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Full Length Research Paper

Implications of Social Networking Sites on University Student's Academic Performance

Samwel N. Nyabera

School of Information, Communication and Media Studies, Rongo University, PO Box 103-40404, Rongo, Kenya.

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Email: s.nyabera@gmail.com

Abstract

The study sought to examine fourth year's university student's views and opinions on the implications of Social Networking Sites on academic performance, with specific interest being Kisii University. The increased use of SNS has become an international phenomenon in the past several years, especially among youths who have embraced these sites as paramount ways to keep in touch with their peers and share information. A survey was done in the Kisii University by distributing questionnaires to 150 sampled students from six schools, including: Faculty of Education; Business and Economics; Information and Technology; Health Sciences; Engineering and Agriculture, in addition, six heads of department were interviewed for data validation. The purpose of the study was to examine the implications of Social Networking Sites on academic performance. The research questions and objectives were: What are the SNS accessed by students on academics? Why do students prefer various SNS? How do these preferred sites influence academic performance? And, to establish the SNS accessed by the University students in academics, to find out why University students prefer various SNS, to examine the implications of SNS on academic performance. Mixed survey design was adopted and conducted in Kisii University involving 150 fourth year students and 6 heads of departments. Quantitative data were generated using questionnaires and presented in tables using frequencies and percentages while qualitative data was generated through interviews and analyzed thematically. The study was guided by technological determinism theory and social learning theory which presumes that technology has effects on society and people learn through their social interaction. The study, reveals that Social Networking Sites had effects on academic performance.

Keywords: Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Performance, Implication, Social Networking Site.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Social Networking Sites are online communities designed to connect individuals to wider networks of relationships. Whereas a social network is an online service, platform, or a site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who share;

interests, activities, backgrounds, photographs or real-life connections. Most social network services are web-based and provide a means for users to interact over the Internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging (Boyd & Ellison 2008).

Evolutions in technological advancements in the technological world have made the internet an innovative

way for students and particularly youths to communicate. Social networks have created a phenomenon on the internet that has gained popularity over the last decade. Users use SNS (Social Networking Sites) such as Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace to create and sustain relationships with others (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In this "information age," social networking sites seem to be growing in popularity rapidly, especially among young adults (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009).

The evolution of internet technology has led to its use as the best medium of communication. Two-third of the world's internet population visits social networking or blogging sites, thus serving as a communication and connection tool, whether from a personal, business or academic perspective (Boyd, 2007). In recent years, social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook, Twitter and Myspace have become the most visited websites in the world, with Facebook topping the list with over 90 million active users in 2009, Myspace ranked second while Twitter soared immediately after it (Friedman, 2010; Nielsen Market Research, May 4, 2010).

Student Participation with technology for social purposes, has become the mainstream communication method for many people in the past several years. In particular, students in universities have adopted these forms of communication as the paramount way to keep in touch with family and friends, Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp are the most popular places for these students to spend their time. What started out as a hobby for some computer literate people has become a social norm and a way of life for people from all over the World (Boyd, 2007). Teenagers and young adults have especially embraced these sites as a way to connect with their peers, share information, reinvent their personalities, and showcase their social lives.

Recent reports indicate that the youth spend nearly 10 hours per day using some form of technology, with socially networked media playing a large role in their daily lives. University years are full of excitement, frustration, disappointment and hope, and this is a time students begin to discover what the future holds for them. With a comprehensive SNS exposure, student's access social networking sites frequently, hence receiving accurate and wrong information. However the darker side of technological evolution is that, Students are increasingly accessing social networking sites on a daily basis, spending much time on SNS than studying which could have a negative implications on their academic performance.

Looking at the context of institutions of higher learning in Kenya, university students are among the most avid users of SNS in the country, they span the whole cycle because, among them are content creators, passive readers, active participants, those who just share and a few who embrace social media. The study was done at KU since, it is one of the fully chattered public universities

in the region, hence a representative of other higher learning institutions, as well as diversity of students who are potential users of Social Networking Sites. In addition, the researcher is familiar with the institution and thus negotiating access did not pose a great challenge during data collection. The student base for the institution includes individuals from Kisii's cosmopolitan population, business and corporate organization within the central business district and its surroundings.

