

INFLUENCE OF SELECTED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: CASE OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, MOMBASA CAMPUS, KENYA

Kimang'a Chris Nyaanga.

Student, Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Daniel Mange Mbirithi.

Lecturer, Department of Public Policy and Administration, School of Law, Arts and Social Sciences, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

©2024

International Academic Journal of Social Sciences and Education (IAJSSE) | ISSN 2518-2412

Received: 20th June 2024

Published: 27th June 2024

Full Length Research

Available Online at: https://iajournals.org/articles/iajsse_v2_i3_380_398.pdf

Citation: Nyaanga, K. C., Mbirithi., D. M. (2024). Influence of selected social media platforms and academic performance of undergraduate students: case of Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Social Sciences and Education (IAJSSE)*, 2(3), 380-398.

ABSTRACT

In the contemporary society, academic performance of students is affected by many factors whereby some are controllable and others non-controllable. Social media platforms have become indispensable in our day-to-day life. The influence of social media platforms has been witnessed in almost all facets of human life. The snowballing effect of social media usage; has affected either positively or negatively students' academic performance. Academic achievement is an essential aspect in any students' academic life particularly undergraduate students. The study set to investigate the effects of social media usage on academic performance of undergraduates. This study adopted two theories: Use and Gratification theory and Technological Acceptance Model. Correlational research design was adopted by this study and survey questionnaires were used as the research instrument. The total population was 732 undergraduate students. Taro Yamen's formula was used in obtaining the sample size of 280 undergraduate students. Pilot study was conducted before the actual study was undertaken with the aim of checking reliability and validity of the research instruments. Survey questionnaires were administered to undergraduate students at Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus,

Kenya. The collected data were analyzed using correlation (Pearson's) technique on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analyzed data were displayed in tables, and Likert scale. Findings indicated a positive and significant effect of selected social media platforms' use on academic performance of undergraduate students at Kenyatta university, Mombasa campus. It was concluded that social media platforms are used to share course outlines amongst students, facilitate group discussions and is a source of communication on assignments and class projects. Social media platforms are used during lecture sessions, during group discussions, during assignments taking, when studying in the library and during private reading. Engaging in group discussions on social media platforms enhances collaborative learning, allowing students to share insights and deepen their understanding of the course concepts. This study recommends that institutions of higher learning in Kenya to institute policies that would enhance the responsible use of social media platforms amongst the undergraduate students.

Key terms: Selected Media Platforms, Undergraduate Students, Academic Performance

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media platforms which includes: WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook and many more other social media platforms has made the world to be segregated into two categories: the online group and the offline group. Social media platforms provide a

virtual environment that connects people regardless of their geographical distance. According to social media by Students (2017), social media platforms are commonly used to build and maintain relationships between its users. The commonly used social media platforms like Microblog, WeChat and Facebook have availed an efficient and effective way of how people interact. Junco (2010) stated that social media platforms offer the users with the ability to interact and enhances community unity where the users can virtually share different information among themselves.

According to Cheung, Chiu and Lee (2011) media users can use social media platforms to publish their ideas and share content with members who are in the same online community. The onset of social media platforms usage has made it possible for many users to be publishers of different kinds of information to a larger pool of content consumers unlike during the conservative media era where the mainstream media were the only publishers and custodian of information. The easy availability of smart phones and high internet connectivity in the 21st century has made it possible for information to be quickly disseminated within a short duration to a larger mass just by a click of a button, making it possible for ubiquitous learning especially in higher learning institutions (Lewis, Pea & Rosen, 2010).

With 81% of users between the ages of 18 and 29 and 78% between the ages of 30-49, Facebook continues to be the most popular social media network in the US, according to a research which was conducted by Pew Research Center survey (2018). Furthermore, 95% of You Tube users are between the age group of 24-35 years. Schneide (2009) stated that Facebook has over 500 million subscribers and its numbers is increasing exponentially. A study conducted by the University of New Hampshire (2009) stated that the numbers of Facebook and YouTube subscribers will continue to increase day by day.

Inter-Media Research for Global Development (2018) conducted research on ‘Impact of digital technology and social media on young people,’ The research findings revealed that many youths use social and digital media in a private space where there is no adult-controlled environment and thus making them susceptible to negative effects of social media usage. Marche (2012) argues that social media platforms provide an enabling and enticing environment where users can dictate how they can choose the happenings of their life. The freedom derived from social media usage makes the users to be addicted to the virtual environment. Turkle (2011) stated that the 21st generation spends much of their time online on social media platforms; searching for the sense of ‘safety’ that they believe will be provided through the use social media platforms. The sense of virtual ‘safety’ makes the undergraduate students (users) to be vulnerable to a variety of effects arising from the usage of social media platforms.

After conducting a study in San Diego, California, in 2009, the American Educational Research Association acknowledged at their annual conference that learners who spend the much of their time on social media platforms do not have enough time to study their academic materials, which resulted to poor academic performance. Achievements in academics is as a resultant of undergoing through formal education; the level to which a student achieves educational goals (Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012). A Low-grade point average (GPA) may make an undergraduate

student to be demotivated in his or her academics while a high GPA attained by a student may motivate him or her to put more effort in academics.

