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EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE UPTAKE OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT WELFARE SCHEMES: AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH

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Abstract
This study was conducted over the prospective beneficiaries of business and entrepreneurship-related welfare schemes in India, which are aimed mainly at empowering business startups and MSMEs. No doubt, these startups will benefit society at large
One of the primary theoretical foundations used is the technology acceptance model (TAM). Conceptual models and hypotheses were constructed and tested using statistical analysis with the centralized research question: Can social media be used for government communication and citizen engagement for business and entrepreneurship-related welfare schemes in India?
The accessibility and suitability of social media in the Business and Entrepreneurship communities utilizes the welfare scheme-related information through social media are checked. The analysis through logistics regression model indicates that social media platforms should audit existing posts for interactive elements, need to set KPI targets for reply ratios. On every social media there are different categories of audiences who visit the sites. The social media people should segregate the audiences in categories like information – seekers and recognition – seekers and accordingly the content should be customized for better engagement and usefulness.
Authors have found that these study findings will narrow the gap between the existing schemes and how to better propagate them to the public at large.

Key Words: Welfare Schemes, Social Media, Citizen Engagement, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Business and Entrepreneurship, Logistics Regression.

INTRODUCTION

The Government of India has significantly expanded its welfare programs, with more than 3,000 operational schemes currently (Government of India Scheme, 2025), including several initiatives focused on supporting business and entrepreneurship in addition to uplifting marginalized communities, alleviating poverty, and promoting equitable access to resources (Shrivastava et al., 2017), but also to ensure the effective implementation of Make in India initiative to encourage companies to manufacture their products in India (Nilsen & Nielsen, 2016), which focuses improving the manufacturing performance of Indian MSMEs (D. Singh et al., 2018), ensuring income generation, job creation and financial inclusions (Daowd et al., 2020) (Pandey & Ugrasen, 2019). Several initiatives were explored by the concerned government department to promote social welfare, including direct benefit transfer schemes (Selvam & Velmurugan, 2015), yet many people still struggle to meet their basic needs (B. K. Reddy & Battu, 2023) (Shrivastava et al., 2017) and the degree of awareness about social welfare programs among the Indian populace exhibits substantial variability, ranging from 49.5% to 97.3% (Goswami et al., 2019). Researchers have noted the lack of effective communication channels and subject matter experts as impediments to the proper implementation of these initiatives (Jayanthi & Sunethra, 2022). Conventional media outlets, including newspapers, television, and radio, have historically served as the primary communication avenues for governmental entities (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). However, these one-way communication channels often fail to address the real-time grievances and feedback from the beneficiaries (Shrivastava et al., 2017). To address the limitations of traditional media, the government is increasingly utilizing social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to disseminate information, gather feedback, and monitor campaigns (Saprykin et al., 2016).
Government departments in various Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh have leveraged social media to some extent for political discourse, engagement, and mobilization (B.M & Suresh, 2019), however scope is tremendous as India has witnessed a significant increase in social media usage, with approximately 90% of internet users actively engaged on these platforms, particularly among the 18-24 age group (Putta et al., 2022). Furthermore, social media adoption in rural India has doubled over the past years (C.K, 2016). Statistical data suggests that Facebook's user base in India is projected to reach 444.2 million by 2022-2023, up from 281 million in 2018 (P. Chakraborty & Chowdhury, 2021), and the monthly active user count for YouTube stands at 265 million (Palakodety & Khuda Bukhsh, 2020). The growing popularity of social media across India presents a valuable avenue

for governments to connect the citizens, especially the younger demographic, disseminate scheme-related information, and facilitate citizen engagement.

This study was conducted over the prospective beneficiaries of business and entrepreneurship related welfare schemes in India, which are aimed mainly at the empowerment of business startups and MSMEs. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the access to various platforms, usage frequency, usage behavior, patterns of engagement using like-share and comments, understand the preferred tone and type of communication like text, picture, or short videos commonly known as reels, and the other factors influencing the engagement of citizens in social welfare schemes. In this study, factor analysis has been used to identify the underlying constructs and dimensions that influence the usage sensitivity of social media in welfare schemes. The main research question addressed in this paper is to find out the readiness of the beneficiaries of B&E welfare schemes and accessibility of social media platforms to the stakeholders of B&E social welfare schemes in India, as a tool for monitoring and influencing the performance.