The combination of the above factors made the university appropriate choice for the study. The sample size was 30% of the total population of fourth year students in Kisii University. With this background the researcher finds the need for examining the implications of Social Networking Sites on fourth year students in Kisii University.

Statement of the Problem

The increased use of Social Networking Sites has become an international phenomenon in the past several years, especially among youths who have embraced these sites as paramount ways to keep in touch with their peers and share information. However, the darker side within technological evolution is that, students are increasingly accessing these sites on a daily basis and spending much time on SNS than studying, which could have a negative implications on their academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the implications of SNS on the academic performance of fourth year students in Kisii University

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- 1). To establish the Social Networking Sites accessed by the University students on academics
- 2). To find out why University students prefer various social networking sites
- 3). To examine the implications of Social Networking Sites on academic performance.

Research Questions

The questions to be answered by this study were:

- 1). What are the social networking sites accessed by students on academics in the university?
- 2). Why do students prefer various social networking sites?
- 3). How do these sites influence academic performance?

Scope of the Study

The study was confined to KU and covered 150 fourth year students and 6 heads of departments from various faculties. On the methodological scope, the researcher used mixed approach and a survey study method involving interviews and questionnaires as data generation techniques.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Definition of Social Networking Site

The idea of "Social Networking" has existed for several decades as a way for people to communicate in society and build relationships with others (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008). With the increase of technology used for communicating with others and the popularity of the Internet, "Social Networking" has become an activity that is done primarily on the Internet, with sites like Myspace, Facebook, Bebo, Friendster, and Xanga Coyle & Vaughn (2008). Social networking sites (SNS) may be defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to: construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 1). The word social means the way one communicates in society, the way you meet and spend time with other people. The network is the connection of parts together to allow movement or communication with other parts.

Social networking could in general terms be seen as, a way of describing the modelling of the everyday practices of social interaction, including those that take place within family structures, between friends, and in neighborhoods and communities Merchant (2012).

The Concept of Social Networking Sites

Social Networking Sites (SNS) have been popular since the year 2002 and have attracted and fascinated tens of millions of Internet users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Though only a few have gained worldwide publicity and attention, the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimated that there are over 200 different sites that are used for social networking Duven & Timm, (2008).

The three most visited and highly talked about social networking websites world over today are Facebook, tweeter and Whatsapp. For students and even the general public, they provide personalized and interactive services based on user interest and activities on the web. Most people who are members of these sites, such as Facebook (over 400 million users) and Myspace (over 100 million users) participate the influence of social

networking participation in them on a daily basis (Duven & Timm, 2008).

Each person who becomes a member of an SNS has the opportunity to create his or her own webpage or "profile" which is supposed to be seen as a reflection of that person's personality (Tufekci, 2008). By using this personal profile, one can build an entire social network based on his or her own personal preferences (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). The idea behind most of this phenomenon, as with many websites, is to help people feel socially connected and part of a community, even though they may be sitting home alone at their computer (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008). Participants may connect with other people they know through school, work, or an organization, or they may meet complete strangers from all over the world (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008). They do this by searching for people and adding them as "friends" so that they may share information with them and other networks that those people may be a part of (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Being "friends" in the SNS world simply means that two profiles have been linked together (Tufekci, 2008).

Social Networking Sites and Learning

Social networking sites (SNS) may be defined as the influence of social networking participation web-based services that allow individuals to: construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social Networking Sites allow students to express themselves, communicate, and collect profiles that highlight their talents and experience (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). To get technical and vocational skills which are very important for human development, Socializing with friends, doing sort of collaborative study, research or academic work, carrying out informal form of learning i.e. online degree, discovering and exploration of interests, both academic and future interest, doing some kind of online marketing, business, seminar known as webinar system etc., having to be informed will make one not to be deformed hence most youth tends to visit this social networking sites daily to get daily news information about what is going on round the country, within his or her vicinity, about friends, relatives, this is also an avenue of a citizen to bring the attention of the government to what is needed in their environment, or by suggesting to the government since it will not be possible for you sometimes to go to the office of whoever is in authority.

