

Social Media Usage among Students of Public Day Secondary Schools in Eldoret Urban, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract**Original Research Article**

Education is the pivot and tool for individual and national development. Therefore, it is important to ensure that learners in school are educated with quality and with minimal distractions. Unfortunately, social media has become one of the biggest sources of distraction for learners everywhere. Learners who have limited parental or school monitoring, such as those who attend public day secondary schools in urban environments, tend to suffer most from the use of social media. Therefore, the study examined the extent of social media usage among students in public day secondary schools in Eldoret urban, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study used ex-post facto (causal comparative research design). The target population was 5,720 students of Form 4 and Form 3 from 22 public day secondary schools. Only 7 public day secondary schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique. The sample size consisted of 182 participants selected accordingly (140 students and 42 teachers). The study used structured questionnaires for data collation. Data was handled using descriptive statistics and presented using charts, graphs and tables. The results showed that the students used the major social network sites such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and Google. Students mainly used these platforms for socializing activities rather than academic purposes. The students used platforms for chatting, making friends and for entertainment purposes. It is recommended that the schools, in collaboration with the parents, should develop media platforms for the students that could incorporate academic features to assist in drawing learners' focus from non-scholarly activities. The study provides insight for parents, teachers and those responsible for learners to know the nature of activities that learners undertake on social media. The research also provides data or information that can be used for in education, especially on the issues of digital technology adoption.

Keywords: Social Media Usage, Students, Public Day Secondary Schools, Eldoret, Kenya.**Copyright © 2022 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution **4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)** which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is the term used to refer to online platforms on which people create and share content through virtual networks and communities. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre [1] define social media as the means which engages mobile and web-centred systems to develop highly involving podia. Kaplan [2] describes it a means wherein individuals generate, disseminate, and exchange messages in virtual groups and network sites. Through this social media, people interact with friends at any time. Social media has shaped all facets of life, including education, communication, health and security. With its attractive tools for connecting people, young high schoolers are also caught up in the social media. Therefore, it is

important to assess the extent of social media usage among learners in order to identify how such usage affects their learning behaviour.

Paul, Barker and Cochran [3] showed that there is statistically meaningful destructive link between duration expended by learners in social media and scholarly output. According to these authors, learners who spend excess time on social media tend to have divided attention, register low performance or abandon their studies altogether. In Kenya, the researchers have observed that secondary school learners (mostly aged 14-18 years) are exposed to social media, which ranges from television, videos, to the new trends of those sites accessed through smartphones, computers or laptops,

such as WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, Snap Chat, Facebook, Twitter, blogging, among others. Learners in urban secondary schools face these challenges more compared to those from rural areas. The situation is worse for learners who are day-scholars because they have minimal parental or school control in their trips to and from school. As such, this paper will present and discuss research findings on the extent of social media usage among public day secondary school students in Eldoret urban, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Some students' misuse of social media can result in poor academic achievement and, more so, expose them to risky learning behaviour, neglect of studies and poor learning aptitude. Misuse, here, implies spending excess time on social media and using the media for anything other than those functions that can promote their learning. Indeed, in Kenya, it is observed that most users of social media are young people, majority of whom are in school. Burak [4] notes that students' involvement in social media tends to engender poor grades. The study inferred that multitasking as a result of social media usage would engender a higher hazard in learning conduct. Yet, the scholar observed that learners seem unable to avoid engaging in social media. One explanation for this is that this type of media offers excitement and distraction for learners.

Ndaku [5], in a study, observed that learners tend to spend more time on social networking platforms than in schoolwork, which has impaired on their studies. He noted that many students who admitted to social media usage daily performed poorly in their academic work. Others had abandoned school altogether. There seems to be little published study done on social media usage among high schoolers in Eldoret urban, Kenya. It was therefore paramount to undertake a study to bring to light the situation of social media usage among students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media developed from the introduction of internet, the former electronic media like television, radio, film and video, newspapers, magazines into more sophisticated gadgets (cell phones). The new trend of technology has brought about major development called digital world. However, people can now communicate, interact with others and communicate with friends far and near. These can be achieved through sites, like Facebook, WhatsApp, and others, hence, students all over the world are engrossed in these media interaction. The application of these sites can bring about huge revolutionary changes, both positive and negative, to the educational environment. The recent years instant messaging has become vogue among the youth [6]. Students are greatly utilizing social media for news feed, events, activities, status updates and messages.