Theoretical Framework

Social media provides personalized experiences and facilitates widespread information searches, and the rise of social media platforms has transformed how consumers interact with each other and organizations (Binlibdah, 2024). The theoretical framework underpinning this study draws from multiple perspectives in order to gain a thorough and detailed comprehension of social media's role in monitoring and influencing the performance of social welfare schemes. Authors have explored several relevant theoretical models:

1. The theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) emphasizes the influence of individual behavior, subjective norms, social factors, and personal beliefs in determining one's intention to engage in a particular action.
2. Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) indicates that an individual's attitudes, perceived social pressures, and perceived ability to perform a behavior shape their intentions to engage in a particular action (Dzandu et al., 2016).
3. The technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis 1989) elucidates that the personal intention of an individual uses a technology is primarily determined by their perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use.
4. Innovation diffusion theory (Rogers & Williams, 1983) elucidates the influencing factors like rate and extent of adoption, including the perceived characteristics of the innovation, communication channels, temporal factors, and the broader social system.
5. Unified theory acceptance and use of a specific technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003) model posits that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions are key determinants of technology adoption and usage.

Technology acceptance model (TAM), originally proposed by (Davis, 1989)), indicates that the perception of usefulness and simplicity of use directly influences an individual's attitude towards using the technology, consequently affects their attitude, behavioral propensity to utilize the technology and may influence the actual usage. Original model also claimed that research should explore other variables that could affect the actual use.

[Figure 1 here]

Thus, the current study also utilizes the customer characteristics including accessibility and demographic conditions like education, income, caste, marital status, gender, age, employment language, and trust of social media channels, along with the constructs in TAM to examine how social media platforms can foster social capital among beneficiaries, thereby enhancing their participation and the efficacy of government social welfare schemes. The conceptual underpinnings synthesize these theoretical perspectives to create a holistic model that explains the factors influencing the adoption and effective the employment of social media platforms in the context of social welfare schemes in India

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review synthesizes various studies that assess these parameters, providing insights into the complex dynamics of social media utilization and social welfare programs.

Accessibility of Social Media and Awareness Welfare Schemes

Empirical evidence suggests that a substantial segment of the population is aware of various social welfare programs, with awareness varies from 49.5% to 97.3% in different studies focusing on urban populations (Goswami et al., 2019). However, the actual utilization of these schemes remains low, with figures ranging from 10.3% to 66.6% among elderly populations (Goswami et al., 2019). The limited accessibility of information and the digital divide, particularly in rural regions, frequently contribute to this disparity (A. Reddy et al., 2022). For instance, citizen engagement through social media could potentially improve access, as it provides a platform for disseminating information about these schemes widely and quickly (D. Chakraborty & Seth, 2015). Moreover, communication channels, including social media, can be leveraged to enhance the effectiveness of outreach initiatives for these schemes. According to various studies, strong mobile phone penetration in India offers significant opportunities for utilizing social media to capture community perceptions and promote welfare scheme awareness (D. Chakraborty & Seth, 2015).

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Usage Sensitivity of Social Media

Understanding the usage sensitivity of social media users is pivotal for effectively engaging the community regarding welfare schemes. Social media's role in increasing awareness has been illustrated in numerous socio-political movements in India, such as "India Against Corruption," which utilized social media to mobilize public support. Such events highlight the importance of sensitivity to the social context and user preferences when employing social media for disseminating information on welfare schemes. Research indicates that social media entertainment plays a significant role in engaging audiences, while the underlying media psychology and technical capabilities are equally crucial factors to consider (Lüders, 2025). Research emphasizes that citizen feedback mechanisms can help fine-tune the design and delivery of welfare schemes based on community needs (D. Chakraborty & Seth, 2015). Furthermore, the usefulness of social media as a tool for welfare engagement is dependent on specific demographic characteristics of the user base. Studies have shown that socio-economic stability in India is closely linked to financial inclusion initiatives, which are often communicated and monitored via social media platforms (J. Singh & Singh, 2022). Therefore, adapting communication strategies to suit the varying sensitivities of different user groups can lead to improved engagement (Kohli et al., 2017).