Implications of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance

Truckman (1975) defined performance as the apparent

demonstration of understanding, concepts, skills, ideas and knowledge of a person and proposed that grades clearly depict the performance of a student. (Kobal and Musek, 2001) defines academic performance as the numerical scores of a student's knowledge, representing the degree of a student's adaptation to schoolwork and the educational system. A study by the National Board Association reported that "96 percent of youth between 21-30 years have used social networking tools for some time, with their average engagement with them rivaling time spent watching TV at nine hours a week" (Klopfer, Osterweil, Groff, & Haas, 2007, p. 12). Similarly, Twitter, which has been around a shorter amount of time, currently has nearly 106 million users according to a release on April 2010 from Chirp, the Twitter developer conference. During their time, these networks, particularly Facebook, have morphed in their functions to include many social aspects such as chat and other networking applications. "Evidence shows that social media are already affecting the ways in which people find, create, share and learn knowledge, through rich media opportunities and in collaboration with each other" (Redecker, Ala-Mutka, & Punie, 2010, p. 11).

In the study conducted by (Englander et al., 2010), he observed that students spend more time using SNSs for other purposes apart from educational use, thus affecting their academic performance. In another study (Nalwa & Anand, 2003), shows that students like to use the internet for their own responsibilities and this affects their academic performance. This study is further elaborated by (Karpinski, 2009) whereby they stated that SNSs users had lower grade rankings than students who never engage in social interactions.

However, there are general benefits associated with users of SNSs. (Roblyer et al., 2010) explained that SNSs are sources of communication among students and lecturers in their respective faculties. Furthermore, (Kolek & Saunders (2008), resolved that users of SNSs who are students have no effect whatsoever with their academic performance. Use of technology such as internet is one of the most important factors that can influence educational performance of students positively or adversely. (Kolek and Saunders, (2008) proposed that student users are affected by the internet and this impact is determined by the type of internet usage. They are positively affected by the informative use of internet while having a drastic impact on recreational use of internet on them. Also, Oskouei (2010) proposed that the internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination. The University of New Hampshire agrees with oskouei (2010), and believes that current college students grew up in the technology era and social networking is now just a part of a student's daily routine.

Their research show that '63% of heavy users received high grades, compared to 65% of light users' (University

of New Hampshire, 2009). The University of New Hampshire said that a majority of students use social networking for social connections and entertainment, but are also using it for education and professional reasons. Kirschnera (2010), revealed that students who multi-task between social networking sites and homework are likely to have 20% lower grades than a student who does not have a social networking site in visual range. Kirschnera (2010), believes that even running a social networking site on the background of a student's PC while studying or doing homework could lower a student's grade.

The American Educational Research Association conducted a research and it was declared on its annual conference in San Diego, California (2009) that SNSs users study less and generated lower grades eventually (21stcenturyscholar.org). Similarly, however, many researchers also found a positive association between use of internet and SNS and academic performance of the student users. Students, using internet frequently, scored higher on reading skills test and had higher grades as well (Lenhart *et al.*, 2009). In a study set out to determine the most effective way for faculty to use social networking sites for educational purposes, Nemetz, *et al.*, (2010) stated conclusively that students use social networking sites frequently and extensively. Many authors report positive impacts on student achievement as a result of participation in social networking sites. After conducting a study on the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance in Malaysia, Helou and Ab Rahim (2011) found that the majority of the respondents agreed that social networking sites have a positive impact on their academic performance; despite the fact that they also reported that they mainly engaged in social networking sites for social reasons rather than academic reasons. The Brady et al. (2010) study of the educationally-based social networking site Ning also provided evidence of a positive impact on student achievement, noting that the majority of students reported positive e-learning benefits in their courses, including increased collaboration and exchange of information compared to face-to-face courses.

It is important to note that in both the Brady et al. (2010) and Helou and Ab Rahim (2011) studies students were self-reporting their impressions on the impact of their use of social networking sites. In a study designed to investigate the effect of social networking site (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter) engagement on cognitive and social skills, Alloway & Alloway (2012) suggested that some activities predicted higher scores in verbal and visual-spatial working memory performance. Beach and Doerr-Stevens (2011) confirms the possibility that social networking sites can have a positive impact on student achievement, noting that the collaborative nature of social networking sites could have a positive effect on the development of civic engagement in students. Furthermore, in another study supporting the positive

impact of social networking sites, Forkosh-Baruch and Herskovits, (2012) concluded that Twitter could actually increase student engagement and improve grades in educationally relevant ways and so was a useful tool in education. At the conclusion of their study, they reported that, for a majority of students, social networking sites provide significant e-learning benefits in their courses, as the research suggests, student engagement and achievement can be impacted positively by student use of social networking sites. In a much reported explorative study to determine whether differences existed in the academic performance of college students who were Facebook users, and those who were not Facebook users; Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) reported a negative correlation between Facebook and student achievement, relaying that Facebook users reported having a lower mean grade point average (GPA). They also reported spending fewer hours per week studying, and engaged in procrastinating behavior.