According to an extensive research, done by the Office of Communication in UK, 47% of children aged 8-17 years who had engaged the Web had been able to create their own profiles on social interaction sites [7]. The favourable and unfavourable sites of social sites do not change their increasing popularity and having a great importance in the current world. Social media companies are also trying to build a niche in the scholarly environment. Put to proper use, instant messaging platforms in the schooling sector has demonstrated increase in learning where learners become active in studies, increasing engagement between learners on own and school-related topics [8]. However, studies have also found that students often misuse social media, particularly those accessible via mobile phones, as it has many irresistible or attractive features and services [9].

Ng, Zakaria and Confessore [10] conducted a research on time spent on social media and output in school among high schoolers in Malaysia. A select 137 students from two schools participated and a correlation analysis was employed to gauge the associations of variables identified. The contributors were to keep daily record of how they used time each day for 7 days. The instrument used included the school related activities and non-school related activities to elicit the responses on duration spent on watching television, browsing and on social media. Similarly, other cooperating schools provided the transcript of each participant too. The information gathered for seven days from both (elites and standard) schools helped to establish overall secondary school academic achievement for each participant. Ng *et al.* found that learners who spent more time on social media registered poor academic grades than those who never used the media at all.

Abbas, Aman, Nurunnabi and Bano [11] studied the impact of social networks on sustainable education in Pakistan. The study appraised the meaningful and adverse effects of social media usage on learners' cognitive aspects. Abbas *et al.* served 1013 questionnaires to participants aged between 16 and 35 years, and received 831 filled tools. It became evident that web social sites present great benefits and risks to learners and has impacts on their psychological flexibility and learning behaviours. The scholars further deduced that social media use has adverse than constructive bearing on the conduct of students.

Umar and Idris [12] investigated the effect of online social sites on psychological and social conduct and scholarly output of high schoolers in Nigeria. The study deployed descriptive survey approach and purposively picked four of 7 public schools and 306 learners randomly picked. Researcher-made validated questionnaire and academic output test in English Language were used for data collection. Umar and Idris noted that social sites have negative bearing on cognitive and social conduct and academic output of

learners. It recommended that educational stakeholders should pay attention to students' usage of social media and should educate them on proper usage of these platforms and on time management.

Dawson [13] explored the link of learners' feeling of team and their status within the created social site. He identified the following benefits of social media to learners. Firstly, social media is widespread, simple and free and demands no backing from the institution. This ensures the university budget was not affected while student activities still are in progress. Social networks also enhance messaging skills, broadening engagement, social involvement and cooperation. Thirdly, it also encourages peer support and review. Students can assist each other if stuck and this helps to promote learning. Fourthly, social networks create learning enthusiasm via team studies. Lastly, it creates informative exchanges and feeling of originality as the learning system is shared online. To the institution, social networks enhance mixed learning involvements with similar benefits that students get.

In a survey of 76 learners at Glamorgan University, Norah [14] found that most learners had registered with several social software like Facebook, Blog and Myspace. However, over 70% of participants hardly or never used social sites for studies. This situation depicts a clear split in social site usage for studies and for private social life. Of uses for learning, Wikis was first rank in the over 40% of the respondents who said they always or often used them.

A survey by Kauser and Awan [15], in Pakistan, sought to gauge how social media usage shapes academic performance among graduate level students. The population used was 300 students picked using simple unsystematic selection. A questionnaire of 40 statements based on five-point Likert scale was developed for data collation. The study discovered that most learners engaged in social media usage, which significantly shape academic output and time factor also played significant role, hence student lack time efficiency impaired with their academic output. The media also exposed them to health and privacy issues. Hence, they urged the Pakistani state to enact a law to restrict learners' use of those media. They prescribed that the students be enlightened on the constructive and risky outcomes of social media obsession on academic output. The authors added that learners be helped to utilize these media for scholarship often instead of entertainment and video gaming.

Abdullahi, Musa, Abubakar and Yusif [16] carried out a study to examine how social media shaped the academic performances of 371 undergrads of Bayero University, Kano (BUK). Questionnaires were issued to the learners and feedback was evaluated descriptively. It showed that, despite the public outcry on misuse of online social sites by learners, more

learners desired to employ the sites for education. The good outcomes of the media among undergrads seemed higher than the risky ones. Nevertheless, ANOVA revealed no statistically noteworthy variance between constructive and harmful outcomes and learners' academic output. Instructors and learners can exploit social media for research and communication and to ease learning. Social media proved useful in class as learners use them to communicate efficiently, know of university-based and other vital information. Essentially, social media somewhat was a new means to learning for undergrads in BUK. Abdullahi *et al.* proposed that the faculty and learners to strengthen the beneficial functions of social media and minimize risks.

