digital literacy varies. Studies have shown that while social media can improve critical thinking and engagement when used effectively, learners often struggle to assess the reliability of the content they consume (Blaschke, 2014; Pang, 2022). This issue is especially pertinent in Bangladesh, where limited digital literacy exacerbates the lack of content verification mechanisms (Hussain et al., 2023).

While social media has the potential to democratize education, it also amplifies the spread of misinformation, which can negatively impact students' learning outcomes. Without critical digital literacy skills, learners are left vulnerable to unreliable or biased content (Abd Halim et al., 2024). Addressing these challenges is essential for maximizing the benefits of social media as an educational tool.

This study explores the quality and credibility of educational content on social media platforms in Bangladesh and proposes strategies to enhance content reliability. By analyzing how learners engage with social media-based educational material and how content creators can improve credibility, this research aims to inform discussions on improving digital literacy and verification mechanisms in the Bangladeshi educational landscape.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the quality and credibility of educational content on social media platforms in Bangladesh. The combination of survey data and in-depth interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of how learners engage with and evaluate educational content. The quantitative component gathered broad usage patterns, while the qualitative interviews offered detailed insights into the challenges of content verification and suggestions for improvement.

Participants

The study included two groups of participants. For the quantitative survey, 80 participants were surveyed to gather data on their experiences with educational content on social media. For the qualitative interviews, 30 participants comprising 22 students, 3 teachers, and 5 professionals were purposively selected to provide diverse perspectives. These participants regularly engage with educational content on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Their selection ensured a comprehensive view of both content creation and consumption within the social media educational ecosystem.

Data Collection

Data were collected using two methods: structured quantitative surveys and semi-structured qualitative interviews. The quantitative surveys were distributed to 80 participants, focusing on social media usage for educational purposes, challenges in verifying content, and perceptions of content credibility. For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 participants. These open-ended interviews provided in-depth insights into the participants' experiences with educational content on social media, the challenges they encountered, and their recommendations for improving content quality. All interviews were conducted online, ensuring both accessibility and participant anonymity.

Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns in social media usage and challenges with content verification. Qualitative interview data were transcribed and analyzed using ATLAS.ti software for thematic analysis. This analysis identified recurring themes related to content authenticity, misinformation, and strategies for enhancing credibility. A rigorous coding process ensured that the qualitative data were thoroughly examined and key insights were captured.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were fully briefed on the study's objectives, their role, and the confidentiality measures in place. The study adhered to the ethical standards set by the American Psychological Association (2017), ensuring that participants' anonymity and privacy were maintained.

Findings

This section presents key insights from both survey data and qualitative interviews, highlighting how learners in Bangladesh engage with educational content on social media, the challenges they encounter, and suggestions for improving content quality.

Social Media Usage for Educational Content

Survey results show that Facebook is the most popular platform for accessing educational content, used regularly by 68% of participants. LinkedIn and Instagram follow with 20% and 9%, respectively. Facebook's wide reach and ease of access make it the preferred platform, but participants raised concerns about its ability to filter out low-quality material. As one participant noted, "Facebook offers a broad range of content, but often lacks the quality control necessary for effective learning."

Table 1: Social Media Platforms Used for Educational Content

Social Media Platform	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Facebook	51	68%
LinkedIn	15	20%
Instagram	7	9%
YouTube	6	8%
Medium	1	1%

Table 1: Most frequently used social media platforms for educational purposes.

Types of Educational Content Consumed

Participants access a diverse range of educational content. History-related topics are the most popular, with 40% of participants indicating interest in this area, followed by design (20%), IT (15%), and business-related subjects (10%). This diversity highlights that learners use social media not only for academic learning but also to develop professional skills. For example, one participant shared that "social media provided perspectives on world and Bangladeshi history that were less commonly found in traditional educational resources," helping to expand their understanding.

Table 2: Types of Educational Content Consumed

Type of Content	Percentage of Participants (%)
History	40%
Design	20%
IT	15%
Business	10%
Other	15%

Table 2: Categories of educational content consumed by participants.

Challenges with Educational Content Quality

Verifying the authenticity of educational content emerged as a key challenge. According to survey data, 52% of respondents reported difficulty ensuring the reliability of the content they encountered, and 25% cited misinformation as a frequent issue. Many participants explained that they often needed to cross-check information using external sources such as Google or books to verify accuracy. Additionally, ads and distractions on platforms like Facebook and YouTube further complicated their learning experience. One participant expressed frustration, stating, "It's hard to stay focused when there are constant interruptions from ads and unrelated posts."

