

Social Media Usage and Its Relationship with Students Achievement: The Case of Public Secondary School Students in Kolfe Keranyo Sub City, Addis Abeba.

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Abstract

In a time of growing digital connectivity, social media platforms are now intertwined with students' everyday lives. This research examines students' preference of social media platforms and why they are using them. The study employed cross sectional survey design. Accordingly, it investigated the relation between students' 2024/25 academic year first semester results and their social media usage (purpose and time spent on social media). Randomly selected 386 students from grades 9 to 12 took part by completing a structured questionnaire. Percentage, frequency, Mean and Pearson Correlation coefficient were used to describe and understand the relationship of quantitative data. Results showed that Telegram (37.3%), TikTok (30.1%), and YouTube (29.8%) were the most commonly used platforms compared to the other types. Messenger (3.6%), Twitter (2.3%), Facebook, and WhatsApp (1.8% each) were less frequently used by students. Besides, the study surfaced out that most of the students used social media for educational purposes ($M=3.56$, $S.D=1.216$) followed by communication ($M=3.33$, $S.D=1.376$), news consumption ($M=2.38$, $S.D=1.292$) and entertainment ($M=3.26$, $S.D=1.247$). Coming to the relationship, Pearson coefficient $r=-0.128$ with $p=0.012$ indicated that there exists a statistically significant negative relationship between time spent on social media and students' academic achievement. However, there was small effect size ($r=-0.128$, $p< 0.05$) between time spent on social media and students' academic achievement. Along with this $r^2=1.6$ indicated time spent on social media explained 1,6% of the variance in students' academic achievement. Finally, the research concluded that, even though students in the study area were frequently used social media for education purposes, the time spent on social media had negative relationship with students' academic achievement. This implies taking more time on social media may reduce time for studying and disrupt concentration on academic activities.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Secondary Schools, Social Media, Students

Introduction

Social media is an online platform that allows individuals to communicate and manage their self-presentation, either synchronously or asynchronously, with large and targeted audiences who benefit from generated material and a sense of involvement with others (Carr and Hayes, 2015). It is computer-mediated communication platforms that enable users to participate in social interaction (Bayer, et al, 2020) for sharing thoughts and information with one another (Dollarhide, 2023).

Social media has entirely transformed the way we interact, converse, and obtain information. It refers to a variety of online and mobile platforms that allow people to connect with others in a virtual network (for example, Instagram, Snap chat, LinkedIn, and Facebook), where they can share, co-create, or swap various types of digital content, such as information, messages, images, or videos (Ahmed et al., 2019; Britannica, 2022).

Social media sites have turned into vital resources for disseminating information and building professional relationships. They promote the swift dissemination of information and allow experts to connect with a wider audience. For example, researchers use these platforms for communicating science, successfully connecting with both colleagues and the public (Zimba & Gasparyan, 2021).

The trend of communication through social media influenced the education sector, as schools and students are progressively utilizing social media for communication and interaction (Ohara, 2023). Despite the promising applications, social media's role in education brings both opportunities and challenges, and its overall impact remains a subject of ongoing debate (Solidjonov, 2021). Social media serves as a helpful tool, but it is unsafe authority and can also be characterized as a double-edged weapon; therefore, users, particularly students, should remain watchful regarding its risks and exercise caution in their use (Kolan & Dzandza, 2018).

As Oguguo et al. (2020) noted, students often use social media to meet new friends, research their assignments, find additional educational resources, and keep informed about current trends and news. The study also revealed that students often use social media to connect with new people, investigate their assignments, find additional educational resources, and keep informed about current trends and news; and they dedicate an average of 2 to 4 hours each day to social media

As Alemayehu and Alamirew (2023) noted, in Ethiopia there are 6.35 million active social media users. These researchers further explained that among these users

students dedicate the majority of their daily time to social media platforms and they often use them primarily for socializing, meeting new people, and sharing content rather than for learning. To this end, entertainment, obtaining information on current matters, interacting with friends/peers, engaging with families or relatives, making new acquaintances, sharing photos and/or videos and generating income are mostly students do through different social media platforms (Mekonen, et al. 2024). Thus, in this context investigating about the place of social media in students learning is very crucial.