Every year, new social media platforms are being launched on the online sites and their popularity grows day by day. The newly launched social media platforms can be easily installed on smart phones by downloading them from either play store (Android phones) or App store (Iphone). The influence they exert on undergraduate students' academic performance is an issue which needs quick interventions in a holistic and objective manner. There are a variety of other elements that influence undergraduate students' academic success, according to numerous pedagogical researches. Therefore, this survey aims to ascertain whether there is any connection between undergraduate students' academic achievement and the use of the selected social media platforms at Kenyatta University's Mombasa campus.

Statement of the Problem

Technological advancement has paved way for the development of internet based social media platforms. These virtual media platforms are adopted and used for various purposes like collaboration, socialization and sharing of information. Is the current high social media usage a revolution or an evolution to human beings' social interactions? Does academic performance of students be affected when they choose to use social media platforms? Determining the precise answers to these social problems requires a scientific approach which was the main purpose for this study. The high usage of social media platforms has led to a worrying phenomenon and is believed to influence academic performance of undergraduate students. Boyd (2007) stated that in the advent of computers, they were commonly used by computer literates as a way of spending their free time but in the modern-days, computers are widely used by many people for recreational and other personal purposes.

The Grade Point Average (GPA), which is attained by an undergraduate student, is the common tool that is used to grade students' academic ability during their academic life. According to Center for Research and Development Academic Achievement (CRIRES) (2005) report; students' achievement, knowledge, skills, and academic ability is measured using academic achievement where a student is graded depending on the grade attained in each semester's exam. Among many other factors that may influence academic performance of an undergraduate student; digital social media usage factor should not be overlooked. The use of social media platforms by undergraduate students can therefore, lead to a negative or a positive effect on their academic performance.

This study was different from other previous conducted studies due to the fact that it collectively and comparatively studied four social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and You tube) and their relationship (if any) on academic performance of undergraduate students. This study aimed at examining the existence of any correlation or relationship between social media platforms usage and academic performance of undergraduate students at Kenyatta University- Mombasa campus.

Objective of the Study

To investigate the effects of the selected social media platforms, usage on academic performance of undergraduate students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section highlights various studies carried out by previous scholars with the aim of bringing out gaps in research. It also identifies the theory on which the study was anchored together with the empirical literature and conceptual framework.

Theoretical Perspective

UGT (Uses and Gratifications Theory) and TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) were adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. These two theories supported the study by elaborating on why an undergraduate student chose between one, two, or four social media platforms and the intended needs that the undergraduate sought to satisfy. The UGT provided insights into the motivations driving students' choices in social media usage, emphasizing the gratifications they sought from these platforms. On the other hand, TAM highlights the factors influencing the acceptance and use of technology, shedding light on how students perceive and adopt various social media platforms based on their perceived usefulness and ease of use. The adoption of UGT and TAM facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' choices in the use of multiple social media platforms and the underlying motivations guiding their decisions.

Empirical Literature

Social media platforms use and its effects on academic performance

Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, and Zickuhr (2010) found that 81% of young adults between the ages of 20 and 29 regularly and actively utilize wireless technology. Since 92% of all undergraduate students are users of Facebook and YouTube, there is a huge demand for social media platform usage among students in higher education (Junco & Cotten, 2012). The tendency of undergraduate students using social media as their communication and socialization tool is currently on the rise, and it has developed into popular culture since undergraduates can socialize, share information, and communicate amongst each other virtually at real times.

Rouis, Moez & Esmail (2011) conducted a study on the *“Impact of Facebook usage on students’ academic achievement.”* The findings concluded that it is hard for students to self-regulate themselves when they are on social media platforms, ultimately leading to poor academic performance. Junco (2012), Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) indicated that social media addiction impacts negatively on students’ academics productivity. Meghan, Hayden and Stacy (2017) stated that social media is a social phenomenon to be analyzed due to its addictiveness and psychological adjustments instances on its users. Social media platforms can influence its audience leaving them with an overwhelming impression, especially young adults aged between 18-27 years (Gauntlet, 2005).

Okyeadie and Nizam (2016) notes that social media encompasses web-based services enabling individuals to create either public or semi-public profiles within a confined system. Users can compile a list of connections, share connections with others, and navigate through their list and those formed by others within the system. Consequently, the study was conducted to assess the influence of social media usage on academic performance among students in Malaysian tertiary institutions. A questionnaire, constructed based on existing literature, was employed to gauge various aspects of social media platforms. A sample of 102 students from Erican College was chosen through convenient sampling. Analysis of the collected data involved descriptive means and regression using SPSS 21. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated, revealing that four independent variables correlated with students' academic performance, while two did not. Through regression analysis, it was established that four variables were significant: time appropriateness, friend-people connection, nature of usage, and health addiction, whereas time duration and security/privacy problems were not significant. Given the potentially detrimental impact of excessive social media use, the study suggests the importance of educational institutions in Malaysia promoting responsible and positive use of these platforms for academic purposes, ultimately contributing to improved academic performance among students.