In a study in Ghana, Owusu-Acheaw and Larson [17] assessed how social media usage shaped academic output of Koforidua Polytechnic students. A population of 1578 students was used and 30% from the three departments: Business management, Engineering and Applied Science and Technology. Stratified sampling was applied to sample the respondents. Social survey method and questionnaires were designed to gather data. The findings showed that most respondents had internet-enabled mobile phones and knew of most media platforms. Additionally, learners used social media for between half an hour to 3 hours daily. The quality of student performance among social media users had also been adversely impacted. This also proofed that a strong positive link exists between learners' performance and utilization of social sites. The authors recommends that learners should be guided to utilise the mobile phones with internet facility for research, rather than socializing, and to give minimal time to social sites. They advised them to replace that time to reading novels rather than wasting it on social sites.

In Kenya, Muhingi *et al.*, [18] examined on social sites and students' academic outcomes in secondary schools, lesson from an Open Learning Centre in Nairobi. Descriptive and cross-sectional study, which intended to describe the views of the respondents (open learning high-schoolers). The data was collated using locally designed questionnaire, with stratified selection applied in picking classes. The target was 174 secondary students of Form One to Form Four, but mostly form twos and threes, 8 teachers, 50 parents and 16 policy makers were involved. The study findings underlined that social sites have both affects learners in high school; nevertheless, the adverse impacts surpassed the positive resulting from the addictiveness of social sites to learners, leading to time wastage and neglecting studies and assignments. They recommended that a controlled access to social sites by learners and supervised closely to realize their academic goals.

In Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, Chepkemoi, Situma and Murunga [19] investigated the influence of Facebook social media usage on students' English

written assignments in Eldoret North Sub- County. The authors applied descriptive design, targeting 38 public day high schools with 15000 learners and 88 instructors of English. A 30% of sampled schools (150 students) (i.e. 11 schools) was randomly selected. Simple unsystematic selection facilitated the picking of schools and purposive approach was adopted to select English teachers who partook in the interview and learners were randomly picked to fill the questionnaires. The research revealed that instructors do not employ social media for teaching. Moreover, learners employ short forms when commenting on their friends' posts on Facebook and sometimes friends find themselves using the short forms when writing English assignments this negatively affects their mastering of spelling. The authors recommended that students should use formal English in Facebook posts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted ex-post facto research design, mainly causal comparative, to inquire into the effects of social media on students' learning behaviour among public day high schools. The study targeted public day high schools within 5 kilometres in Eldoret urban in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. About 5,720 students from 22 secondary schools were targeted. Stratified sampling was used, mainly strata sampling, to sample extra-county schools, county and sub-county schools; then strata sampling to sample equal number of schools as per their level in sub-counties. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select schools. Among students, 20 were picked from Form 3 and Form 4 from the 7 sampled schools. Forty-two teachers were sampled using simple random selection from the sampled schools to participate in the inquiry. In total, therefore, the study sample was 182, comprising 140 students and 42 teachers, drawn from 7 schools. The investigation used structured questionnaire to collate data. Once data had been collated, it was organized into themes, coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It was managed quantitatively using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The teachers were probed if their schools had and used media-related facilities for instruction. From their responses, 26(61.9%) of the teachers acknowledged some media-related facilities in their schools were utilised for instruction while 16(38.1%) did not have the facilities in their schools. The facilities identified by all the teachers in their schools for instruction included television screens, computers, smart phones and video machines. The teachers said the facilities offered interactive sessions in class as they provided audio-visual dimension when relaying information.

The teachers were further asked to give their views on the proportion of learners who had engaged in social media in their respective schools. Table 1 below shows the findings.

Table 1: Teachers' Opinion on Proportion of Learners Exposed to Social Media

Percentage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 40%	0	0
40-59%	2	4.8
60-79%	8	19
80-100%	32	76.2

From Table 1, it is evident that 32(76.2%) of the teachers reported that 80-100 percent of their students had been exposed to social media, 8(19%) reported 60-79 percent while 2(4.8%) reported only 40-59 percent. This demonstrated that majority of the high school learners in Eldoret urban had access to social media facilities.