Statement of the Problem

As social media significantly impacts the academic outcomes of students (Kennedy, 2020), studies have found different results regarding the influence of social media on students' academic achievement. Some studies reported the positive effect of social media (Gazibara et al., 2020; Kasperski & Blau, 2020; &Tomé-Fernández et al., 2020). In line with this Gazibara et al. (2020) added that using YouTube helps adolescents enhance their academic achievement. Furthermore, Reychav et al. (2018) discovered that learners who are heavily involved in social media are more likely to be sources of knowledge, which leads to improved academic performance.

On the other side, several researchers have found a negative correlation between social media usage and academic performance (Bergdahl et al., 2020; Molla Esparza et al., 2020; Sampasa Kanyinga et al., 2019; Šević et al., 2020; Van Den Eijnden et al., 2018). These studies reported that excessive usage of social media; inappropriate use of it and using social media for purposes other than education are reasons for adverse effect on students' achievement. To this end, unlike Gazibara et al. (2020), Bergdahl et al. (2020) reported that frequent use of YouTube for purposes other than education has a significant adverse link between students' achievement. Excessive use (Masood et al., 2020) and inappropriate use (Astatke, Weng and Chen, 2023) of social media create cognitive distractions among students, impacting their academic achievement.

In Ethiopia, like any other country in the world social media influences secondary school students' academic performance. In this regard, Setena (2023) and Afework (2023) have found a negative association between the amount of time spent on social media and academic performance. This finding indicates that as the amount of hours spent on social media grows, academic performance tends to decline.

Similarly, Tesfaye et al. (2023) and Alemayehu and Alamirew (2023) explained that learners who invest more time on social media often show decreased academic

achievements. Though its influence is small, to the contrary, Assefa, et al (2023) noted that social media has direct positive effect on students' achievement in Ethiopian context. The findings of Mekonen's (2021) study which is similar to neither of the above studies results explains that students' academic achievement does not influenced by time spent on social media.

The above global and local studies did not confidently report favored social media platform. Besides, regarding association between students' achievement and time spent on social media, inconsistent results are observed in the existing studies. Hence, this study has tried to fill this gap by answering the following basic questions:

- Which social media platforms are frequently preferred by students?
- How long do students spend on social media per day?
- What are the purposes of students using social media?
- Is there a relationship between students' academic achievement and students' social media usage (Purpose and time spent on social media)?

Method

Research Approach and Design

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine students' social media usage and its relation with their academic achievement at Kolfe Keranio Sub-City government secondary schools. Specifically, cross sectional survey design was employed. This design enables the researchers to gather data at one specific moment in a brief period duration (Creswell, (2014).

Sampling Procedure

Kolfe Keranyo sub city had nine public secondary schools. These schools were managed and supported by the same sub-city education administration office. Out of these nine schools, Hidasse Secondary School (HSS), Keranyo Medhaniyalem Secondary School (KMSS), Yemane Birhan Secondary School (YBSS), and Repi Secondary School (RSS) were chosen at random. In the 2024/25 G.C. academic year, the target population consisted of 10,603 students from four selected secondary schools. From this target population a sample size of 386 was determined. It was statistically justified at 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. For this purpose, Yamane's (1967) formula was employed.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where, n=required sample size

N= population size

$e =$ margin of error (5%)

$N = 10,603$

$$e = (0.05)^2 = 0.0025, \text{ then } n = \frac{10,603}{1 + 10,603(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{10,603}{27.5075}$$

$$n = 385.45 \approx 386$$

$$n = 386 \text{ respondents}$$

Accordingly, 386 student respondents were selected by using simple random sampling techniques proportionally from the selected schools such as Hidasse Secondary School (HSS), Keranio Medhaniyalem Secondary School (KMSS), Yemane Birhan Secondary School (YBSS), and Repi secondary school (RSS). Thus, the proportionality formula was $a = \left(\frac{S}{T}\right)n$

