THE EFFECT OF TYPE AND NATURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KALAMA SUB-COUNTY, MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the effects of social media use on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub-County. The objectives of the study were to; examine the types of social media used by students and their effects on academic performance in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub-County and examine the effects of nature of usage of social media on students' academic performance in Kalama Sub-County. The study adopted General Systems Theory by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy. The study used descriptive survey research design. The target population was 33 secondary schools, 33 guidance and counseling teachers and 1710 form two students. Proportional stratified technique was used to sample 330 students. 10 teachers were randomly sampled from each of the schools from the entire number of schools. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as the research instruments. The data was analyzed and interpreted both qualitatively and quantitatively using descriptive survey research design. The descriptive statistics included the mean, frequency tally and percentages while inferential statistics included the Pearson's chi-square at 5% level of significance. Analysis of data was conducted with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The findings of the study were that showed that students make use of several social media platforms with Facebook, WhatsApp and Google having the highest number of frequencies of usage. Further, the hypotheses testing verified the assumption that the type of social media used has no effect on students' academic performance and the nature of usage of social media has no effect on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub-County in Machakos County. The study recommends that Students should be allowed to have a free choice of social network site they are willing to use especially if they use it for learning. Teachers should ensure they use the social media as a tool to improve the academic performance of students in schools.

Keywords: Social media, Mass media and Social networking

INTRODUCTION

Social media use in educational institutions

The habitual use of social media has caused a gradual addiction especially to the youths, most of which are secondary and tertiary school students. Social media has exploded as a category of online discourse where people create content, share it, bookmark it and network at a prodigious rate. Due to its ease of use, speed and reach, it is fast changing the public discourse in society and setting trends and agenda in topics that range from the environment and politics to technology and the entertainment industry (Asur & Huberman, 2010).

Alongside the recent trends in web technologies, making profitable use of social media is at the top of agenda for many academic institutions. Social media refers to online services that support social interactions among users through highly accessible and scalable web-based publishing techniques (Dutta, 2010). Social media use is one of the recent challenges in the society today in almost all the educational institutions. Students highly affected by the social media will do almost anything to engage others. This has penetrated to all levels of our society affecting students, working class and everyone in between. Students can be addicted on the use of social media like playing Computer games, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp among other social media platforms. Technology nowadays is becoming more and more high tech, and it improves day to day for us to use it in our convenience. This technological evolution and dynamism affects us but mostly the "Millennial". Social media entails engagement in the relationships that exist between networks of people; hence students spend most of their time using social media platforms. It would make it easy to use social media to connect to other students who are far from them and share ideas on education matters. Social media can also be used to express feelings towards something or someone, therefore, they would use it to build positive attitude towards education (Troy, 2011)

Social media comes with both positive and negative effects. Studies have revealed that social network websites grab students' attention and then diverts it towards non-educational and inappropriate actions including useless chatting. Research has proven the heavy presence of social media usage among students is more than 90% in secondary school students; they use social networks and networking sites in their daily routine life (Kross & Johnson, 2013). This shows the level at which students are patronizing these sites and this may bring along both positive and negative effects on students as far as their academic performance is concerned. Students must really know the importance of social media to be able to fulfill their own will. It would be of great gain if they would tap of its benefits and use it in doing their academic assignments (Jeff, 2018).

Types of Social Media and their Effect on Students' Academic Performance

One of the major benefits of using social media with students is teaching them to communicate openly, honestly and above all, kindly with their peers. The perceived privacy or anonymity of being online is especially freeing for boys who may otherwise feel it is uncool to engage in class discussions or to show their emotions. Therefore, it is imperative to use this teachable moment to promote compassionate communication. Guidelines are needed in place before introducing technology in a school or in a classroom. This keeps everyone safe and ensures students on harness the power of social media for good. In this age of cyber bullying kids need to learn that online behavior has real-world consequences. The bottom line of social networking in schools is that if you wouldn't do it in class you shouldn't do it online (Miguel, 2009). Types of social media are numerous. They include Facebook, Twiducate, Twitter, Tween Tribute, Instagram, Snapchat, Linkedin, Brainly, Viusasa, Google, Skype, You tube, Whatsapp, Blogger, classloom and many more. People all over the world have been enjoying the benefits of using technology nowadays. In the past, communicating and free sharing of thought between people was restricted by long distance, race, and even religion. But now these barriers can no longer stop the flow of information and knowledge because now the new world of social networking allows free sharing of thoughts through online social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Viusasa and the like. Facebook is the most popular social networking site among students and it has reached a one billion user base in October 2012. LinkedIn with more than 35,000 users has been reported the third most popular social

networking site but mostly used for professional networking. In addition, Viusasa, WhatsApp, Social Impact, and Facebook are among the other popular Social Networking Sites (Junco, 2012).

