

The Influence of Social Media on Academic Performance of Students in University of Kigali

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to examine the influence of Social Media on Academic Performance Of students in University of Kigali. Two Research objectives and two Research questions guided the study. To achieve this, the descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study focused on University of Kigali hence, population consists of all the 251 full-time undergraduate students. The simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 154 students. The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage were used to analyze the data. Research findings showed that a great number of students in University of Kigali are addicted to social media. To this end, the researcher concluded that social media should be used for educational purposes as well; Social Networking Sites should be expanded and new pages should be created to enhance academic activities and avoid setbacks in the students' academic performance; and Students should be monitored by lecturers and parents on how they use these sites. This is to create a balance between social media and academic activities of students to avoid setbacks in the academic performance of the students.

Keywords: Social Media; Academic Performance and Students.

1. Background of the study

The world is today celebrating the improvements in communication technology which has broadened the scope of communication through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Modern Technology in communication no doubt has turned the entire world into a "Global village". But as it is, technology like two sides of a coin, bring with it both negative and positive sides. . It helps people to be better informed, enlightened, and keeping abreast with world developments. Technology exposes mankind to a better way of doing things. Social networking sites include: Twitter, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), what's app messenger, Skype, Google talk, Google Messenger, iPhone.

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These networking sites are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends [2]. The world has been changed rapidly by the evolution of technology; this has resulted into the use of technology as the best medium to explore the wide area of knowledge.

The evolution of internet technology has led to its use as the best medium for communication. Whereby, two-third of the world's internet population visits social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as a communication and connection tool. Social networking sites (SNSs) are online Communities of Internet users, who want to communicate with other users about areas of mutual interest, whether from a personal, business or academic perspective[3]. The millions of social networking sites have transformed the thought of global village into a reality whereby billions of people communicate through social networking sites. Numerous benefits have been obtained through distant communication through the use of social networking sites.

In the beginning years of personal computers and Internet access, social media websites were used primarily for information gathering and research [1]. In the past several years, the Internet has become the center of communication between people, as well as being their prime source of entertainment [1]. It has also become the tool used for almost every project or paper that a student will write in high school, and in their later years in college [1]. In recent studies, university students have shown to be the greatest consumers of the Internet, particularly for social interactions [18]. Social networking sites, as well as email, instant messaging, blogging, and online journals have completely changed the way that adolescents interact and gather information [5]. Teenagers have become accustomed to this lifestyle much more than older generations have in recent years, as this way of living is all they know [4]. Teenagers now use the social media for the majority of their daily activities and information gathering, as opposed to older generations who used resources like the television or newspaper [4].

Academic excellence or achievement plays an important role in an individual placement, be it in the academic institutions or job placement. Due to this, many people are concerned with the ways they can enhance their academic achievement. The emphasis on academic excellence which is also prevalent worldwide has encouraged many studies about the conditions promoting it. The role of academic achievement as one of the predictors of one's life success and also in the aspect of academic placement in schools to higher institutions as well as the level of employability in one's career is inevitable[10].

Academic performance, which is measured by the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school. [7] argued that schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance.

A direct relationship exists between Social media usage and the academic performance of students in universities. However the darker side within technological evolution has resulted in dilemmas such as the setback of real values of life especially among students who form the majority of users interacting through the use of social networking sites. Online social networking sites focus on building and reflecting social associations among people who share interests and or activities. With so many social networking sites displayed on the internet, students are tempted to abandon their homework and reading times in preference for chatting

online with friends [19].

Today most youths and students possess Facebook accounts. The reason most of them perform badly in school might not be far-fetched. While many minds might be quick to blame the poor quality of teachers, they might have to think even harder, if they have not heard of the Facebook frenzy [11]. Olubiyi [12] noted that these days' students are so engrossed in the social media that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that some students are always busy pinging, 2going or Facebooking, while lectures are on. Times that ought be channeled towards learning, academic research and innovating have been crushed by the passion for meeting new friends online, and most times busy discussing trivial issues. Hence most students' academics suffer setback as a result of distraction from the social media.

According to Kuppuswamy and Shankar [8], social network websites grab attention of the students and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting. Whereas on the other hand, [13] reviewed that the students are socially connected with each other for sharing their daily learning experiences and do conversation on several topics.

Tinto [15] argued that extracurricular activities and academic activities are not enough to satisfy some student those who are suffered by social networking isolation. This shows that social networks are beneficial for the students as it contributes in their learning experiences as well as in their academic life.

According to Cain [6] social network websites provide ease of connecting people to one another; free of cost and after connecting one can post news, informative material and other things including videos and pictures etc. Wiley and Sisson [16] argued that the previous studies have found that more than 90% of tertiary school students use social networks. In the same way Ellison *and colleagues* [20] stated that the students use social networking websites approximately 30 minutes throughout the day as a part of their daily routine life. This statement shows the importance of social networking websites in students' life. Lenhart and Madden [14] revealed through a survey that students strongly recommend social networking websites to stay in touch with friends to keep informed and aware.

It is therefore of great importance to explore some of the trending issues facing students' academic performance as a result of social media. Students at all levels of learning now have divided attention to studies, as a result of available opportunities to be harnessed from social media.

Whether these opportunities promote studies is a question that needs to be answered. Thus, the problem this study investigates is the influence of social media networks on the academic performance of the students in University of Kigali.

2. Objective of the study

- i. To examine the level of student addictiveness to social media and the influence on their academic performance
- ii. To ascertain how age has influence on students' usage of social media network.

3. Research Question

- i. To what extent would student addictiveness to social network influence their academic performance?
- ii. In what way do younger and older students influence the use of social media?