Junco (2012), suggests several negative predictors of overall GPA, including chatting, checking, and posting status updates on Facebook, he continues to relate how this increased time on Facebook would certainly detract from time spent focusing on academic work, and would negatively impact academic success. Flad (2010) agrees, reporting that SNS use can have a negative impact on study habits and homework completion, with students in their study admitting to having spent time on SNSs rather than studying, and that time spent on an SNS has prevented them from completing homework. Similar findings were reported by Paul, Baker and Cochran (2012) in a very recent study of the relationship between the times spent on online social networking sites and academic performance, stating that time spent on SNSs is shown to negatively impact academic performance.

In a second revealing finding coming from their study, Paul *et al.*, (2012) also reported that as the level of attention deficit increased, the amount of time spent on social networking sites increased. As a result of these findings, Paul *et al.* (2012) even go so far as to suggest that students should be made aware of the potential detrimental effect SNSs can have on their academic achievement. Hooley (2009) came to the conclusion that time spent on Facebook for social purposes was sometimes to the detriment of time available for academic study. Any time spent away from the time allotted to academic study could be viewed as a negative influence. Jacobsen and Forste (2011) concur in a study of the academic and social outcomes of electronic media use among university students, that there is a significant negative association between social networking site exposure and academic performance.

In a recent study in Pakistan to explore the relationship between SNSs and educational performance of students, Ahmed *et al.*, (2011) sampled 1000 students from various universities, comparing aspects of SNS usage in areas

such as student gender, specialty area of study, age, study habits, leisure activities, time and purpose on the internet, time spent on SNSs, and most importantly for this paper the effect of using social networking sites on their studying habits, and the differences of academic performance of students. The authors found study habits were significantly affected by time spent using social networking sites, concluding that Internet and SNS usage negatively affect the studying habits of the students and eventually their academic performance. Although concluding with positive remarks about Twitter. Wise *et al.*, (2011) argue that Facebook, a medium for social interaction, has only a limited role, if any, to play in promoting student engagement from an academic or institutional perspective.

Despite the intentions of many researchers to find a conclusive impact of the use of social networking sites on engagement and achievement, many reported no such findings, concluding only that there was no real connection to be found. Neutral research on the impact of SNSs on student engagement and achievement while many researchers weigh in on the positive or negative side of the impact of social networking sites on student engagement and achievement, other literature is reported as being neutral. This is supported in research focusing on social networking and gender when the author states "The relationship between students who are actively involved in social networking and their academic performance is inconclusive" (Flad, 2010, p. 12). Ahmed and Qazi (201, p.6) also reported results of their study, which explored the relationship between SNS usage and educational performance of the student user, finding that the internet or SNS usage was not significant enough to affect the academic performance of students adversely.

Though there are negative perceptions about the possible effects of SNS on students' academic performance, some studies showed that students found it quite appropriate for a teacher to use Facebook, and for teachers and students to socialize by this means (Baran, 2010). Students also believed that such tools could allow them to share knowledge in formal education contexts. According to Williams & Merten (2008), university students are often found to be obsessed with their Facebook profile or Twitter page. Williams and Merten (2008), also suggested that the over-dependency on these media may affect a student's attendance at school. Boyd & Ellison (2007), pointed out that adolescents and young adults are the heaviest users of computers and the Internet. The relationship between social media and academic performance, Kalpidou *et al.*, (2011) in a study released by Ohio State University reveals that college students who utilized Facebook spend less time on studying and have lower grades than students who do not use the popular social networking sites.