One critical approach to render learning is to reach students where they are, which includes locating social networking outlets that can be used in the classroom. While social media inherently combines with subjects such as language arts and social studies, tech-savvy teachers should realize that teamwork can function in any classroom thus adopt social media platforms that encourage teamwork for purposes of learning. Some of these sites include; Twiducate a platform for teachers and students to collaborate that helps teachers to build an online class environment. 30 hands learning network community is another outstanding cloud-based solution for educators who want to communicate with others, track/manage students, plan activities, and many more. Brainly is a social network where students can ask questions and other students from all around the world can address them. Classloom is a friendly social network that helps students and educators to connect and access resources on every mobile device thus making it a top-performing and one of the best social networking sites (Khan, 2012).

Skype in the classroom is one of the best ways to introduce real-time video communication to the classroom through virtual field trips, "mystery" visitors, and other means. Twitter is by far one of the most successful and the best social networking sites for students. This micro-tweeting platform is popular around the world, particularly in education. Furthermore, with the upcoming parental controls, Twitter is becoming a more realistic choice for educators on a daily basis. In addition, this website provides high-level education for students searching for tutors online or to read. With social media there is interaction with individuals and communities according to their particular interests and needs. Social media has to be highly sociable and there has to be interaction and engagement (Kaplan, 2010).

According to Brown 2010, the biggest player in this educational technology sector is obviously Google. They keep on unleashing new productivity and collaboration tools as a part of the G suite for education and the best part is that it is free to use and can easily be accessed by anyone to search information in any field of study including such sources as abstracts, articles and books. Google classroom which was released in 2014, helps schools to seek to simplify creating, distributing and grading assignments in a paperless way. Assignments are created and distributed among students with the help of Google Drive and classroom communication is provided through Gmail. Google Hangouts, one of the most popular applications provided by Google, is a free video conferencing tool available to teachers and students. Apart from being integrated with other Google services like YouTube, Gmail and Calender, it allows one to communicate with up to ten users at a time. Teachers can use this service to help their students, or the students can clarify their doubts even when they are at different places at that time. Google Drive, a cloud-based storage, allows one to store and synchronize their files online. Schools can use this service to provide all the learning and academic materials online at one place and share the link with the teachers and students so that they can give access to the required folder. Assignments can be uploaded for the students by the teachers in separate folders for different classes and the students can also submit their finished homework there. Google books has brought the library into our pockets. It is a relief to the students who do not have access to a library and is also helpful for teachers as they can also have a look at any concept from various angles. With more than 70 million members worldwide and a pretty high growth rate, Google is steadily moving with its aim of increasing innovation, participation and creativity among the students and teachers. With such powerful tools at our disposal, we should take advantage of them and make education more creative and less boring.

Many researchers such as Choney (2010), Miguel (2009) and Enriquez (2010) studies on the effects of social media on students' academic performance revealed some types of social media like Facebook and Whatsapp have a negative effect on students' academic performance. The studies purport that social media users study less and generate lower grades. Majority of the particularly those in secondary schools spent most of their times chatting with their acquaintances, playing online games, and watching videos instead of reading their lessons, making their assignments and other academic requirements. The main cause for this is that, when they are working or searching their materials online, they get attracted to social networking sites to kill boredom during study time, diverting their attention from their academic work.

Mensah (2016) in his study on the effects of social media in secondary school students' academic performance divulged that a great number of students indulge in social media; majority being students in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The investigation revealed that social media improved students' academic performance. He averred that Social media provokes and improves competencies as creativity, critical thinking, self-efficacy and collaboration thus there is need to introduce the student's to other information resources and content materials that would motivate and help them perform well in their academics. He further argues that the use of some types of social media has beneficial effect to students, not only on their academic needs but also to help them establish a sense of identity, build and enhance networking skills.

The Effects of Nature of Usage of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance

According to Katz (2018), a youth empowerment and life skills expert, Social networking is the new peer pressure leading to extreme suicide and or rejection. She believes that virtual peer pressure is more dangerous as it is permanent making cyber bullies use it to spread their views about anyone publically without realizing the impact of their words and actions. Socialization is the factor or main cause that leads to use of social media. Peer pressure among students especially teens is not a new thing. It is impacting our digital generation by crossing the school walls and entering our homes, forcing our kids to do things such as sexting, drug abuse, and alcohol consumption among others. Social media has given peer pressure the power to ruin the lives of kids who feel pressurized to do things mainly because all their friends are doing them. Students spend hours on different social media accounts, which may boost their social standing but at the same time compel them to do things they shouldn't or even aren't too keen to do.