4. Methodology

Research methodology is the way researcher proceeds to facilitate the research process. The researcher found out, the description of the study in term of the area of study, research design, population study and sampling techniques, data collection and analysis.

The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. This design is considered apt because it enables the researcher to generate data through the standardized collection procedures based on highly structured research instrument(s) and well defined study concepts and related variables. The population in this research is all the full time undergraduate students in the University of Kigali in 2020/2021 session. The total population comprised 251 undergraduate full time students. Total sample sizes of 154 students were randomly selected using Yamane’s formula (1967) from the total population of 251 full-time students in the University of Kigali. A well-constructed and self-developed questionnaire titled “The influence of social media on academic performance of students Questionnaire” was used to get the desired information from the students. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A was for collection of information on personal data of respondents while Section B consisted of questions that elicited responses from the respondents with response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The researcher collected the needed data through the use of questionnaire and its administration in the selected faculties. The administration of the questionnaire was carried out by the researcher. Responses from the questionnaire were analyzed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentage. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used in analyzing demographic variables and research questions.

5. Result and Discussion of findings

Research Question 1: To what extent would student addictiveness to social network influence their academic performance?

Table 1: Students Addictiveness to Social Network and Academic Performance.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Addiction to online social networks is a problematic issue that affects my academic life	76 49%	46 30%	21 14%	11 7%	154 100%
2	Online social networks distract me from my studies.	83 54%	54 35%	11 7%	6 4%	154 100%
3	Hours spent online can never be compared to the number of hours I spend reading.	69 45%	38 25%	25 16%	22 14%	154 100%
4	There is no improvement in my grades since I became engaged into these social networking sites.	37 24%	39 25%	34 22%	44 29%	154 100%
Total		265	177	91	83	616
Percentage %		43%	29%	15%	13%	100%

Table 1 shows that 265 (43%) of the participants’ response Strongly Agree that Students’ addictiveness to social network has a significant influence on their academic performance, 177(29%) Agree that Students’ addictiveness to social network has strong influence on their academic performance, 91(15%) Disagree, while 81 (13%) Strongly Disagree. The result from this study shows that learner’s addictiveness to social network has a significant impact on their academic performance. Social media have become a major part of the lives of the students of today. This links with the findings of Olubiyi [12] which states that these days’ students are so engrossed in the social network that they are almost 24 hours online. Even in classrooms and lecture theatres, it has been observed that some students are always busy ringing, twitting or Facebooking, while lectures are on. Times that ought be channeled towards learning, academic research and innovating have been crushed by the passion for meeting new friends online, and most times busy discussing trivial issues. According to Manjur Kolhar [21], he observed that only 1% of the students used social media for academic purposes, and a majority of them (35–43%) used social media for nonacademic purposes to chat with others (i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat) and browsed social networking sites to pass time. At present-day, social media platforms can be used to retrieve necessary information that serves educational purposes. However, social media use negatively affected the academic progress, and studies have shown a strong positive relationship between social media use and academic performance. Hence most students’ academics suffer setback as a result of distraction from the social media.

Research Question 2: In what way do younger and older students influence the use of social media?

Table2: Age Usage of Social Media.

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Age has impact on the use of social media	83	54	11	6	154
		54%	34%	8%	4%	100%
2	Social media become boring has I grow older.	76	46	21	11	154
		49%	30%	14%	7%	100%
3	Social media is not relevant to people of older generation.	37	39	34	44	154
		24%	25%	22%	29%	100%
4	The younger generations are the most active users of social media.	69	38	25	22	154
		45%	25%	16%	14%	100%
	Total	265	178	91	82	616
	Percentage %	42%	30%	15%	13%	100%

Table2 shows that 265 (42%) of the participants’ response strongly Agree that there is a significant difference between student’s usage of social media network by age and their academic performance, 178 (30%) Agree by confirming that social media network affect the academic performance, 91 (15%) Disagree, while 82 (13%) Strongly Disagree. The finding of this study shows that age influence the use of social media. The past studies have found that students who spend more time on social media sites are likely to demonstrate poor academic performance and it is because they spend time chatting online and making friends on social media sites instead of reading books[18]. Reading both soft and hard copies of books is very rear nowadays. This has a negative effect on their academic performance. From the above observation, it is also in line with the findings of Lewis,[4] which noted that Teenagers now use the social media for the majority of their daily activities and information gathering, as opposed to older generations who used resources like the television or newspaper.

6. Conclusion

A majority of the students used social networking sites. Excessive social media use for non-academic purpose distracted them from their learning and academic activities and delayed their bed time, which in turn reduced their sleep duration.

Furthermore our study reported that, excessive social media use decreases social face to face interaction. This has a negative impact on social well-being and can lead to depression, anxiety, and mood swings.

The result from the findings of this study showed that, though Social media have negative effects on students such as lack of privacy, distracting students from their academic work, taking most of their productive time, and such like, they also have benefits and can be used appropriately.

For instance, students can form online communities in order to plan for a project, have group discussions about class material, or use the social networking sites (SNS) as a way to keep in conclusion.

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For instance, students can form online communities in order to plan for a project, have group discussions about class material, or use the Social networking sites(SNS) as a way to keep in contact when a student who has been absent needs to be updated on current academic information.

The findings of this study and earlier ones showed some noteworthy results. The first independent variable influencing the academic performance of students, that is, social media participation was negatively related with students' outcome, while the other independent variables were positively related with students' outcome.

The results of this study suggest that lecturers should come up with a template on how their students can maximize the benefits of Social media, that school management should incorporate rules and regulations on the use of the social media in the school and, that the government should put in place adequate control measures to regulate their use among students and lecturers, tact when a student who has been absent needs to be updated on current academic information.

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