According to Palla and Sheikh (2021), social media has gained widespread popularity, boasting the largest user base compared to other online platforms. Individuals across various age groups engage with social media platforms based on their specific needs. The study's aim was to investigate the impact of social media usage on the academic performance of college students in Kashmir. A structured questionnaire was developed, and a survey was conducted to collect data from undergraduate students in different government colleges in Kashmir. The questionnaires were distributed randomly among male and female students across various undergraduate programs and academic years. The results revealed that a majority of students used social media networking sites to fulfill their educational needs, with YouTube being the most commonly used platform among undergraduates.

Most students find social media networks user-friendly and have been using them for the past three years. The study emphasized that the use of social media significantly aided students in knowledge sharing, academic grade improvement, and the enhancement of reading and writing skills. A considerable portion of students spends approximately an hour utilizing social media networks, accessing them through laptops, mobile phones, and personal computers. The research highlighted the crucial role of social media networks in students' educational activities, confirming that students employ these platforms for academic purposes, thereby positively impacting their academic skills and grades. The study recommended that teachers encourage students to make optimal use of social media networking sites for both recreational and academic purposes.

According to Singh, Gupta, Jasial and Mahajan (2023), social media users experience feelings of being overwhelmed by the vast amount of information shared by followers and friends across various platforms. Managing these online connections demands considerable time, leading to social media fatigue and posing potential risks to users' well-being and productivity.

The findings revealed the mediating role of social media fatigue between compulsive social media use and academic performance decline. Furthermore, the study established the moderating role of self-control in mitigating the effects of social media fatigue on academic performance. The study's novelty lies in linking social media fatigue to academic performance decline and demonstrating how self-control plays a crucial role in alleviating these effects. The research analysis provided valuable insights for students and educators who may overlook the adverse impact of students' excessive reliance on social media and their academic performance. The study suggested that addressing social media overuse requires self-regulation and necessitates careful attention from educators to develop effective solutions mitigating the detrimental influence of social media on higher education. The study offered practical recommendations for practicing self-control in social media usage behavior.

Chukwuere (2021), explored the positive impact of social media platforms on students' academic learning progress, addressing a concern shared by students and scholars in developing countries. The study aimed to shed light on how social media platforms offer continuous learning opportunities for students in their academic journey. In developing countries, students are increasingly leveraging social media platforms to positively influence their learning processes and performance. Despite occasional misconceptions due to the distracting nature of these platforms, students effectively use them to enhance their academic progress and performance. It was noted that use of social media positively influences students' academic performance.

Sivakumar (2020) highlighted the rapid growth of social media among the younger generation worldwide, with school-age students widely engaging in its use. Recognizing the potential impact of social media on both personal and academic lives, the study aimed to investigate its effects on the academic performance of students in Cuddalore District. The survey method was employed to collect relevant data from a sample of one thousand students, selected through random sampling. Statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data, revealing that despite public concerns about the misuse of social media, most school students expressed a positive interest in using it for academic purposes. This indicated that social media indeed influences the academic performance of students, contributing to their overall improvement. The study emphasized the need for digital literacy among both staff and students in higher education, acknowledging the widespread use of sophisticated computing devices for purposes beyond learning. As social media networking continues to rise as a communication medium, institutions of higher education must adapt to ensure modern, relevant, and effective learning environments that align with students' expectations and the demands of the professional world. Leyrer and Wilson (2018), noted that recent research has predominantly explored the use of social media in the classroom to facilitate student learning. This study aimed to assess the broader effects of social media usage on undergraduate students, considering its potential benefits or detriments to academic performance. A survey was distributed to 234 participants from a four-year university, with students self-reporting their grade point averages (GPA), study habits, and social media use. The study revealed that female students used social media more frequently than their male counterparts. Additionally, a negative correlation was found between GPA and the number of subscribed social media websites. The study suggested that

incorporating social media into the classroom, although previously advocated, might negatively impact study habits and academic performance, especially among students in the biological and sciences field.

Zamir and Mujeeb (2022), conducted a study to explore the perspectives of prospective teachers regarding the impact of social media on the academic performance of undergraduates. The research also delved into strategies to enhance academic performance and coping mechanisms to mitigate the negative influence of social media. Employing constructivist and interpretivist philosophical stances, the study utilized a qualitative case study design. Purposive sampling was employed to select the sample, and data were collected through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis, both within and cross-data, was utilized for data analysis. The findings highlighted the dual influence of social media on the academic performance of prospective teachers, emphasizing its role as a platform for socialization and indirect improvement of academic excellence. Coping strategies such as time and mind management emerged as crucial in countering the negative effects of social media. The study suggested that students could benefit more from social media with proper support systems for teaching and learning. The recommendation emphasized maximizing social media use to optimize academic activities that contribute to academic performance.

Ashraf, Khan, Chohan, Khan, Rafique, Farid and Khan (2021), investigated the role of social media as an open-learning (OL) tool in education, particularly in terms of its impact on student academic performance (AP). While social media platforms are widely popular among students, empirical evidence validating their effectiveness in open learning tools remains scarce. In an effort to bridge this gap in literature, the authors focused on international medical students in Chinese higher education who adopted social media for open learning, exploring its positive impacts on their academic performance. Ultimately, engagement exhibited a positive influence on students' AP, highlighting social media's dynamic role in facilitating collaborative learning environments that enhance students' academic behavior and performance.