Idris (2015) avers that 75% of the kids accepted the fact that the pressure to blend in after seeing posts of their friends openly drinking alcohol and taking drugs forced them to repeat this behavior. He further states that going through Facebook timeline of their friends and seeing them going late night parties, drinking alcohol, trying drugs or having physical relationship makes teens feel that everyone except them is enjoying their life. Social media has given rise to a new term "Virtual peer pressure" whereby kids face online almost daily.

In their investigation on the effect of the nature of social media on students' academic performance, Ivcevic and Ambady,2012 argue that social media and low self-esteem are related since social networking sites allow users to create electronic profiles for themselves, provide details about their life and experiences, post pictures, maintain relationships, plan social events, meet new people, comment on others' lives, express beliefs, preferences and emotions as well as fulfill belongingness needs and this can serve as a basis for social comparisons, self-evaluation or self enhancement. Thus, viewing social media profiles with negative content results in poor self-esteem and negative self-evaluations. This in turn affects students' academic performance negatively. Idris (2015), a founding member of Facebook admits that social media platforms like Facebook have been designed to get people hooked; they are a part of the attention economy.

Mass media is communication that reaches a large audience like television (TV), advertisement, the internet, newspaper and so on (Luois, 2018). In the contemporary society, people are strongly influenced by mass media and spend more time in front of computers listening to music and radios, reading news and information, interacting with other people in social network and watching TV programs and films. According to Corner, (2000) mass media has some influences on our decision making especially on our idea of consumption. Students who concentrate much on mass media end up losing performance. Mass media can also lead to various health risk behaviors amongst the youths like use of drugs, sex related behaviors among others.

According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, (MoEST, 2013), students are getting lazier and are over dependent on social media such that they do not want to reason on their own. This is probably due to being extensively indulged to get global access and therefore leading them to perform less academically. Students should be encouraged to limit the time they spend on social media sites on matters which are not of academic gain and be advised

to rather substitute those hours with reading more academic materials like; short stories, novels etc. to improve their vocabulary.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of the type and nature of usage of social media on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub- County, Machakos County.

Research Questions

1. Does the type of media used affect students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub-County?
2. What is the effect of the nature of usage of social media on students' academic performance in public Secondary schools in Kalama sub-county?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is used to analyze and report events as they occur and describe some aspects or characteristics of human population such as opinions, attitudes, beliefs or even knowledge of certain phenomenon. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Effect of Type of Social Media used on Students' Academic Performance

The objective aimed at determining the effect of type of social media used on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kalama Sub-County. To answer the objective,
The teachers were requested to indicate the social media they use in teaching in their school. The findings are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 1: Social Media Teachers Use in Teaching

Type of item	Mean	STD DEV
Facebook	2.33	0.679
WhatsApp	3.51	0.987
Twitter	1.23	0.879
Blogger	1.82	0.231
You tube	2.61	0.567
Skype	1.12	0.578
Instagram	2.21	0.478
Viusasa	2.76	0.499
Linked in	2.12	0.678
Google+	1.22	0.526

Findings in table 1 indicate that Whatsapp is mostly used by teachers as shown by a mean of 3.51, followed by Viusasa (2.76) and You-tube (2.61). Others social media platforms used were Facebook (2.33), Instagram (2.21), LinkedIn (2.12), Blogger (1.82), Twitter (1.23) and Google+ (1.22).These findings imply that schools in Kalama Sub-county have inadequate social platforms needed for learning. The results show that more teachers use Youtube for classroom interaction and also for materials that are relevant to the syllabus. The findings are consistent with the assertions of

Khan (2012) that social networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter and You-Tube are used by teachers to teach in the classroom and also to research on educational content.

The students were also requested to indicate the social media they use in their learning process. The findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 2: Social Media the Students use in Learning

Social media	Mean	STD
Facebook	2.45	0.152
Whatsapp	2.03	0.187
Youtube	3.61	0.142
Instagram	4.09	0.253
Viusasa	4.12	0.169
Google+	4.23	0.148
Blogger	2.19	0.221
Skype	3.33	0.158
Twitter	2.12	0.153
LinkedIn	2.35	0.144

The findings presented in Table 2 show that majority of the students use google+ (4.23) in learning, followed by viusasa (4.12), Instagram (4.09), youtube (3.61), Skype (3.33), facebook (2.45), LinkedIn (2.35), Blogger (2.19), Twitter (2.12) and whatsapp (2.03). This depicts that the social media mostly used by students in Kalama Sub-county in learning was the Google+. The findings are in line with the findings of Brown 2010 who asserts that the biggest player in this educational technology sector is obviously Google which is steadily moving with its aim of increasing innovation, participation and creativity among the students and teachers. This has led to a great number of students using it in their studies.

To ascertain how the type of social media used by students influenced their academic performance, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the statements related to type of social media used by students. Responses are represented in Table 2.