The relationship between using social media with the grades of students, concurrent with past studies found

that online communication is linked to time spent offline relationships, the findings indicate that Social Networking Site use and mobile-phone communication facilitates offline social interaction, rather than replace it (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). Students felt that connection should be invaluable for making friends and supporting each other, especially within the first few weeks after arriving at the University (Kalpidou *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, there was a need to keep in mind that the benefits of this interactive technology far outweighed the risks, when it is used in a positive way, it can be an extraordinary tool (Brydolf, 2007). Although some research has been conducted on the effects of social media on student engagement (HERI) 2007; Heiberger & Harper 2008), studies up to this point have been cross-sectional and correlational in nature, and therefore it has been difficult to make causal inferences. Because of the strong links between engagement and student success (Pascarella *et al.*, 2005).

This inundation of technology and flashy media also alters student expectations in the classroom. With the introduction of the latest technologies students “expect interactive, engaging content and course material that motivates them to learn through challenging pedagogy, conceptual review, and learning style adaptation” (Baird & Fisher, 2006, p. 24). Students are expected to be engaged through interactive lessons, visually appealing simulations, and other modern technology applications. (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011b) in order to gain a more clear-cut understanding of the academic impacts of online social networks. It is important to note that in many studies, academic assessment is addressed by way of self-reporting by students and faculty.

Therefore, this study goes beyond GPA (general point aggregate), and grading and extends the literature to incorporate an overview of impressions by the subjects in line with the respondents response on the questions in the questionnaire, for example, how often a student spent accessing the sites, time of access, average hours on the sites, how accessible, if spending time on SNS interfered with respondents ability to complete assignments and if respondents had ever been late handling assignments because of spending time on SNS. However, researchers indicated that they couldn't be certain that SNS use was the direct link to lower grades because of less studying, but they felt it was an obvious connection to make (Kuh, 2009).

There is a clear gap, according to (Paul *et al.*, 2012), in his recommendation that many researchers have concentrated on the impact of Facebook and therefore, need for researchers to go beyond that and focus on other popular sites such as Myspace, Twitter, or more educationally orientated sites and hence prompting for this study locally focusing on Facebook, Whatsapp and twitter, so as to expand upon the idea that too much spending of time in any social networking site has an

effect on participant performance, the researcher was unable to replicate findings demonstrating SNS has effects on GPA, but did find a significant correlation between the number of hours, how often a respondent engaged in the sites and their level of performance, one possible danger for students is that they may not realize that too much or overindulgence on the sites may ultimately impact on their academic performance.

Again in the past five years, previous studies have dealt with the emotional consequences of social networking site participation and not going beyond that, but not much has been studied locally on the implications of the sites on the academic outcomes in higher learning institutions using mixed approach, and primarily focusing on (Whatsapp, twitter and Facebook), It is on this note that the current study serves to extend previous literature on SNS by using a mixed design to examine the causal link between SNS and academic performance in a sample of Kisii university fourth year students. However there exist several gaps locally on the implications of SNS on academic performance in university and in particular Kisii University.

RESEARCH APPROACH

A mixed approach was used to collect, present and analyze data. According to Creswell (2003), a mixed approach is a method which focusses on collection, and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. A mixture of probability and non-probability sampling procedures were used to identify respondents of the study. The researcher collected data using quantitative survey instruments and followed up with interviews with six heads of departments who were chosen purposefully to participate in the study so as to learn more details about the respondents. Quantitative data were collected using closed ended questionnaires, so as to obtain the attitudes, views and perceptions of the respondents based on the study and presented in tables using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data was obtained using open ended interviews which allowed the respondents to supply answers in their own words and analyzed thematically.

Research Design

In consistency with the mixed approach, the survey study design was adopted in this study. A survey study, according to Oso (2002) is a type of research where a researcher presents oriented methodology used to investigate populations by selecting samples to analyze and discover occurrences. A survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires to the 30% sample of stratified fourth years to obtain quantitative data, and interviews on six head of departments purposively sampled for further

qualitative analysis and to ensure focused information. The data collected was presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies tables and percentages

Study Area

The study was conducted in the Kisii University in Kisii County. The researcher specifically went for 30% of fourth year students and Six Head of Department drawn from six faculties. The study was done at KU since, it is one of the fully chartered public universities in the region, hence a representative of other higher learning institutions, as well as diversity of students who are potential users of Social Networking Sites. In addition, the researcher is familiar with the institution and thus negotiating access did not pose a great challenge during data collection.