Table 3: Challenges in Verifying Educational Content

Challenge Faced	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Difficulty verifying content	52	52%
Encountering misinformation	25	25%
Ads and distractions	20	20%

Table 3: Main challenges faced when verifying educational content.

Verifying Content Authenticity

Despite the widespread use of social media for educational purposes, verifying content authenticity remains a significant hurdle for many users. Survey results reveal that while 63% of participants regularly cross-check information by consulting external sources such as trusted websites or textbooks, 37% admit to rarely verifying the content they consume. This discrepancy highlights the challenges learners face in evaluating the reliability of the information they encounter online.

Participants often found it difficult to distinguish between accurate and misleading content. While many made efforts to ensure the accuracy of the material they encountered, time constraints and the lack of accessible resources frequently hindered consistent verification. "It's not easy to know what's real or false without checking multiple sources," shared one participant. This inability to assess content credibility consistently contributes to the unchecked spread of misinformation across platforms. Furthermore, distractions posed by ads and unrelated posts on social media diluted the quality of the learning experience for some users.

Several participants expressed frustration with the sheer effort required to verify content, as it often involved consulting multiple external sources such as books or verified websites. Others struggled with navigating the vast amount of content, unsure of which materials to trust. These experiences point to the need for more accessible and integrated verification tools on social media platforms, enabling learners to confirm the credibility of educational content without needing extensive external research.

Table 4: Frequency of Content Verification

Frequency of Verification	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Regularly cross-check information	50	63%
Rarely verify information	30	37%

Table 4: How often participants verify the authenticity of educational content.

Years of Social Media Usage and Digital Literacy

Most participants have been using social media for 6 to 8 years, with 36% reporting more than 8 years of experience. Despite this familiarity, many users still express concerns about trusting educational content. One participant, who had been using social media for over eight years, noted, "Even after all this time, I still struggle to trust the educational materials I come across without verifying them through external sources."

Table 5: Years of Social Media Usage

Years Using Social Media	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
8+ Years	28	36%
6+ Years	20	25%
4+ Years	21	27%
2+ Years	11	12%

Table 5: Length of time participants have been using social media.

Suggestions for Improving Educational Content

Participants overwhelmingly suggested that social media platforms implement stronger fact-checking mechanisms. A total of 45% recommended that platforms reward content creators who prioritize accuracy and quality, rather than engagement metrics. Thirty percent of participants also called for digital literacy programs to help users independently assess the credibility of content. One participant emphasized that platforms should "incentivize creators to produce well-researched, reliable educational content to reduce misinformation."

Table 6: Suggestions for Improving Educational Content

Suggestion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Implement fact-checking mechanisms	36	45%
Introduce digital literacy programs	24	30%
Incentivize quality content creators	20	25%

Table 6: Recommendations from participants to enhance content quality.

The findings underscore the complex challenges that learners in Bangladesh face when engaging with educational content on social media. While platforms like Facebook and YouTube offer accessibility and a diverse range of content, the issues of content verification, quality control, and digital distractions persist. Addressing these challenges through stronger fact-checking mechanisms, enhanced digital literacy programs, and incentivizing credible content creators will be essential for improving the educational landscape on social media platforms.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal significant challenges faced by learners in Bangladesh when engaging with educational content on social media platforms. While platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn offer a wide range of educational materials, users struggle with verifying content credibility, navigating misinformation, and avoiding distractions. This section contextualizes these challenges in light of existing literature and provides a deeper understanding of the underlying issues.

Content Credibility and Misinformation

One of the most critical challenges raised by participants is the difficulty in assessing the credibility of educational content. More than half of the respondents (52%) reported struggles in determining the reliability of the information they encountered. This is consistent with previous research indicating that learners in developing countries often lack the necessary verification tools to validate online content (Ali & Qazi, 2023). The absence of effective fact-checking mechanisms leaves users vulnerable to misinformation, increasing the risk of inaccurate educational material spreading unchecked.

While 63% of participants stated that they cross-reference information with external sources, 37% admitted that they rarely verify the content they consume. This highlights the ongoing vulnerability of learners to misinformation. Similar concerns have been raised in studies on health misinformation, where unchecked content can lead to negative consequences for public understanding (Labonno & bin Ahsan, 2024). Without platform-driven verification tools, the onus of ensuring content accuracy falls heavily on the user, often resulting in inconsistencies in content evaluation.