Where, $S =$ Number of students in one school

$T =$ Target Population

$n =$ Sample size derived from Yamane's formula

$a =$ Sample size from each school,

Accordingly, the number of respondents from each school was calculated as follows:

$$\text{HSS} - \left(\frac{1660}{10,603}\right) 386 = 60.43 \approx 60$$

$$\text{KMSS} - \left(\frac{2459}{10,603}\right) 386 = 89.51 \approx 90$$

$$\text{YBSS} - \left(\frac{1377}{10,603}\right) 386 = 50.12 \approx 50$$

$$\text{RSS} - \left(\frac{5107}{10,603}\right) 386 = 185.9 \approx 186$$

$$\text{Total} - 60 + 90 + 50 + 186 = 386$$

Data Type and Data Gathering Instruments

Quantitative data were collected by using structured questionnaires. Closed ended Likert-scale type questionnaire was used to collect data about preferred social media platforms and purposes of using social media. The scales were five which range from never (1) to always (5); in between rarely (2), sometimes (3) and often (4) were included. Respondents were made to label themselves on how frequently they use social media platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Skype, Telegram, Viber, Messenger, WhatsApp, Imo, Twitter, YouTube, and other platforms. Concurrently, they also requested to label themselves based on their recurrent practice of using social media for education, entertainment, news and communication.

Regarding time spent on social media, respondents were asked to select the length of time that each of them commonly take for watching social media per day. The alternatives were labeled as follows: 1= 'less than 1 hour', 2= '1-2 hours' 3= '2-3 hours', 4= '3-4 hours and 5='more than 4 hours'. Besides, document review was employed to collect 2024/25 first semester students' academic achievement (results out of hundred percent) from the schools' record offices. Students' results were labeled into six categories: $1 = < 50$, $2 = 50 \leq x < 60$, $3 = 60 \leq x < 70$, $4 = 70 \leq x < 80$, $5 = 80 \leq x < 90$, $6 = \geq 90$

Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the Likert-Sclae type instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.782, indicating acceptable dependability. According to generally established criteria, a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.7 is generally regarded acceptable. A value between 0.7 and 0.8 indicates that the items have relatively high internal consistency and are appropriate for further examination (Cronbach, 1951). Besides, the instruments' content validity were checked for their clarity and relevance by three experts (two from psychology and one from education).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency and mean were used to describe preferred social media platform, purposes of using social media and time spent on social media. Furthermore, relationship between students' social media usage (purpose and length of time) and their academic achievement was analyzed by calculating Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r).

Ethical Consideration

All information gathered throughout the study was handled with confidentiality and used exclusively for academic purposes. Participants were requested to give their consent to take part in the study, and the researcher was present to address any inquiries they might have had. Participants had the option to exit the research at any moment without facing any consequences. Nevertheless, they were morally obligated not to supply misleading information or partake in dishonest actions (Howard, 2024).

Results and Discussion

Preferred Social Media Platforms

This research discovered that YouTube, TikTok, and Telegram were the most frequently utilized platforms, while Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger and Twitter were less used. (See Table-1)