Samuel, Frempong and Akoto (2022), focused on the examination of social media usage on students' academic performance. Results showed that social media had a negative impact on students' English writing skills, consequently affecting their academic performance. Findings also indicated that students spent considerable time on social media platforms daily, and various challenges such as personal security and privacy issues, unreliable internet services, and high costs of internet connectivity were identified. The study recommended organizing workshops and seminars to educate students about the potential dangers of excessive social media use.

Ameyaw (2023), conducted a study to explore the influence of social media usage on the academic performance of students in private tertiary institutions in Ghana, with a specific focus on Valley View University, Oyibi Campus, Accra. Employing a descriptive survey design, the study targeted a population of 2,172. Through a simple random sampling technique, 388 students were selected, and data were collected using a questionnaire. Out of the 388 distributed questionnaires, 362 were correctly filled and used for analysis. The data analysis employed

IBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions (IBM-SPSS) version 22.0. The study revealed that students were primarily motivated to use social media for entertainment, relaxation, posting pictures, and chatting with friends. Additionally, it identified that frequent use of social media had a negative impact on the academic performance of some students. Recommendations included encouraging students to utilize social media for educational purposes and advising them to reduce the time spent on non-academic activities.

Odekeye, Fakokunde, Alaba and Iwintolu (2023), explored the perceived influence of WhatsApp social media on students' learning outcomes in the English Language in Osun State. Adopting a descriptive survey research design, the study targeted all senior secondary school students in Osun State, with 200 students selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected through a self-developed questionnaire, and analysis involved frequency count, percentage, standard deviation, and t-test. The findings indicated that students used WhatsApp for both academic and non-academic purposes, and its usage did not have a negative impact on academic performance except in cases of addiction. No significant difference was found in the perceived influence based on gender. Recommendations included advising students to use WhatsApp for academic purposes and organizing seminars on the potential dangers of non-academic usage.

According to Francisco, Andrei, Simoune, Jungco, Cardaño, Berbosos and Francisco (2021), in the new normal learning system, students engage in learning through mediums that also serve as platforms for social media interaction. The purpose of the study was to find out if students' use of social media platforms affected their academic achievement in the new standard learning environment. The research findings were intended in aiding the creation of efficient teaching strategies in the current dynamic educational environment. 53 pupils from a private school in the City of Marilao, Bulacan, who attended the 2020–2021 academic year, were the sample for the study. Utilizing a standardized questionnaire, data were gathered. Utilizing statistical analysis, the gathered data was interpreted. The usage of social media sites did not always have a uniform impact on students' academic performance, according to the results. While some students saw these platforms as useful for improving their speaking and reading skills, others saw them as distractions from their academic work.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this survey, correlational research design was used. Correlational research design attempts to investigate the nature of relationship between two or more variables using statistical data (Shirish, 2013). Additionally, under correlational design, the researcher can record quantitative data about the subjects (the subjects in this study were undergraduate students at Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus) without manipulating the study variables.

The study was conducted at Kenyatta University-Mombasa Campus in Mombasa County, Kenya. Mombasa County, a total area of 295 km² and 65 km² of inshore waters, is situated between latitudes 3°56' and 4°10' south of the equator and longitudes 39°34' and 39°46' east. Kenyatta University-Mombasa campus is specifically located within the Central Business

District (CBD) of Mombasa. The CBD of Mombasa is a host to various campuses from different universities, including Technical University of Mombasa, University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University, Moi University, Daystar University, Kenya Methodist University, and Mount Kenya University.

The target population is used by researchers to extrapolate the study's findings (Oso and Onen, 2005; Kothari, 2004). At Kenyatta University's Mombasa campus, 732 undergraduate students made up the study's overall target population. The undergraduate of Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus were the target population for this study because they represented the age bracket that is computer literate and which used social media platforms most of their time.

The target population was the undergraduate students of Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus and were chosen purposively due to the fact that during my Postgraduate studies at Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus, I noticed that the undergraduate students spent most of their times on their smart phones and laptops and I was curious to investigate what platforms do they visit and what content do they consume. The target population therefore, consisted only the undergraduates of Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus and not diploma neither postgraduate student.

A representative sample of 258 respondents was selected through the Nwankwo (2020) formula. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The gathered information was subjected to a correlational (Pearson's) analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The range of Pearson's r ranged from -1.00 to +1.00, with 0 denoting no relationship at all between the two variables under investigation.

The analyzed data aimed to establish the nature of the relationship between the two variables under this survey: the usage of selected social media platforms and academic performance. The analyzed data was displayed tables and Likert scale. For example, the percentages of the amount of time students spent while using the chosen social media platform was presented in Likert scale while the gender distribution of the responses was presented in tables. This analytical process provided a visual representation of the data, allowing for a clearer understanding of the patterns and relationships between the variables investigated.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study issued 258 questionnaires to undergraduate students of Kenyatta University, Mombasa Campus, out of which 238 were completed and returned; this was a response rate of 92%. Sammut, Griscti and Norman (2021) stated that a 50% response rate is sufficient, 60% is good and an above of 70% is very good. Data on gender distribution indicated that out of 238 respondents 115 (48%) were male and 123 (52%) were female. Hence, majority of the respondents were female which was a fair gender distribution in regards to the usage of the social media platforms. Data on Respondent's school indicated that 61(26%) belonged to School of Education, 87(37%) were from School of Business, 12(5%) belonged to School of Economics, 20(8%) School of Hospitality, 58(24%) were from School of Social Sciences. Therefore, school of Business had the highest distribution of 87(37%) due to the fact that. Data