The Role of Digital Literacy

The study further underscores the importance of digital literacy in addressing the credibility gap. Despite many participants having long-term experience using social media (36% with 8+ years of use), they still faced difficulties in critically assessing the reliability of educational content. This suggests that familiarity with social media alone is insufficient to navigate the complex landscape of online information.

Improving digital literacy is essential for empowering learners to critically evaluate the content they engage with. Research supports the implementation of educational programs that teach users how to assess the credibility of online information (Pang, 2022). Participants in this study echoed this need, emphasizing the value of digital literacy initiatives in reducing reliance on external verification tools and mitigating the spread of misinformation.

Social Media as an Educational Resource

Despite these challenges, social media remains a valuable resource for education. Platforms like Facebook and YouTube provide learners with access to a variety of subjects, from academic fields such as history and IT to professional development areas like design. This flexibility allows learners to engage with materials beyond traditional classroom settings. However, the study also highlights a significant downside: distractions caused by advertisements and irrelevant content. Many participants expressed frustration with the frequent interruptions to their learning process, reinforcing the need for better content curation. Earlier research has also called for stronger moderation to ensure higher-quality educational materials are more visible (Chen et al., 2023).

Improving Content Verification and Quality

Participants emphasized the necessity for more robust content verification mechanisms on social media platforms. Automated fact-checking systems have proven effective in reducing misinformation in various contexts (Urakami et al., 2022), and incorporating these systems into educational content would enhance its credibility. Moreover, participants pointed out that platforms should incentivize creators to prioritize quality and accuracy over engagement metrics, encouraging the production of reliable and well-researched educational materials.

Finally, the study highlights the need for platforms to provide greater visibility to verified educators and experts. Offering verification badges and promoting content from trusted sources could help learners easily identify credible material. This aligns with previous literature advocating for the amplification of reliable voices in digital spaces to combat misinformation (Ehsan & bin Ahsan, 2024).

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and supported by existing literature, the following strategies are recommended to enhance the quality and credibility of educational content on social media platforms in Bangladesh:

1. Strengthen Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking Programs

To help users critically evaluate educational content, targeted digital literacy and critical thinking programs should be integrated into formal educational curricula. Schools, universities, and social media platforms must

collaborate to implement these programs, equipping learners with the skills to differentiate between credible and misleading information. These initiatives are essential for empowering users to navigate online learning spaces more effectively, as noted by both this study and previous research (Ehsan & bin Ahsan, 2024; Pang, 2022).

2. Implement Fact-Checking and Verification Tools

Social media platforms should integrate real-time, automated fact-checking systems to verify educational content's accuracy. These tools should be easily accessible to users, providing personalized feedback on content credibility. Studies have shown that such verification systems significantly reduce the spread of misinformation, particularly in educational and health-related contexts (Labonno & bin Ahsan, 2024; Urakami et al., 2022).

3. Enhance Transparency and Moderation

To preserve the integrity of educational content, social media platforms should increase transparency around how their algorithms prioritize content. By providing clear guidelines on content moderation, platforms can ensure that high-quality, well-researched materials are given prominence over sensational or misleading information. Strengthening content moderation practices will help maintain the trustworthiness of educational resources (Ali & Qazi, 2023).

4. Support and Incentivize Verified Educators

Social media platforms should provide verification badges for educators and subject matter experts who consistently produce accurate and well-researched content. Highlighting verified content will help learners quickly identify trustworthy material. Platforms should also incentivize content creators who prioritize quality over engagement, fostering a culture of credibility and rigor in educational content creation (Ehsan & bin Ahsan, 2024).

5. Utilize Interactive and Visual Learning Tools

Encouraging content creators to use interactive and visual tools, such as infographics, animations, and data visualizations, will improve user engagement and comprehension. Research shows that visual learning aids enhance retention and make complex information more accessible (Blaschke, 2014). Social media platforms should promote these tools as a way to increase the effectiveness and trustworthiness of educational content.

6. Foster Government and Institutional Collaboration

Governments and social media platforms should collaborate to establish regulatory frameworks that address misinformation in educational content. Legal measures, such as penalties for spreading false information, can serve as a deterrent, while public awareness campaigns can promote content verification practices.