Readiness in Utilizing Social Media

The readiness of stakeholders to use social media for monitoring and influencing social welfare schemes reflects a broader trend towards decentralized governance in India. Research suggests most of the time the ruling government plays a very crucial role in designing and implementing welfare policies, and their readiness to adopt social media can enhance program delivery (Deshpande et al., 2017). However, barriers such as low digital literacy, especially among marginalized communities, significantly hinder effective utilization (S. Reddy et al., 2021)). To overcome these challenges, it is vital to develop specific strategies aimed at enhancing digital literacy and access to technology among underserved populations. Initiatives that involve citizens in decision-making processes can promote a more collaborative environment to implement welfare schemes, ensuring that they are attuned to the needs of the community (Punir, 2023). Research demonstrates that harnessing the potential of social media requires not merely an understanding of fundamental principles, but also the application of creative approaches, which may enable campaigns to increase their visibility, broaden the reach and engagement, and keep citizen informed in near real-time (Alvino, 2022). The potential for social media to facilitate this engagement and monitor the effectiveness of schemes is promising, as evidenced by examples where community feedback improved service delivery through direct interactions with local governance (D. Chakraborty & Seth, 2015).

In conclusion, social media holds significant potential as a tool for monitoring and influencing the performance of social welfare schemes in India. Its accessibility must be optimized to ensure that information reaches those who need it most, while sensitivity to user demographics will enhance engagement. Finally, by fostering readiness among stakeholders to leverage these digital tools effectively, India can enhance the transparency and accountability of welfare programs, leading to better outcomes for its citizens.

METHOD

The quantitative method i.e. logistic regression is used to achieve the purpose of this study. Target populations were the prospective beneficiaries of business & entrepreneurships related welfare schemes introduced by Indian government, and a survey method using a convenience sample was employed over the target populations who were the employees, contractor, suppliers, founders, investors of Indian startups companies along with some students of India B-Schools who were the future drivers of the startup India initiative, launched by the Government of India in January 2016, has multifaceted objectives aimed at fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurship and innovation within the country to support the Indian economy by promoting startups as engines not only for job creation but also for economic growth.

The study employed a two-part questionnaire. The first part collected demographic data from the participants, while the second part focused on their perceptions of social media knowledge. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice, checkbox, and four-point Likert scale questions, allowing participants to indicate their level of agreement with the statements. The self-administered survey was designed using Google Forms and distributed to respondents via email, social media groups, and WhatsApp. A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire, explaining the study's purpose and ensuring the confidentiality of the participants' responses.

Participants

A total of 373 responses were gathered, cleaned, and properly coded, making them ready for statistical analysis using a SPSS. Descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the demographic characteristics of the respondents, and factor analysis was employed to determine the underlying dimensions of the participants' perceptions of social media knowledge.

Participant’s Measurement

The authors have framed three hypotheses to analyze the users' readiness to adopt social media as a means for having awareness and adoption of the social welfare schemes initiated by government.

1. H1: Volume/ number of users has a positive relationship with Access/ Reach of SM.
2. H2: Users' accounts in multiple social media (SM) platforms have positive relationship with Access/ Reach of SM.
3. H3: Frequency and patterns of SM usage have a positive relationship with the usefulness of the communication message and readiness of the SM users

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

The sample was 18.6% female and 81.4% male; respondents are mostly from the age group 18-30 years, which constitutes 34.31%, 26.96% are from 40-50 years old, 25.49% are from 41-50, and 13.24% are from 51 years and above. In terms of educational background, 79.66% of the respondents are postgraduate and doctorate, 19.61% are graduate, and the rest (<1%) are primary and secondary school. A majority of the participants were employed by startup enterprises, constituting 69.61%, 15.44% are business owners who are majorly entrepreneurs of startup companies, 12.25% are students of business schools, and the remaining 2.7% are unemployed persons. Financially 58.58% are earning more than INR 300K annually, 23.77% are earning in between INR 27K - 300K annually and there is 16.42% respondent mentioned that their household income in below INR 27K, which means respondents are from wide variety of financial status from below poverty level to meddle and may be upper middle classes (refer Table 1).