According to Osharive [9], social media usage is increasingly popular worldwide and has become the biggest digital means of communication. The media employs readily available technological gadgets such as mobile phones and other web based technologies to create highly interactive platforms, which individuals and community share. Students worldwide, including in developing countries, use these media such as television, video cell phones and many other internet sites both outside and inside classrooms and lecture rooms since they have many attractive features and services.

On their part, the learners were asked to indicate if they owned smart phones and if they used those phones on social media. The findings showed that 54.1% of the learners owned smart phones while 44.9% owned no smart phones. Those who owned no smart phones communicated via social media with friends and relatives using phones they borrowed from their older siblings, peers, parents/guardians and other relatives staying with them. Those who had smart phones said they used the gadgets on social media. All the students affirmed that they saved their pocket money to buy credit for their phones, while some students directly received credit from their parents and guardians.

Nwabueze and Aduba [20] explained that ICT gadgets, like cell phones, PCs and iPads are the commonest among learners in accessing social media sites. Moreover, these accesses mostly impair with learners' overall disposition and study behaviours.

The students were further probed to indicate the frequency with which they used various social media sites provided. Their responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale of: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4) and Always (5). Table 2 presents the findings.

Table 2: Responses on Use of Various Social Media Sites

Media site		1	2	3	4	5	
WhatsApp	F	5	8	26	41	58	4.01
	%	3.6	5.8	18.8	29.7	42	
Twitter	F	5	13	40	48	32	3.64
	%	3.6	9.4	29.0	34.8	23.2	
Instagram	F	5	13	42	44	34	3.64
	%	3.6	9.4	30.4	31.9	24.6	
Facebook	F	5	13	45	50	25	3.56
	%	3.6	9.4	32.6	36.2	18.1	
Snapchat	F	5	10	30	41	52	3.91
	%	3.6	7.2	21.7	29.7	37.7	
YouTube	F	6	11	31	41	49	3.84
	%	4.3	8	22.5	29.7	35.5	
Google	F	5	11	35	46	41	3.78
	%	3.6	8	25.4	33.3	29.7	

Table 1 shows that the following major social network sites were used by the students more frequently: WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and Google. On a rating scale of the optimum of five points, WhatsApp was the commonest among the learners (Mean = 4.01), followed by Snapchat (Mean = 3.91) and YouTube (Mean = 3.84). The other scores were as follows: Google (Mean = 3.78), Twitter and Instagram (Mean = 3.64) and Facebook (Mean = 3.56).

Moreover, a small percentage (approximately 3.6%) had never used social media within the school or outside the school environment, while the rest had used the sites to varied extents. These discoveries support those of Ng *et al.* [10], who explained that learners expend over 30% of their free time on media related engagements, like watching television, surfing internet, listening to the radio and reading magazines. According to these authors, cell phones are among the technological tools commonly used to communicate, share information, search for knowledge and converse

with people. The gadget can affect learning behaviour. WhatsApp offers chatting services and instant photo sharing, which along with other engagements facilitated by the cell phone, such as gaming, can adversely affect learning behaviour of students. However, Ng *et al.* affirm that cell phones, and indeed social media, can have a constructive influence on students' learning if used to promote scholarship. However, they report that literature mainly underscores how social media engagements can create study habits of procrastination among students while trying to complete homework.

The learners were also asked to indicate the activities for which they used social media. The students were issued with statements on popular tasks people engage in on social media and asked to indicate the frequency with which they had engaged in those tasks when using social media. The tasks were ranked on a five-point Likert scale of: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4) and Always (5). Their feedback was as summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Students' Activities in Social Media

Statement		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
To facilitate working on my school assignments	F	25	63	25	15	10	2.43
	%	18.1	45.7	18.1	10.9	7.2	
For academic group discussions outside the school environment	F	72	45	2	9	10	1.84
	%	52.2	32.6	1.4	6.5	7.2	
For research study	F	59	39	27	7	6	2.00
	%	42.8	28.3	19.6	5.1	4.3	
To network with my friends and relatives	F	5	6	21	44	62	4.10
	%	3.6	4.3	15.2	31.9	44.9	
Pornographic videos	F	15	31	47	32	12	2.96
	%	10.9	22.5	34.1	23.2	8.7	
To download and watch movies	F	6	15	52	45	18	2.26
	%	4.3	10.9	37.7	32.6	13	
For general entertainment	F	4	7	27	39	61	4.06
	%	2.9	5.1	19.6	28.3	44.2	
Advertisements and shopping	F	42	43	31	16	5	3.40
	%	30.4	31.2	22.5	11.6	3.6	
Communication	F	6	7	22	42	61	4.05
	%	4.3	5.1	15.9	30.4	44.2	