Additionally, partnerships between governments, educational institutions, and social media platforms can support media literacy initiatives, improving the overall quality of digital education (Labonno & bin Ahsan, 2024).

Conclusion

This study underscores the vital role of social media platforms in providing accessible educational resources, especially in a developing context like Bangladesh, where formal education systems face numerous barriers. Platforms like Facebook and YouTube offer diverse learning opportunities, but significant challenges remain concerning the quality, accuracy, and verification of the content provided. The research revealed that learners frequently encounter misinformation and often lack the tools or digital literacy necessary to verify the authenticity of educational materials.

These findings stress the importance of integrating robust content verification systems and enhancing transparency on social media platforms. Prioritizing digital literacy initiatives in collaboration with educational institutions, platforms, and government agencies is key to empowering users to critically assess the information they engage with.

While social media has democratized access to education, its full potential can only be unlocked by addressing the issue of content credibility. Implementing the recommended strategies such as stronger verification systems, support for verified educators, and clearer content algorithms can significantly improve the learning experience and ensure that users have access to reliable, well-researched educational materials. These efforts will ultimately contribute to building a more effective and trustworthy digital education ecosystem in Bangladesh.

Limitations and Future Research

This study provides important insights into the credibility and quality of educational content on social media platforms in Bangladesh, but it has several limitations. First, the relatively small sample size, while diverse, limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the focus on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn excludes emerging or niche platforms such as TikTok, which are increasingly used for educational purposes, leaving gaps in understanding content consumption across all platforms.

Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data from surveys and interviews, which may reflect socially desirable responses or underreport exposure to misinformation. This study also did not examine how platform algorithms affect the visibility of credible educational content, an area crucial for understanding user interaction with learning materials.

Future research should expand the participant pool to include more diverse demographics and explore a wider range of platforms, including TikTok and Instagram. Examining the long-term impact of digital literacy initiatives and fact-checking mechanisms on content verification would also be valuable. Additionally, future studies should investigate how social media algorithms influence the promotion of credible versus misleading content. Exploring the potential of artificial intelligence to curb misinformation and enhance content credibility is another avenue for improving digital education.

Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the participants who took part in this study for sharing their valuable insights and experiences. Their contributions were fundamental in shaping our research. We would also like to thank Userhub for providing the resources and support necessary to make this study possible. Additionally, we acknowledge the guidance and input from our colleagues and advisors throughout the research process.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this study. All aspects of this research were conducted independently and impartially.

References

- Abd Halim, N. D., Abdul Mutalib, M., Mohd Zaid, N., Mokhtar, M., Abd. Majid, F., & Sharil, W. N. E. H. (2024). The Use of Social Media to Enhance Critical Thinking in Online Learning Among Higher Education Students. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (IJIM)*, 18(06), 56–66. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v18i06.48033>
- Ali, A., & Qazi, I. A. (2023). Countering misinformation on social media through educational interventions: Evidence from a randomized experiment in Pakistan. *Journal of Development Economics*, 163, 103108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2023.103108>
- American Psychological Association. (2017). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>
- Blaschke, L. M. (2014). Using social media to engage and develop the online learner in self-determined learning. *Research in Learning Technology*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.3402/rlt.v22.21635>
- Chen, S., Xiao, L., & Kumar, A. (2023). Spread of misinformation on social media: What contributes to it and how to combat it. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 141, 107643. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107643>

- Ehsan, A. M., & bin Ahsan, W. (2024). *Unraveling Misinformation in Bangladesh: Perceptions, Impacts, and Strategies for Mitigation*. <https://doi.org/10.58947/PBSY-TGJR>
- Hussain, K. M., Rafique, G. M., & Naveed, M. A. (2023). Determinants of social media information credibility among university students. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 49(4), 102745. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2023.102745>
- Kemp, S. (2024). *Digital 2024: Bangladesh*. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-bangladesh>
- Labonno, N. J., & bin Ahsan, W. (2024). *Health Misinformation on Social Media in Bangladesh: Public Health Impact and Mitigation Strategies*. <https://doi.org/10.58947/RGKM-SDPT>
- Pang, Y. (2022). The role of web-based flipped learning in EFL learners' critical thinking and learner engagement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1008257>
- Urakami, J., Kim, Y., Oura, H., & Seaborn, K. (2022). Finding Strategies Against Misinformation in Social Media: A Qualitative Study. *CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems Extended Abstracts*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3491101.3519661>