[Table 1 here]

The findings (refer figure 2) indicate that all the respondents engage with social media platforms, and a significant proportion utilize YouTube, constituting 96.08% of sample size, followed by 92.16% LinkedIn, 64.22% Facebook, 59.07% Instagram and 45.10% Twitter, it is also found that 30.15% participants also utilize various other social media platforms. Respondents are also frequent users of various social media messaging applications; 99.26% are using WhatsApp, and 98% are using this application daily, Facebook Messenger are also used by 35.05% respondents, 33.82% Telegram, Discord & Snapchat both applications are used by 14.95% and 15.93% used others platforms as well. It is also found that 99% of respondents are using more than one social networking sites and messaging applications.

[Figure 2 here]

It is evident from figure 2, that the target audience of the prospective beneficiaries of business & entrepreneurship welfare schemes is using social media extensively, and most of them are using productive and professional social media like LinkedIn, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The target market of social media is dominated by WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, and all of them are developed by Meta Platform Inc. (META), an American multinational technology conglomerate based in Menlo Park, California.

Conceptual Model

The authors have come out with a conceptual model based on the research gap and empirical gaps as shown in figure 3. This model is validated by the empirical data. This model has the constructs to check the success of communication success of government schemes propagating through various social media platforms. Social Media Usage is an inner model and trust is a mediating variable which result to communication as an output variable (outer model).

[Figure 3 here]

Data Analysis

The authors have used the above conceptual model as a base for the study. The variables are taken here as independent variables as Usage frequency, visibility of posts, type of content and engagement behaviour. The dependent variable considered for running the logistic regression model are communication success – access and communication success-usefulness. The mediating variable which is a linkage of independent and dependent variable is trust.

After running the dataset of 373 respondents on SPSS, the authors have come out the important findings with regards to the final result of social media communication.

Generalisation quality of the output

- Cross-validated ROC-AUC: ≈ 0.78 (up from ≈ 0.76 in the un-penalised model).
- Accuracy 0.79, F1 0.87, Precision 0.81, Recall 0.94.

The model now captures almost every "usefulness success" while making fewer false alarms than before—evidence that regularisation reduced over-fit.

[Table 2 here]

The table 2 lists only those predictors whose coefficients survived the L1 shrinkage. Direction shows impact on the log-odds of success:

- Engage – Interaction (strongest positive). Respondents who interact actively with municipal posts are far likelier to judge them useful.
- Engage – Expect reply. Anticipating two-way dialogue boosts perceived usefulness; one-way broadcasting hurts.

- Total number of users and Accounts. Larger followership and more official accounts signal reach or legitimacy, nudging usefulness upward.
- Trust: Participation and Trust: Accountable. Trust dimensions matter—access to participatory features and accountability both add lift.
- Usage motive – Information (negative). Those logging in mainly "for information" tend to be more critical, perhaps expecting higher informational quality.
- Usage motive – Social Recognition (mild positive). Community-oriented motives help.
- Type – Consistent (small positive). Consistency of content schedule has a modest benefit.
- Prior Communication-Success on "Engage" shows a small carry-over effect.
- SM User (binary whether respondent is a social-media user) still matters, but only slightly after other factors enter.

The managerial interpretation of the logistic regression is that two-way engagement is the single biggest lever and media people should design features (comment replies, Q&A sessions) that encourage interaction. The social media person should bolster trust through participatory mechanisms and visible accountability so that citizens value seeing how input leads to action. On every social media needs raw follower counts, but content quality (especially beyond mere "information dumping") is key, otherwise heavy information-seekers become sceptical.

All the social media communication should have consistency in messages, yet only after basic engagement and trust factors are met; treat it as hygiene rather than a differentiator.