Study Population and Sampling

A study population entails the entire objects or group of persons that are of interest to the researcher. According to Somekh and Lewin (2005), a study population refers to all the people or phenomena under study from which a sample will be selected for research

Target Population

Target population is defined by Orodho (2009) as total individuals, elements or groups to be studied. Therefore the target population for this research was five hundred, fourth year students' in Kisii University and six heads of departments drawn from six faculties. Among the faculties included: Education; Health sciences; Engineering; Agriculture; Information technology and Business and economics

Accessible Population

This is part of the target population which the researcher can actually reach Oso (2002). The study population consisted six heads of departments and 30% of fourth year students of KU which was 150, which was sufficient for generalization of the whole population of fourth years

Sampling Frame and Procedure

The sample consisted of 150 fourth year students selected from the target population of 500. This number was chosen according to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) which says that 30% of a given population under study is sufficient for generalization in social science research.

Sampling Techniques

Stratified Random Sampling Method

The researcher employed stratified sampling to select representative respondents from accessible population. Chandran (2004) defines stratified sampling as grouping of study elements into homogenous strata and then picking a sample from each stratum for the final sample size. This enabled the researcher to improve the accuracy and efficiency of estimation, focus on important sub-populations, ignore the irrelevant ones and facilitate balancing of difference between strata, by sampling equal numbers from strata.

The researcher identified subgroups in the population and their proportions to form a sample. After stratifying the sample into six faculties, a sample size of 30% of the total population of fourth year students using the sites as opposed to the entire population were used which were one hundred and fifty. 25 students were randomly selected from each faculty of studies, faculties of Education, Business and economics, Information technology, Health sciences, Engineering and Agriculture, making it one hundred and fifty students in total.

Purposive Sampling Method

According to Oso (2002). Purposive sampling refers to a non-probability where the researcher decides who to include based on their typicality. The researcher purposively selected six heads of departments who were key informants for this study based on their in-depth knowledge that served purpose of this study and virtue of their duties; experience; and judgment hence making them most desirable elements of the study. They were also selected basically to obtain qualitative data free from bias and focused information in line with the research objectives of the study.

Data Generation Techniques

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used for data collection and were distributed to 150 student's respondents drawn from the six faculties. Since the study was concerned with views, opinions, perceptions and feelings of the respondents that could not be directly observed. Such information was best collected through questionnaires (Touliatos & Compton, 1988).

Interviews

The study used individual interviews to gather data from the head of department's respondents. An interview guide for the respondents, with semi-structured questions were designed to help collect data on

implications of Social Networking Sites on fourth year students. The interviews were meant to produce qualitative data that helped back quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis was done using quantitative and qualitative method. Quantitative analysis involved use of numeric measures to the scores of various responses on implications of SNS on academic performance which entailed generating descriptive statistics after data collection, and data was presented in tables using frequencies and percentages and interpretations made based on the research objectives, while qualitative data analysis involved explanation of information obtained from the empirical literature and analyzed thematically according to the research questions.

RESPONSE RATE

For the purpose of this study, the researcher administered 150 questionnaires to the respondents. The actual response was 95.3% and a non-response of 4.66% respondents. The table below shows distribution of respondents as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Showing Response Rate

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Actual Responses	143	95.33
Non Response	7	4.66
Total	150	100

Background Information

The researcher sought from the respondent's the following information on, gender and age from the respondents.

Gender

The table below shows the response rate based on gender.

Table 2. Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	90	62.93%
Female	53	37.06%
Total	143	100

From the table above, 62.93% of the respondents were males while 37.06% were females.

Age

The researcher sought to establish the age of the respondents as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3. Distribution by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-22	57	39.86
23-27	64	44.75
28-32	12	8.39
33 and above	10	6.99
Total	143	100

From the above table, 44.75% of the respondents were between 23-27 years, 39.86% were between 18-22 years, 8.39% of the respondents were of the age of 28-32 years, while 6.99% of the respondents were the age of 33 and above. This is an indication that 44.75% of the respondents in this study were aged 23-27 years respectively.