on the programs pursued by the respondents indicated that 61 (26%) respondents belonged to education program, 87 (37%) were of Commerce program, 12 (5%) Bachelor of Economics program, 20 (8%) were of Hospitality program and 58 (24%) were of Bachelor of Arts program. Bachelor of commerce program had the highest distribution of 87 (37%). Data on the year of study showed that 40 (17%) were in year one, 65 (27%) were in year 2, 75 (32%) were in year 3 and 58 (24%) were in year four of their study. Majority of the students were in their third year of study. The research findings proved that the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students had a higher rate of using social media platforms unlike the 1st year students.

Respondent GPA data indicated that 35 (15%) had a GPA of A, 140 (59%) had a GPA of B, 50 (16%) had a GPA of C, 17 (7%) had a GPA of D, lastly 8 (3%) had a GPA of E. This showed that most of the respondents had a GPA of B. Majority of the respondents had a GPA of B and most of them attested that, the social media platforms aided their academic performance since they had formed virtual groups on the social media platforms where they mainly discussed educational content.

Data on respondents' e-devices proved that undergraduate students owned electronic devices, out of 238 respondents 105 (44%) owned smartphones, 103 (43%) owned laptops, 20 (8%) owned desk top computer and 10 (4%) owned smartphone, laptop and desktop computer. The use of smartphones 105 (44%) had the highest distribution. Accessibility to internet data showed that 238 (100%) of all respondents had access to internet. Data on respondents mostly used electronic device indicated that 163(68%) used smartphone while 75(32%) used laptop. Most of the respondents preferred using smartphones during their access to internet. Findings on respondents' subscribed social media platform indicated that 62 (26%) were WhatsApp subscribers, 91 (38%) were Facebook subscribers and 64 (27%) were of YouTube subscribers while 21 (9%) were Twitter subscribers. This showed that most of the respondents were subscribed to Facebook and You Tube social media platforms. Data on respondents' hours spent on social media platforms showed that 97(41%) spent less than 3 hours and 141(59%) spent 4-7 hours. This showed that most of respondents engaged on social media platforms for 4-7 hours.

Social media platforms use and academic performance of undergraduate students

The study's first objective was to investigate the effects of selected social media platforms' use on academic performance of undergraduate students. Respondents were asked ten questions regarding the objective. Likert scale was used to present the responses. Out of 238 respondents, (37%) strongly agreed that they used social media platforms to share each semester's courses of study amongst their fellow students, 56% agreed and 7% were neutral (Mean=4.29; SD=0.593).

The use of social media platforms to facilitate group discussions was supported in that 8% were neutral, 64% agreed whereas 29% strongly agreed (Mean=4.21; SD=0.564). The use social media platforms to communicate about assignments and class projects was assessed such that (2%) were neutral, (51%) agreed while the remaining 47% strongly agreed (Mean=4.45; SD=0.539). Additionally, 39% strongly agreed that they shared educational video content with fellow students through social media sites, 57% agreed while 4% were neutral (Mean=4.34; SD=0.558). Thirty nine percent strongly agreed on sharing articles and links on social media that were pertinent to their course of study, 57% agreed and 4% were neutral (Mean=4.34; SD=0.558). Moreover, 34% strongly agreed of joining academic social media groups that were

relevant to their field of study, 62% agreed while (4%) were neutral (Mean=4.30; SD=0.537). Thirty one percent of the respondents strongly agreed on taking part in collaborative projects for academic purposes using social media sites, 62% agreed while 7% were neutral (Mean=4.24; SD=0.566). The exchange of academic documents via social media platforms was proposed such that 2% were neutral, 59% agreed while 39% strongly agreed (Mean=4.37; SD=0.526). Also 28% strongly agreed that social media use enabled them to perform well in their academics, 66% agreed and 6% were neutral. Table 4.20 (Mean=4.22; SD=0.538). Thirty nine percent of the respondents strongly agreed that social media platforms had enabled them to improve on their English language, 57% agreed and (8%) were neutral, (Mean=4.36; SD=0.547). This is illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: Social media platforms use

Statements	N	M	Std.	S	D	N	A	S
		ea	Dev.	D				A
		n						A
I use social media platforms to share each semester’s courses of study amongst my fellow students	238	4.29	0.593	0	0	7	56	37
I use social media platforms to facilitate group discussions	238	4.21	0.564	0	0	8	64	29
I communicate via social media about assignments and class projects.	238	4.45	0.539	0	0	2	51	47
Through social media sites, I share educational video content with fellow students	238	4.34	0.558	0	0	4	57	39
I share articles and links on social media that are pertinent to our course of study.	238	4.34	0.558	0	0	4	57	39
I join academic groups relevant to my field of study through social media platforms.	238	4.30	0.537	0	0	4	62	34
I take part in collaborative projects for academic purposes using social media sites.	238	4.24	0.566	0	0	7	62	31
I exchange academic documents via social media platforms	238	4.37	0.526	0	0	2	59	39
Social media use has enabled me to perform well in my academics	238	4.22	0.538	0	0	6	66	28
Social media platforms have enabled me to improve on my English language	238	4.36	0.547	0	0	3	57	40

Source: Research Data

Palla and Sheikh (2021), asserts that social media has attained widespread popularity, boasting the largest user base compared to other online platforms, reflecting the profound impact and ubiquity of these digital spaces in contemporary society. This phenomenon has significantly altered the dynamics of communication, information sharing, and social interaction, with individuals from diverse age groups finding value in engaging with social media platforms for a multitude of purposes. The widespread popularity of social media can be attributed to several factors.