Hypothesis one (H1) and hypothesis two (H2), which are about the larger number of SM users and the higher number of user accounts in multiple social media platforms, have a positive relationship with access/reach of social media platforms. After combining the responses of multiple social media platforms, it is found that 100% of respondents are using social media, and the majority have user accounts on multiple social media platforms. Analysis explored the frequency of the number/quantity of users' accounts in various social media platforms which shows more than 99% people are using two or more social media platforms and around 69% respondents majorly males with the two age groups 18 - 30 years and 31 - 40 years are maintaining 4 - 7 numbers of users' accounts on various social media platforms. Consequently, H1 and H2 are determined to be statistically significant, and they are accepted.

Hypothesis H3, is very validated by the logistics regression results, when authors have run it on two dependent variables, viz, communication success- access and communication success – usefulness as highlighted in the conceptual model (figure 3).

The ROC value of logistic curve for communication success – usefulness is showing AUC as 0.827 which is very accepted and directly hinted that the users found the content on the social media useful for getting the knowledge of business/ entrepreneurship schemes, launched by government of India.

[Figure 4 here]

Usefulness model (as per figure 4)

- Accuracy ≈ 0.82 Roughly 4-in-5 responses are predicted correctly.
- Precision ≈ 0.83 Out of all "success-usefulness" predictions, 83 % are right.
- Recall ≈ 0.93 The model captures most actual successes; only ≈ 7 % slip through.
- F1 ≈ 0.88 Balances precision and recall into a single score.
- ROC AUC ≈ 0.83 The orange curve rises well above the diagonal, showing good—but not perfect—ranking power.

[Figure 5 here]

Figure 5 shows the usage frequency distribution of social media sites and messaging platforms, it is found that WhatsApp is on top as 98% of people prefer to use this platform daily, followed by YouTube 68%, LinkedIn 63%, Instagram 40%, and Facebook 35% on daily basis.

[Figure 6 here]

Figure 6 displays the distribution of browsing time and purpose of using social media and it shows that majority of the users prefer to browse social media during their leisure time 8 PM - 2 AM and 66% respondents use it for news and other information gathering purposes, however they try to learn, entertained an perform networking using social media. So, it is evident that the target audience who are from the business & entrepreneur community are looking for networking and information on social networking sites and applications daily. Therefore, H3 is found to be significant and it is also accepted.

DISCUSSION

The analysis clearly indicates that social media platforms should audit existing posts for interactive elements, need to set KPI targets for reply ratios. On every social media there are different categories of audiences who visit the sites. The social media people should segregate the audiences in categories like information – seekers and recognition – seekers and accordingly the content should be customized for better engagement and usefulness.

With these findings the government has a data-backed roadmap: build two-way, trust-centred experiences first, polish consistency second, and continuously test that changes improve true usefulness—not just raw impressions.

This study attempted to estimate the accessibility of social media sites and applications and the readiness of the target audience to accept the new information through a different channel, like social media. The hypotheses were developed systematically and evaluated through quantitative analysis; the results indicate that all hypotheses were found to be statistically significant and have been accepted.

The findings indicate that all surveyed individuals utilize social media platforms, and a majority maintain multiple accounts across various social media and messaging services. Additionally, a significant proportion of respondents report daily engagement with these platforms, which they also rely upon as a source of information. In conclusion, the findings suggest that the target audience, consisting of the business and entrepreneurial community, is receptive to information pertaining to business and entrepreneurial-focused welfare initiatives. Despite several initiatives by the Indian government, the awareness levels of the Indian population regarding social welfare schemes vary significantly. Business and entrepreneurship-related schemes are now very relevant to successfully implementing the Make in India initiative. However, the lack of proper communication channels and experts has been noted as a hindrance to properly implementing these schemes.