Regarding whether learners appropriated social media to facilitate working on their school assignments, 45.7% indicated they rarely did, 18.1% sometimes provided, 18.1% indicated never, 10.9% indicated often and 7.2% agreed they always used the media to facilitate working on their school assignments. On whether they used social media for academic group discussions outside school, 52.2% said they never did, 32.6% - rarely, 7.2% - always, 6.5% - often and 1.4% said they sometimes did. These figures showed that majority of the learners rarely used social media to facilitate working on their school assignments or for academic group discussions outside school.

In establishing if learners used social media for research study, 42.8% of the learners said they never did, 28.3% said that they rarely did, 19.6% sometimes did, 5.1% often did and 4.3% used the media for research study. As such, most students never used social media for research study. On whether they used SM to network with peers and relatives, 44.9% of the learners said they always did, 31.9% often did, 15.2% sometimes did, 4.3% rarely did and 3.6% said they never did. Clearly, majority of the learners used social media mainly to network with peers and relatives. Regarding if the students shared and watched pornographic videos, 34.1% admitted they sometimes did, 23.2% said they often did, 22.5% said they rarely did, 10.9% indicated they never did and 8.7% said they always did. Evidently, social media platforms have become avenues for accessing pornographic content among students.

In establishing if learners used social media to download and watch movies, 37.7% of the learners said they sometimes did, 32.6% often did, 13% always did, 10.9% rarely did and 4.3% showed that they never did. It was thus deduced that social media platforms enabled students to download and watch movies. On whether they used social media for general entertainment, 44.2% indicated they always did, 28.3% often did, 19.6% indicated sometimes, 5.1% indicated rarely and 2.9% said they never did. As such, the main function of social media, according to most student users, was general entertainment.

Regarding use of social media for advertisements and shopping, 30.4% of learners indicated they never did, 31.2% said they rarely did, 22.5% said they sometimes did, 11.6% indicated they often did and 3.6% said they always did. This showed that some learners shopped on social media platforms. On whether they used social media for communication, 44.2% of learners said they always did, 30.4% often did, 15.9% indicated sometimes, 5.1% indicated rarely and 4.3% said they never did. However, for most learners, communication was another major function of social media.

The findings showed that learners appropriated social platforms more for socializing than for academic tasks. They also used them mainly to chat, making friends and for entertainment purposes. Most learners were generally utilizing the media sites in collaboration with companions, connecting with their schoolmates for online study and for chatting about national issues, watching movies and for many other purposes. The time that learners expend on social media impacts their learning behaviour negatively. Kiplagat and Ombiro [21] established that most students in Kenya have access to the internet and frequent social media sites, such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Moreover, the students spend over two hours a day in different online activities, which include chatting, posting photos, entertainment, watching videos, getting news and sports, all of which have contributed to impaired learning behaviour and poor academic output. Social media usage was also found to affect their ability to use language properly in communication and writing.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Almost all the learners in the study area have been exposed to social media. Social media exposure is facilitated by easy access to cell phones among learners. Some learners own such phones while others borrow from family and friends. WhatsApp is the commonest among the learners, followed by Snapchat and YouTube. Learners rarely use social media to facilitate working on their school assignments or for academic group discussions outside school. Moreover, most students never use social media for research study. Majority of the learners use social media mainly to network with peers and relatives. These media platforms have also become avenues for accessing pornographic content among students. While some students affirm that social media platforms have enabled them to download and watch movies, for majority of them, the main function of social media, is general entertainment and communication. A number of learners have also used social media to do shopping.

It is recommended that the schools, in collaboration with the parents, should develop media platforms for the students that could incorporate academic features to assist in drawing learners' focus from non-scholarly activities. Moreover, the school administration should encourage students to monitor their individual time use and daily progress by finishing tasks and engaging on the activities related to improvement of academic life. More research is also needed to examine how social media shapes the social lifestyle of students.

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