Implications of Social Networking Site

Respondent's view on SNS Implications

The researcher sought to obtain the views of the respondents on Social Networking Sites implication on their academic performance, and the yes and no form were used, as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4. Respondent's view of SNS implication

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	49.65
No	71	44.75
No response	8	5.59
Total	143	100

The above table 4 shows, 44.75% of the respondents indicated that, Social Networking Sites had no implications to their academic performance while 49.65% of the respondents agreed, while 5.59% did not respond, an indication that a good number which is 49.75% of the respondent's academic performance was affected by Social Networking Sites.

Third objective was to examine the implications of SNS on academic performance, the first question as per table 4 was optional in the form of yes and no, 44.75% of the respondents' felt SNS had no implication on academic performance, while 49.65% of the respondents said SNS had an impact on academic performance. On rating of SNS implications as shown in table 5, the researcher sought to know from general statement on implications of SNS. First statement posed was SNS has effects on the student's behavior and lifestyle, 81.81% of the respondents

Table 5. Rating of implications of SNS

Statement	N %	Agree	Disagree	Total
SNS has effect on students behavior and lifestyle	N 117 % 81.81	26	143	100
SNS have implications on academic performance	N 69 % 48.25	72	143	100
Relying on SNS on accessibility of information	N 78 % 54.54	65	143	100
Relying of SNS affects communication	N 61 % 42.65	82	143	100
SNS increases rate and quality of collaboration	N 95 % 66.43	48	143	100
SNS helps in sharing of creative works	N 115 % 80.41	28	143	100
SNS has created a lax attitude	N 99 % 69.23	44	143	100

agreed while 18.18% it did not, an indication that according to the respondents, SNS affects student's behavior and lifestyle.

The Second statement was, relying of SNS on accessibility of information, 54.54% of the respondents agreed and 45.45% did not, hence indication that a number of respondents which is 54.54% relied on SNS in accessing information. Third statement was, relying on SNS affects communication and a number of respondents which is 57.34% respondents disagreed, while 42.65% agreeing. On whether SNS increases the rate and quality of collaboration, 66.43% participants agreed while 33.56% disagreed, further 80.41% respondents agreed that the SNS helps in sharing of creative works while 19.58% disagreed, 69.23% respondents agreed that the SNS has a lax attitude while 30.76% participants disagreed. On statement of whether SNS have implications on academic performance, 50.34% of the respondents agreed that SNS have implications on academic performance while 48.25 disagreed.

The researcher further posed the question in an open ended form, and majority of the respondents were of the opinion that SNS affects academic performance in the sense that: they spent much time on the sites; accessed the sites during lectures and doing assignments, and multitasking hence distracting them from concentrating on academic matters, while some respondents were of the opinion that SNS does not affect academic performance when used properly.

The findings concurred with (Englander *et al.*, 2010) who observed that students spend more time using SNSs for other purposes apart from educational use, thus affecting their academic performance. In another study (Nalwa and Anand, 2003), shows that students like to use

the internet for their own responsibilities and this affects their academic performance.

On further inquiry on why participants did not have Social Networking Sites, table 5 indicates 45.45% of the respondents felt they did not have enough time to access the sites while 10.90% worried about their privacy, 7.27% too confusing and 0.90% of the respondents did not have reasons for non-use. This response through data presented in table 4, prompted the researcher to conclude, that some respondents missed information about SNS or were ignorant of having the gadgets and thus this was treated as a communication challenge, and hence need for educating students through students representatives and unions, this in researcher's view could bring about exposure of information.

Rating of Implications of Social Networking Sites

The researcher further sought to understand the general implications of Social Networking Sites, as shown on table 5 above. From the table 5 above, 81.81% of the respondents agreed that, Social Networking Sites have effects on student's behavior and lifestyle while 18.18% disagreed that Social networking sites does not have an effect on student's behavior and lifestyle. In addition, 48.25% of the respondents agreed that Social Networking Sites have implications on academic performance, and 50.34% respondents disagreed. On the other hand, 54.54% of the respondents agreed to rely on Social Networking Sites on accessibility of information, while 45.45% disagreed with the statement. Further, 42.65% respondents agreed that Social Networking Sites affects communication, and 57.34% of the contrary opinion, on whether Social Networking Sites increases the rate and quality of collaboration, 66.43% agreed while

33.56% disagreed. The researcher also sought to know whether Social Networking Sites helps in sharing of creative works, and 80.41% respondents agreed, while 19.58% of the respondents disagreed. On Social Networking Sites creating a lax attitude towards spelling and grammar, 69.23% of the respondents agreed while 30.76% disagreeing. This is an indication that a good number which is, 49.65% of the respondent's opinion was that, Social Networking Sites affects academic performance.