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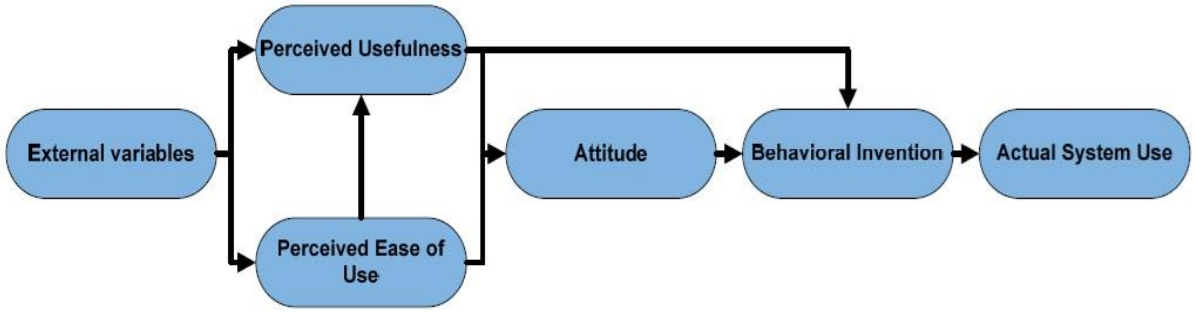
Figure 1 Technology acceptance model (see online version for colours)



Source: Davis (1989)

Table 1: Respondent's Profile

SN	Particulars	Percentage (%)

1	Social Media User's Age	
	Age (In Years)	
	18-30	34.31
	31-40	25.49
	41-50	26.96
	51 and above	13.24
2	Educational Qualification	
	10th - 12th Grade	0.73
	Graduate	19.61
	Post Graduate and above	79.66
3	Employment Status	
	Business/Entrepreneur	15.45
	Employed	69.61
	Student	12.25
	Unemployed	2.7
4	Annual Income	
	0-27 K	16.42
	27 K-300 K	23.77
	300 K and above	58.58
	Prefer not to say	1.23

Table 2: Logistic Regression Model Output

Feature	Coefficient
Engage- Interaction	0.524
Engage Expect reply	0.451
Total No of Users	0.339
Trust: Participation	0.185
Usage Motive: Information	-0.158
Accounts	0.105
Trust: Accountable	0.081
SM User	0.078
Comm Success- Engage	0.055
Usage Motive: Social Recognition	0.031
Type of content: Consistent	0.011

Figure 2: Social Media Platform Usage Distribution

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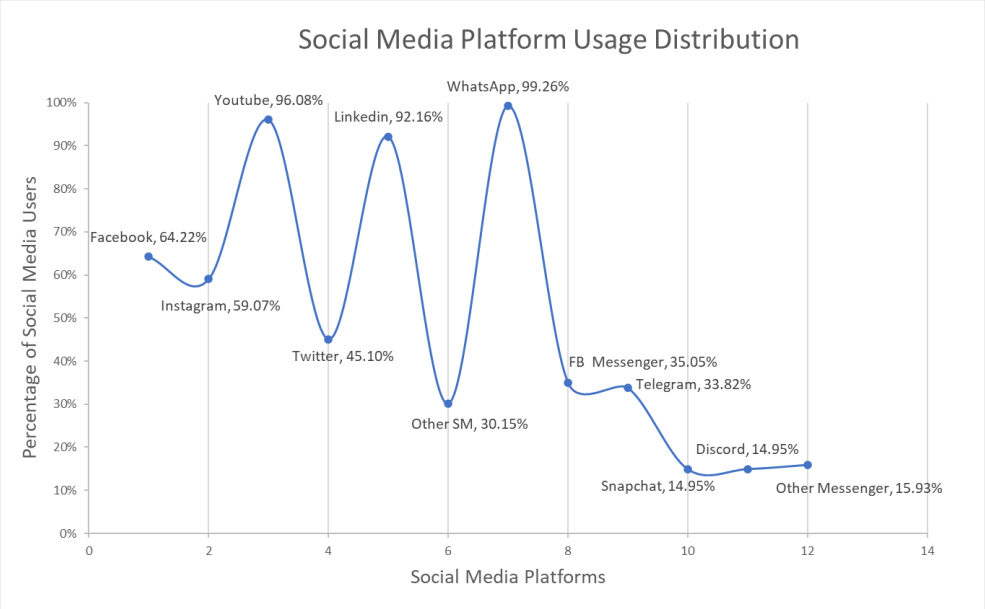