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Social Media Platforms

| Social Media platform | Preference Level | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|------|--------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|--------|------|
| | Never | | Rarely | | Sometimes | | Often | | Always | |
| | f | p | f | p | f | p | f | p | f | p |
| Facebook | 297 | 76.5 | 59 | 15.3 | 20 | 5.2 | 3 | 0.8 | 7 | 1.8 |
| Snapchat | 169 | 43.8 | 109 | 28.2 | 49 | 12.7 | 23 | 6.0 | 36 | 9.3 |
| Instagram | 137 | 35.5 | 72 | 18.7 | 70 | 18.1 | 43 | 11.1 | 64 | 16.6 |
| TikTok | 64 | 16.6 | 77 | 19.9 | 51 | 13.2 | 78 | 20.2 | 116 | 30.1 |
| Skype | 352 | 91.2 | 19 | 4.9 | 7 | 1.8 | 5 | 1.3 | 3 | 0.8 |
| Telegram | 41 | 10.6 | 68 | 17.6 | 51 | 13.2 | 82 | 21.2 | 144 | 37.3 |
| Viber | 346 | 89.6 | 19 | 4.9 | 14 | 3.8 | 5 | 1.3 | 2 | 0.5 |
| Messenger | 238 | 61.7 | 75 | 19.4 | 40 | 10.4 | 19 | 4.9 | 14 | 3.6 |
| WhatsApp | 259 | 67.1 | 75 | 19.4 | 31 | 8.0 | 14 | 3.6 | 7 | 1.8 |
| Imo | 212 | 54.9 | 92 | 23.8 | 52 | 13.5 | 13 | 3.4 | 17 | 4.4 |
| Twitter | 310 | 80.3 | 37 | 9.6 | 23 | 6.0 | 7 | 1.8 | 9 | 2.3 |
| YouTube | 45 | 11.7 | 68 | 17.6 | 74 | 19.2 | 84 | 21.8 | 115 | 29.8 |
| Other platforms | 99 | 25.6 | 99 | 25.6 | 96 | 24.9 | 65 | 16.8 | 27 | 7.0 |

Note: f= frequency; p= Percentage

The table reveals distinct usage patterns across various social media platforms among the 386 respondents. YouTube, TikTok, and Telegram stand out as the most actively used platforms. On the contrary, platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, IMO, Twitter, Skype, Viber, Instagram and Snapchat were largely underutilized by the majority of students in the study area.

These findings are consistent with the results of Kimo and Gemechu (2022) study which says that among urban Ethiopian high school students, video-based and instant messaging platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Telegram were far more popular than traditional platforms such as Facebook and Skype. Similarly, Abebe and Melesse (2022) reported that TikTok has shown a sharp rise in popularity among Ethiopian

teenagers due to its short-form video content and viral trends, whereas platforms like Facebook were viewed as outdated and more commonly associated with older generations. However, these findings contradict earlier studies. For instance, Muluye (2019) found that Facebook and WhatsApp are dominant platforms among Ethiopian students. This shift highlights a rapid evolution in platform preference over the past few years, likely driven by changing content trends, mobile app innovation, and peer influence.

Purpose of Using Social Media

The study's findings indicate that students were utilizing social media mostly for academic purposes ($M = 3.56$, $SD=1.216$), followed by communication ($M=3.33$, $S.D =1.376$), entertainment ($M=3.26$, $SD=1.247$), and News ($M=2.38$, $SD=1.292$). Accordingly, Table-2 illustrates that the majority of students used social media platforms for educational purposes. That is 218(56.5%) of students often and always use social media for education purposes. Consequently, next to educational purpose 190(49.2%), 177(45.9%) and 82(21.3%) of students often and always utilized social media for communication, entertainment and news, respectively.

Table 2: Purposes of Using Social Media

| a | Extent | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------|------|--------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|--------|------|
| | Never | | Rarely | | Sometimes | | Often | | Always | |
| | f | p | f | p | f | p | f | p | f | p |
| For entertainment | 29 | 7.5 | 96 | 24.9 | 84 | 21.8 | 98 | 25.4 | 79 | 20.5 |
| For education | 25 | 6.5 | 56 | 14.5 | 87 | 22.5 | 112 | 29 | 106 | 27.5 |
| For communication | 43 | 11.1 | 85 | 22.0 | 68 | 17.6 | 82 | 21.2 | 108 | 28.0 |
| For news | 124 | 32.1 | 109 | 28.2 | 71 | 18.4 | 47 | 12.2 | 35 | 9.1 |

Note: f = frequency; p = percentage

This trend aligns with the findings of Teketel et al. (2025), who reported that secondary school students in Addis Ababa increasingly use social media platforms to access educational content, including video lessons, exam preparation materials, and peer support discussions. Their study also indicated that students viewed social media as a useful supplement to formal education, particularly when physical classroom access was limited. In contrast, Melaku (2025) found that the use of social media for communication and entertainment ranked high among high school students in urban Ethiopia. Besides, Table-2 explains that students use social media for the purpose news at lower level. But, in developing countries such as United States of America students commonly use social media platforms for updating themselves by accessing

news and global events. The discrepancy may be attributed to differences in the perceived credibility of news content from social media.