Implications of Social Networking Sites

The researcher further sought to examine, the implications of Social Networking Sites on the respondents' academic performance. The researcher presented the question in an open ended form and the responses were as follows:

Most of the respondents were of the view that, Social Networking Sites affect academic performance, when used in a wrong way, at the wrong time and with bad intentions. Hence time wastage, and reduces performance, affects concentration, costly, and a shortcut to further research. While one of the respondents interviewed from school of education responded, "Social Networking Sites do not affect academic performance, instead it helps students in gaining knowledge of the world view, e-learning, creating awareness, improving academic performance and keeping students informed on class matters."

According to the head of departments from various faculties, low level of performance was not parsed from the use of SNS but from over indulgence of SNS and more specifically spending more hours on the non-academic sites during the time of study, lectures or when doing assignments hence distracting them from their academic performance.

CONCLUSION

Being a student in an institution of higher learning and particularly in the field of communication studies, the researcher identified Social Networking Sites as a key component in communication. With few previous studies locally on, the implications of Social Networking Sites on academic performance in Kenyan Public Universities. This study focused on SNS and particularly Whatsapp, twitter and Facebook. The researcher chose the three SNSs because of their relevance, ease to use, preference and popularity with students.

On literature, the researcher fitted the study within the current Social Networking Sites in the field of communication and how it is supported in institutions of higher learning. No prior empirical studies could be

identified that examined the implications of SNS (Facebook, twitter and Whatsapp) on academic performance and conducted using mixed approach, hence need to ascertain the study in Kisii University.

The literature reviewed so far on the implications of Social Networking Sites on academic performance is inconclusive. Some studies found out that, Social Networking Sites had effects on academic performance, in addition, other studies found out that SNS does not have effects on academic performance while some studies were neutral.

Third objective which was on the implications of SNS on academic performance, questions on this focused on feelings of SNS on academic performance, and this was in a bid to ascertain the respondents' opinions on the sites and data analysis from table 2, showed that a number of the respondents which is 49.65% felt SNS had an effect on academic performance. Nevertheless a few of the respondents which 45.45% from table 4, who engaged in Social Networking Sites were of the view that there was no enough time, and hence reducing academic performance.

The findings concurred with (Englander *et al.*, 2010) who observed that students spend more using SNSs for other purposes apart from academic use, thus affecting their academic performance. However respondent's maintained that SNSs are important in fact, one respondent quoted that "since I started using Social Networking Sites, am lazy in accomplishing tasks and doing research and I am no longer the same." This concurred with. (Robbyler *et al.*, 2010) who noted that SNSs are sources of communication among students and lecturers in their respective places.

Data presented in table 3, indicated that a number of respondents which is 50.34% agreed that, Social Networking Sites had implication on academic performance, and also much effect on behavior and lifestyle with 81.81%.

This was attributed to, accessing Social Networking Sites during lectures as presented on table 1 where a few of the respondents which is 4.89% accessed SNS during lectures, while 11.88% of the respondents accessed SNS when doing assignments, further the respondents indicated that they spent 1-5 hours per day on Social Networking Sites, in addition, 16.78% of the respondents accessed SNS for entertainment, hence an obstacle in pursuing matters pertaining academics.

The findings concur with (Englander *et al.*, 2010), who observed that students spend more time using SNSs for other purposes apart from academics, thus affecting their academic performance. In another study (Nalwa & Anand, 2003), shows that students like to use internet for their own responsibilities and this affects their academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hence there is a need for Kisii University policy makers to evolve strategies to guide and ensure that social networking sites are adopted mostly for academic purposes. In other words, if Kisii University lecturers and faculty managers should engage students, mostly through SNS, just like the classroom discussion group that is now available on the social networking sites, so that students will be indirectly carried away from using the non-academic aspect of social networking sites, like games and chatting with friends when they are online. In addition the faculty should explore the available applications on the social sites that are meant for academic purposes and encourage Kisii University students to use them.

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