Figure 3: Conceptual Model of Social Media Usage

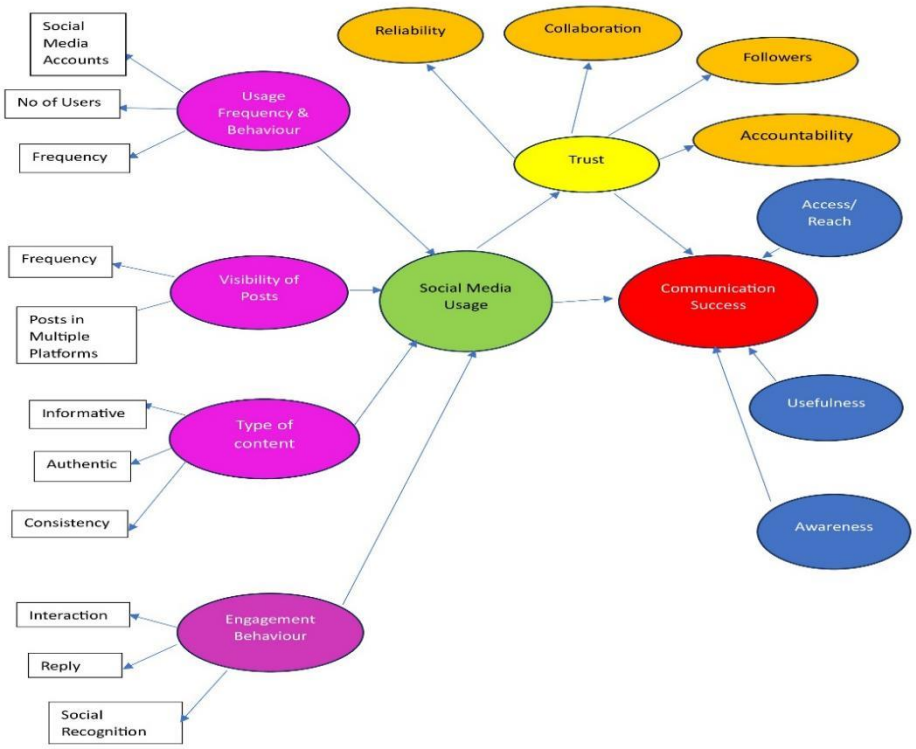

Figure 4: ROC Curves for Logistic Models

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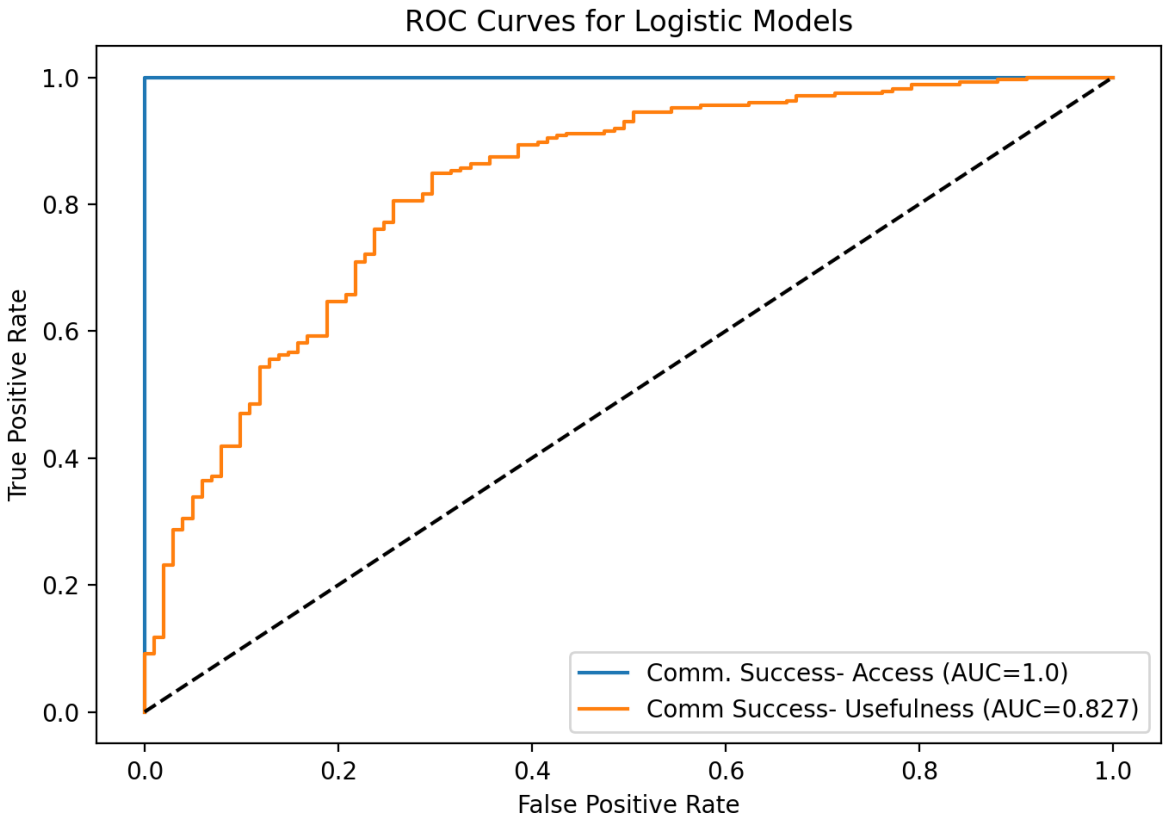