Firstly, these platforms provide users with a convenient and accessible means of communication, allowing people to connect with others globally in real-time. This instantaneous and borderless communication has transformed how individuals maintain relationships, share experiences, and stay informed about the world around them. Additionally, social media serves as a versatile tool that is used to meet various needs and interests. Different age groups engage with these platforms based on their specific requirements, whether it be for socializing, professional networking, entertainment, news consumption, or activism. The diverse functionalities of social media platforms, such as text-based posts, images, videos, and live streaming, contribute to their broad appeal, accommodating a range of communication preferences.

The effects of social media on social dynamics is particularly evident in the way it facilitates the formation and maintenance of communities. Individuals with shared interests, regardless of geographical location, can connect and engage in discussions, creating virtual communities that transcend physical boundaries. This has led to the democratization of information and the empowerment of individuals to participate in conversations and movements that align with their values and interests. However, the pervasive use of social media also raises concerns and challenges. The potential for information overload, the spread of misinformation, and issues related to privacy and online harassment are some of the drawbacks associated with the widespread use of these platforms. Additionally, the addictive nature of social media, coupled with the constant stream of content, can impact individuals' mental health and well-being. Understanding the varied needs that drive individuals to engage with social media is crucial. Different age groups may seek distinct benefits from these platforms, such as social connection for younger users, professional networking for adults, and community support for seniors. Recognizing these diverse motivations can inform discussions around the design, regulation, and ethical use of social media.

Singh et al. (2023), investigated the experience of information overload and social media fatigue. In contemporary society, where individuals are increasingly interconnected through digital platforms, the sheer volume of information shared by friends and followers on various social media channels has become a significant aspect of online life. Information overload due to the vast amount of information circulating on social media platforms is a common experience reported by users. The constant influx of updates, posts, images, and videos creates a digital environment characterized by information saturation. Users may find it challenging to keep up with the content generated by their online connections, leading to a sense of cognitive overload and, ultimately, social media fatigue.

Managing online connections on social media demands a considerable amount of time and attention. Users often feel pressured to stay updated with the lives and activities of their friends, family, and acquaintances, leading to a continuous cycle of scrolling, browsing, and consuming content. This constant engagement can become a time-consuming task, potentially encroaching on other aspects of users' lives, such as work, studies, and offline relationships. Social media fatigue encompasses not only a sense of information overload but also the emotional and psychological toll of continuous online engagement. Users may experience fatigue in the form of decreased interest, motivation, and satisfaction with their social media interactions. The need to present curated and idealized versions of one's life on these platforms, coupled with the comparison to others, can contribute to feelings of inadequacy and stress.

Importantly, social media fatigue is not only a subjective feeling but also has implications for users' well-being and productivity. The constant exposure to curated images and narratives on social media can contribute to a distorted perception of reality, leading to negative self-esteem and mental health concerns. Additionally, the time spent on these platforms may detract from other meaningful offline activities, potentially impacting overall life satisfaction and productivity. Understanding the factors contributing to social media fatigue is crucial for individuals, platform developers, and policymakers. For users, establishing healthy boundaries, practicing digital detox, and being mindful of their online habits can mitigate the negative effects of social media fatigue. Social media platforms can play a role by implementing features that promote meaningful interactions over quantity, emphasizing quality content, and providing tools for users to manage their online presence effectively.

Boyd (2015), asserted that, despite occasional misconceptions due to the distracting nature of social media platforms, students effectively use them to enhance their academic progress and performance introduces a nuanced perspective on the relationship between students and digital technologies. This viewpoint challenges that social media inherently hinders academic success and underscores the multifaceted ways in which students engage with these platforms to support their educational endeavors. While social media platforms are often criticized for their potential distractions, Boyd (2015), suggests that these distractions might be intermittent or situational. This perspective highlights the need to recognize individual differences and varying contexts in which students navigate the digital landscape.