Table 3: Type of Social Media used by Students and Academic Performance

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
I learn a lot by listening to and watching social media	82 (32.8%)	107 (42.8%)	13 (5.2%)	22 (8.8%)	26 (10.4%
I make academic discussions with fellow students on social media.	77 (30.8%)	116 (46.4%)	10 (4%)	18 (7.2%	29 (11.6%)
Social media gives me guidance for examination	85 (34.0%)	104 (41.6%)	17 (6.8%)	21 (8.4%)	23 (9.2%)
My academic performance depends on social media	83 (33.2%)	108 (43.2%)	13 (5.2%)	24 (9.6%)	22 (8.8%)
I get academic reading materials related to schoolwork from social media	75 (30.0%)	114 (45.6%)	19 (7.6%)	27 (10.8%)	15 (6.0%)

The findings in Table 3 show that majority of the students agreed to the fact that they like listening to and watching social media as indicated by 32.8% strongly agreed and 42.8% agreed. With regards to whether the type of social used by students enhance making academic discussions with fellow students, 77 (30.8%) strongly agreed and 116 (46.4%) agreed. Concerning the social media gives student guidance for examination, 85 (34.0%) strongly agreed and 104 (41.6%) agreed. Also, 33.2% and 43.2% of students strongly agreed and agreed respectively on their academic performance depends on social media. Again, majority of students 45.6% agreed they get academic reading materials related to schoolwork from social media. The findings concur with Mensah, (2016) who underscored four (4) major advantages of social media usage by students in higher education which included; enhancing relationship, improving learning motivation, offering personalized course material, and developing collaborative abilities.

The findings show that more students make academic discussions with fellow students using the social media and they believe that social media gives them guidance for examination thus enhances their academic performance. This concurs with Luois, (2018) assertion that social media helps learners to be in learning communities and social media deepens their learning knowledge. This influences their freedom of expression and opinions in discussion forums, socialization and effective communication.

The findings were supported by a Guidance and Counseling teacher's interview schedule results which revealed that;

"……… Students use social media platform such as YouTube, which have millions of educational videos, which help students to broaden their scope of knowledge as well as develop various other good skills and talents. If students' find some good and informative videos related to their studies, they can share it with their friends or classmates who can benefit by watching them……."

Another respondent was of the opinion that:

"Learners use three social media platform most frequently; Facebook, Whatsapp and YouTube most frequently. Learners visit these social media sites to get their assignments done, communicate with their peers and get information that supports their education.

Effect of Nature of Usage of Social Media on Academic Performance

The objective aimed to examine the effect of nature of usage of social media on academic performance. The teachers were requested to indicate how often they use each of the social media in their school. The findings are presented in table 4.

Table 4 Rate of Social Media Use in Teaching and Learning

Social media	Very often		Often		Less often		Rarely		Not at all		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Facebook	14	6.51%	76	35.35%	98	45.58%	16	7.44%	11	5.12%	215
WhatsApp	29	12.72%	128	56.14%	59	25.88%	9	3.95%	3	1.32%	228
Twitter	9	4.95%	27	14.84%	86	47.25%	26	14.29%	34	18.68%	182

Instagram	14	7.41%	25	13.23%	83	43.92%	46	24.34%	21	11.11%	189
Snapchat	2	1.65%	28	23.14%	16	13.22%	68	56.20%	7	5.79%	121

Of the respondents 35.35% on Facebook users, 79.18% on WhatsApp, 60% on twitter, 63.67% on Instagram and 35.1% on snapchat admitted to be frequent and active users. The findings illustrate that Whatsapp and Facebook platforms are often used by students. The study established that teachers used social media in teaching. This study is in agreement with the finding of Mond (2012) that frequent use of social media is an added advantage to facilitate and help the teacher in delivering concepts in more concrete approaches. These platforms assist both the teachers and the learner to acquire the prescribed knowledge, skills and ideas. Students need enough social media and qualified teachers to help them comprehend the content in teaching and learning.

The researcher also interviewed the Guidance and Counseling teachers. One teacher argued that;

"………the use of social media is highest amongst students including children, teenagers and adults. The social media use is very popular amongst students as it provides them the freedom to do whatever they want to do using social media. They can create and share the content, comment on anything they wish to, connect and chat with their friends as well as make new friends. Social media can also be used as an educational tool for learning amongst students. Students can connect with their professors or classmates online, if they face any issue related to their studies. This will help them to connect with their teachers and classmates in a new way providing flexibility in learning……"

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The study made the following recommendations:

1) Teachers should emphasis the importance of social media with the aim of raising the academic performance as the school as it has been proved that social media in teaching and learning enhanced the performance of the students.
2) Social networking is a powerful tool that can support excellent academic performance. Students should, therefore, be allowed to have a free choice of social network site they are willing to use especially if they use it for learning.
3) The use of Social media network by students should focus on the academic relevance of those sites instead of using them for negative purposes.

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