Figure 5: Usage Frequencies of Social-Media Platforms

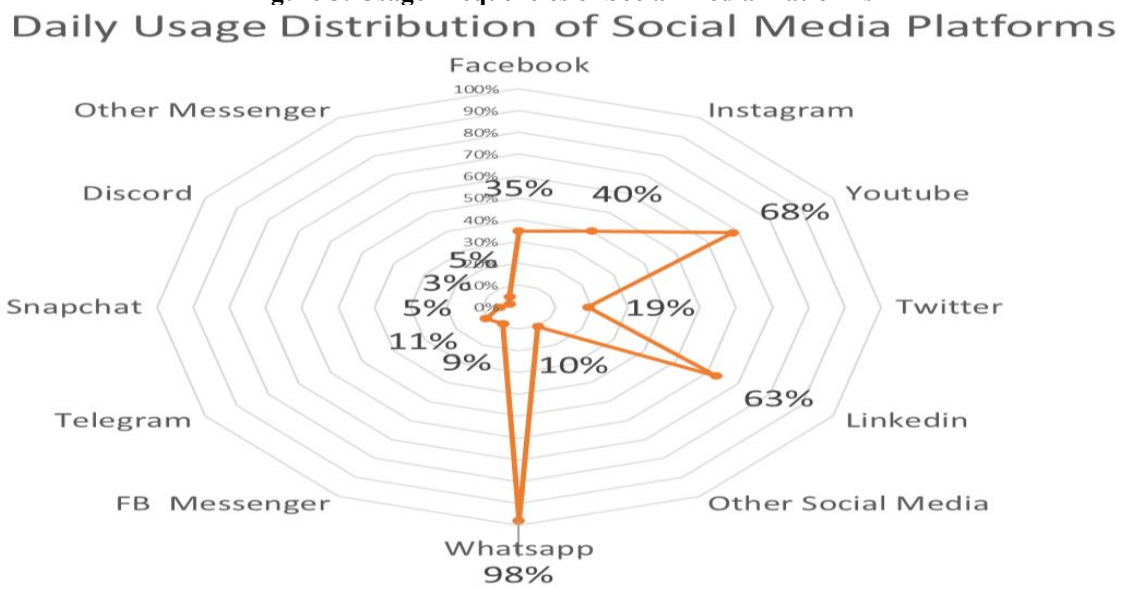

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Figure 6: Purpose of using Social-Media