According to different scholars, social media use necessarily translates into detrimental effects on academic progress, as some students may employ effective strategies to balance their online activities with their educational responsibilities. Rather than being passive consumers of online content, students can leverage these platforms for educational purposes. For example, social media can serve as a space for collaborative learning, knowledge-sharing, and academic discussions. Online forums, study groups, and educational communities on platforms like Facebook, You Tube, WhatsApp and Twitter provide students with opportunities to seek assistance, share resources, and engage in intellectually stimulating conversations. Social media platforms can be valuable tools for staying informed about academic events, accessing relevant resources, and connecting with peers and mentors. Platforms like Twitter

and LinkedIn, when used strategically, can facilitate networking and professional development, enhancing students' academic and career trajectories. Recognizing social media as a tool that students can actively employ to support their learning emphasizes the importance of digital literacy, responsible use and self-control. It encourages educators and institutions to explore ways to harness the benefits of social media for educational purposes, rather than imposing blanket restrictions based on assumptions about its distracting nature.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study's set to investigate the effects of selected social media platforms' use on academic performance of undergraduate students. It was agreed that social media platforms were used to share each semester's courses of study amongst students, facilitated group discussions and was a source of communication on assignments and class projects. Additionally, students shared educational video content with each other through social media sites and also shared articles and links on social media. Most of the undergraduate students joined academic social media groups which were relevant to their field of study and took part in collaborative projects for academic purposes. The exchange of academic documents via social media platforms was evident and 80 % of the undergraduates attested that social media platform aided in improving their academic performance. The results confirmed that most students used Facebook, Whats App and Youtube for academic purposes.

There was a positive and significant effect of the selected social media platforms' use on academic performance of undergraduate students. Social media platforms were used to share course outlines amongst students, facilitated group discussions and as a source of communication on assignments and class projects. The role of social media platforms extends beyond traditional communication to include the sharing of educational resources among students. This includes the exchange of educational video content through various social media sites like on Facebook and WhatsApp. Students can share informative videos related to their coursework through You Tube, which can serve as supplementary learning materials. Furthermore, students can easily exchange academic related articles, scholarly links, and research findings within their social media academic networks. This collective sharing not only broadens the scope of learning resources but also encourages critical thinking and discussion among peers. It transforms social media into a dynamic space for staying abreast of developments in the chosen field of study, contributing to a well-rounded academic experience. Social media platforms provides a pivotal role in facilitating students' engagement within the social media academic groups pertinent to their field of study. Joining these specialized communities allowed the students to connect with peers who shared similar academic interests. This not only enhanced a sense of community but also provided a platform for collaborative learning. Through these groups, students engaged in discussions, sought advice, and shared valuable insights, enhancing their understanding of the subject matter. Participation in collaborative projects for academic purposes is another noteworthy facet of social media's effect on students' academic performance. The selected social media platforms, therefore, enabled the undergraduate to form virtual teams, collaborate on assignments, and undertake group projects seamlessly.

Social media interactions among students play a critical role in academic achievement. Direct interaction with lecturers on these selected social media platforms enables a more accessible and personalized communication channel, positively influencing students' academic performance. Engaging in group discussions on social media platforms enhances collaborative learning, allowing students to share insights and deepen their understanding of the academic concepts. Lecturers' comments on these platforms provide valuable feedback, contributing to academic performance. Social media platforms also positively affect academic groups, serving as dynamic hubs for knowledge exchange and collaboration, enriching the overall learning experience. Furthermore, these platforms influenced the conduct of class or group discussions since they provided them with versatile communication tools, encouraged diverse perspectives, and fostered more engagements and effective academic dialogues. The multifaceted role of social media in student interactions underscores its positive effect on academic success and the overall educational journey.

Recommendations

This study recommended that institutions of higher learning in Kenya to institute policies that would enhance the responsible use of social media platforms. The use of online platforms holds significant importance for students, serving as a dynamic link for sharing course outlines and facilitating group discussions. The advent of digital communication tools has provided a seamless avenue for students to access, consume and disseminate essential course information. By sharing course outlines on these platforms, students can benefit from increased transparency and accessibility, ensuring a clear understanding of the curriculum and fostering a sense of organization in their academic pursuits. Moreover, social media platforms transcend the boundaries of conventional classroom interactions, evolving into indispensable mediums for communication on assignments and collaborative class projects. Through the real-time capabilities of online forums, students can engage in live discussions, clarify doubts, and coordinate efforts efficiently. This not only enhances individual comprehension but also cultivates a collaborative learning environment where students can collectively contribute to the mastery of course materials.

The multifaceted nature of social media platforms extends to the sharing of educational content. Such sharing not only diversifies the learning experience but also encourages a culture of knowledge exchange among peers and enriches the academic journey but also nurtures a sense of community among students. Furthermore, it is important to encourage students to actively participate in social media academic groups that align with their field of study. Joining these specialized groups opens up opportunities for focused discussions, networking, and collaborative projects. Engaging in such academic communities not only broadens students' perspectives but also cultivates a deeper understanding of their chosen field. Additionally, the exchange of academic documents through social media platforms further facilitates seamless collaboration. Students can share research papers, study guides, and other relevant materials, creating an environment that supports and empowers their academic endeavors. This digital exchange not only streamlines the process of information sharing but also equips students with valuable resources that contribute to their overall academic success.

During group discussions, social media platforms can be harnessed as effective tools for collaborative learning. By creating dedicated spaces for academic discourse, students can leverage the connectivity afforded by these platforms to engage in meaningful discussions, share resources, and collectively enhance their understanding of course materials. This targeted use aligns social media with academic objectives and minimizes the potential for distraction. Additionally, lecturers can utilize social media to distribute exam past papers, further aiding students in their exam preparation by providing valuable practice resources. This efficient exchange of academic materials contributes to a more organized and accessible academic experience. Course notes, a fundamental component for student learning, can be distributed through social media platforms, ensuring that students have easy access to supplementary materials. Lecturers can share relevant resources, articles, and additional readings, enriching the learning experience and promoting a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This accessibility to course content beyond traditional classroom settings enhances students' autonomy in their academic journey.