Time Spent on Social Media and Its Relationship with Students' Achievement

Regarding time spent on social media, Table-3 shows that 30.1% (116 students) spend for more than 4 hrs. Per day. This is followed by 29.3% (113 students) for 1 to 2 hrs., 23.1% (89 students) for 3 to 4 hrs., 16.1%(62 students) for 3 to 4 hrs., and 1.6% (6 students) for less than 1 hrs.

Table 3: Time Spent for social media per day

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| less than 1 hour | 6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| 1-2 hours | 113 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 30.8 |
| 2-3 hours | 62 | 16.1 | 16.1 | 46.9 |
| 3- 4 hours | 89 | 23.1 | 23.1 | 69.9 |
| more than 4 hours | 116 | 30.1 | 30.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 386 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Coming to the correlation analysis, Table-4 displays a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.128$, $p = 0.012$) between the overall daily utilization of social media and students' academic achievement in the study area regardless of the purposes of social media used. Even though the effect size is small (Cohen,2013) and $r^2 = 1.6$ indicated that time spent on social media explained only 1.6% of the variance in students' academic achievement, the result implies that how often students use social media significantly influences their academic achievement. Similarly, studies conducted by Junco (2011) and Wang et al. (2021) reported a significant negative correlation between time spent on non-academic social media and academic achievement. Their findings suggested that excessive use for entertainment detracted students' concentration on education and academic results. In addition, Zeleke and Kibret (2022) revealed that irrespective of purpose time spent on social media has negative on students' academic performance. Likewise, Setena (2023), Afework (2023); Tesfay et al (2023); and Alemayehu and Alamiraw (2023) have revealed that students' academic achievement is negatively associated with time spent on social media, while Assefa. Moges and Kumar (2023) noted positive relation between the two variables. This is supported by Neuman's (1988) time displacement theory that shows social media displaces study time and cognitive engagement needed for academic success.

Table 4: Relation between overall usage of social media and Students' Achievement

| | | time spent per a day | 2017 E.C 1st semester academic result |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| time spent per a day | Pearson | 1 | -.128* |
| | Correlation | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .012 |
| 2017 E.C 1st semester academic result | N | 386 | 386 |
| | Pearson | -.128* | 1 |
| | Correlation | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .012 | |
| | N | 386 | 386 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regarding the relationship between purpose of using social media and students' academic achievement, the study found that weak positive relationship ($r=0.065$) and not significant ($p=0.200$). Accordingly, the relation between each social media utilization purpose and students' academic achievement was not statistically significant, and it was also notably weak: for news ($r=0.026$, $p=0.604$); for education ($r=0.020$, $p=0.697$); for communication ($r=0.024$, $p=0.645$) and for entertainment ($r=0.093$, $p=0.068$). However, Al-Rahmi et al. (2020) found that structured and purposeful use of social media for learning and knowledge sharing have a significant positive impact on academic achievement.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that social media has become an integral part of students' daily lives, with a significant amount of time devoted to various platforms. The study reveals that students preferred video-oriented platforms like TikTok and you tube than old types of platforms like Facebook. Though, most students primarily use social media for educational purposes, its relation with students' achievement is very weak. Similarly, whatever purposes attached with the usage of social media the relation with students' achievement remains very weak and statistically not significant. Nonetheless, the lack of a strong correlation might also indicate the impact of other factors like teaching effectiveness, study habits, parental engagement, or socio-economic circumstances that were not addressed in this research. However, the study revealed that, regardless of its purpose, excessive time spent on social media tends to negatively correlate with students' academic achievement. Those who spend prolonged hours on social media regardless of its purpose experience difficulty in maintaining focus on their learning which can lead to lower grades (Teketel,2025).

Hence, Students would benefit from study time by minimizing time on non-academic social media. This implies balanced and purposeful use of social media can serve as a valuable educational tool; while excessive use hinders students' academic success. Therefore, promoting digital literacy and time management skills among students is essential to ensure that social media supports educational goals.

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