Group discussions on social media transcend physical barriers and time constraints, enabling students to engage in academic conversations at their convenience. This flexibility promotes active participation and deeper understanding of course materials, ultimately positively influencing academic performance. Lecturers' comments on social media platforms emerge as valuable tools for academic success. Timely and personalized feedback through these platforms, allows students to receive constructive criticism, clarification on concepts, and encouragement. This immediate feedback loop enhances the learning process by addressing queries in real-time, offering guidance on assignments, and facilitating a more interactive approach to academic improvement. The supportive nature of these interactions creates a conducive atmosphere for students to excel academically.

REFERENCES

- A Kenyan based Intermedia Research for global development (2018). Impact of digital technology and social media on young people.
- A New Pew Research Centre survey of U.S. Available at: <https://www.USpewinternet.org/Social.Media-use-in-2018>. (Accessed on September 15, 2020)
- Abaleta, A. B, Centaza, S. M, & Calimlin, M.E. (2004). Impact of social networking on the academic performance of college students in Anellano University.
- Adekeye, J. A. (2016). Empirical application of research design in management sciences.
- Al-Deen, H., & Hendricks, A. (2012). Social media: Usage and impact. Lexington Books.
- Alexander, B. (2006). Web 2.0. (March/April 2006). A new wave of innovation for teaching and learning? *EDUCAUSE Review*, 41(2), 32– 44.
- Basic Education Act, Kenya, 2013. Available at: <https://www.BasicEducationAct-Kenya.com/> (Accessed on February 12th, 2020).

- Blumler J.G and Katz E. (1974). *The uses of mass communication: Current perspectives on gratifications research*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
- Boyd, D (2015). *Social media: A Phenomenon to be analyzed*. DOI: 10.1177/205630511580148.
- Cheung, C.M., Chiu, P.Y. and Lee, M.K. (2011). Online social networks: Why do students use Facebook? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(4), pp.1337–1343.
- Choge, K. (2015). *Social networks integration into teaching and learning in higher education in Kenya*.
- Cilliers, L. & Tinashe, O. (2017). Factors influencing social media adoption and continued use in academia: A case study at a Traditional University. DOI.10.1007/978-3-319-71084-6_23.
- Cohen, L., & Manion, C. (2003). *Research methods in education*. London: Croom Helm Ltd.
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13 (3), 318-339.
- Dennis, M. (2000). *Mass Communication Theory*. 4th Ed. 6 Bonhill Street, London. SAGE Publications Limited.
- Dimofte, C., Haugtvedt, C. & Yalch, R. (2015). *Consumer psychology in a social media world*. Routledge.
- Donald, K. K. & Delno, L.A. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing*. Nairobi, Pauline's Publication Africa.
- Dontre, A. J. (2021, July 1). The influence of technology on academic distraction: A review. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*. John Wiley and Sons Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.229>
- Fischer, J. (2004). *Social responsibility and ethics: clarifying the concepts*. Journal of Business Gauntlet, D. (2005) *Moving Experiences: Media effects and beyond*. London. John Libbey.
- Ishikawa, K. (1960). *Introduction to quality control: Fishbone diagram*.
- Langat, J. (2017). *Social networking and academic performance of university students in Kenya: A case study of Kenyatta University, Kericho Campus*.
- Madden, M. & Smith, A. (2010). *Reputation management and social media. The Pew internet and American Life Project*. Available at <http://www.pewinternet.Org/Reports/2010/Reputation-management.aspx/> (Accessed on March 3, 2021)
- Mangal, S.K. & Mangal, U. (2011). *Essentials of educational technology*. Asoke K. Gosh, PHI Learning Private limited, M-97, Connaught circus, New Delhi-110001
- Marche, S. (2012, April 2). *Is Facebook making us lonely?* The Atlantic, NA.
- Mugenda, M.O. & Mugenda, A.G. (1998). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi Act Press.
- Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A. (2003). *Research methods*. Nairobi: Laba Graphics Services.

- Nael, D. R. (2012). *Social media for academics: A practical Guide*. (pg. 57). New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd, Publishers.
- Redd, L. (2016). *Digital distraction in class is on the rise*. America. University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Selltiz, C., Wrightsman, S. & Cook, S. (1976). *Research methods in social relations*.
- Shirish, T.S. (2013). *Research methodology in education*. USA: Lulu.
- Tess, P.A. (2013). The role of social media in higher education classes (real and virtual): A Literature Review', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29, (5), A60–A68.
- Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone Together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. New York, America: Basic Books.
- USIU University. Available at: <https://www.usiu.ac.ke/assets/file/SIMElab> (Accessed on July 14, 2019).
- Zohrabi, M. (2013). Mixed method research: Instruments, validity, reliability and reporting findings. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(2), 254-262.
- Zu, N., Chen, Z., Duan, Z., Li, L. & Meng, Z. (2017). A review of social media in education: Effects and attitudes. *International Journal of Social Media and Interactive Learning Environment*. 5(3). DOI: 10.15041/IJSMILE.2017.087947.