

Impact of Social Media Use on Academic Performance of Students': The Case of Regular 3rd & 5th Year Law Students' in Oromia State University, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This action research identified and addressed negative impacts of social media use on 3rd & 5th year regular law students' academic performance in the school of law, Oromia State University. This action research used a mixed approach, which means quantitative and qualitative research approach. To support the research, information relevant to the action research were gathered from both primary and secondary data. Primary data collected from the law students' of the study area, thirty law students'. Secondary data collected from previous studies, literatures, documents, books, and electronic materials related to the study. The instruments for data collection are interview, observation (participatory), review of previous studies and analysis. Quantitative data analyzed by using descriptive statistical methods such as summation, averages, and percentages. The qualitative data analyzed and interpreted thematically against the research questions. Before action taken by the researcher law students' of the study area mainly use social media like face book to communicate with friends, to post their photos, and for entertainment. They use Tik Tok to watch videos mainly for entertainment. They also use you tube for entertainment. They invest a short time for academic purpose in social media. After the series follow up law students were able to use social media for academic objectives, as opposed to merely for entertainment or social interaction. In addition the follow-up proofed progressive development of behavior of law students from using social media for entertainment, conversation, and enjoyment to using it for academic purposes.

Keywords: Academic objective, Impact, Social Media, Law Students'

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1. Introduction

To shed light on the positive and negative sides of using social media networks in general, as well as discover its impacts on Oromia State University 3rd & 5th year law school students' academic performance, existing studies were reviewed.

Studies found out that academic outcome of students who spent most of their time interacting using social media are positive because they were able to share and generate ideas and concepts related to their studies. They also use these sites for having fun as these social media sites are helpful in their academic work.¹

A similar study revealed that online social media had improved the communication between the faculty member and students which facilitate the communication of the correct information and improve understanding and the development of the ideas and the courses. Based on the information collected, it is noticeable to say that the use of the social media during the lecture time is not recommended.²

Some researchers concluded in their study that a social media platform has a significant impact on students' academic performance in Malaysia tertiary institutions. Nevertheless, among the six variables used in their study, time appropriateness and health addiction has a stronger significant influence on students' academic performance. This is because time management plays an essential role in determining the success and failure of an individual. Thus students who lack time management can easily fall prey to the negative impact of social media. Likewise, health and addiction, students who are engrossed with social media platforms ends up skipping meals which has

¹ Amin, Z., Mansoor, A., et.al (2016). Impact of Social Media of Student's Academic Performance. International Journal Business and Management Invention, 5(4), pp. 22-29

² Abousaber, I.o, Oueder, M. (2018). A Study on the Impact of Social Media Usage on Student Academic Performance: University of Tabuk an Example. American Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, and Sciences (ASJETS), 40(1), pp. 77-88

health impact.¹

According to another study, it was revealed that the use of social media had affected the academic performance of their respondents negatively and further confirmed that there was a strong positive relationship between the use of social media and academic performance. Their study further revealed that most of their respondents use social media sites to chat rather than for academic purpose.²

In another related research on the issue, it was found that social media usage on weekly basis displayed a positive skew where most students do not use social media excessively. Respondents in their study felt that time management and football were factors that contributed towards negative academic performance besides excessive social media use.³

Study in Kogi State University found out that the exposure of the students to social media has effect on their academic performance. Evident show that social media have negative influence on the academic performance of students. Students who spend more time on social media are likely to perform poorly in their academics this is because instead of reading books, they spend time chatting and making friends via social media and this will definitely have negative effect on their academic performance.⁴

Another study shows that students are not only affected by social media, employees and employers too. A U.K. firm released a study showing that people who use Face book, Twitter and other social networks while at work extracts a heavy cost on their employers.⁵

According to Kolan and Dzakza⁶, the nature of social media as a useful servant but a dangerous master and a two-edge sword has been revealed in the findings of the study. Despite the benefits that students can harness from social media networks such as sharing of information, building relationship, partaking in group discussion, there is to some extent addiction and distraction of attention caused by the use of social media which could have serious consequences on the academic life of students. One of the negative effects of social media is piracy. The primary motivator for Australians of all ages illegally downloading movies and TV shows is that it is free.⁷

Finally, according to the findings of another research, social media a tool that could be used for good or bad, it all depends on the person. Social media has its layers of good and bad. Yes, it is easier to remember the bad rather than the good but, social media sites have created opportunities for people all over the world.⁸

From the findings of various researches conducted on the impacts of social media on academic performance of students, as been reviewed and presented in the above paragraphs, one can clearly understands that using various social media platforms can either negatively or positively affect the academic performance of students. All most all students in Oromia State University spend many hours on social media platforms and internet. For instance, Face book, Tik Tok has isolated students in terms of communication because they spend most of their time on social media instead of using it to engage discussion forums, assignment and research work. The major theme of this particular action research was therefore, to clearly identify and address the negative impact of social media usage on the academic performance 3rd & 5th year law students in Oromia State University.

2. Objective

The objective of this particular action research is to clearly identify and address the negative impacts of social media usage on the academic performance of 3rd & 5th year law students in Oromia State University.

The specific objectives of this research are the following:

- To assess time spent on social media by 3rd & 5th year law students' in school of law, Oromia State University.
- To identify positive and negative impacts of using social media by 3rd & 5th year law students' in school of law, Oromia State University.
- To address the negative impacts of using social media on 3rd & 5th year law students' academic performance in school of law, Oromia State University.

¹Mensah, S., Nizam I. (2016).The impact of social media on students' academic performance – a case of Malaysia Tertiary Institution. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Training*, 1(1), pp. 14-21

²Owusu-Acheaw, M., Larson, A. (2015). Use of social media and its impact on academic performance of tertiary institution students: A study of students of Koforidua Polytechnic, Ghana, *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(6), pp. 94-101

³Alwagait, E., Shahzad, B. (2014). Impact of social media usage on students' academic performance in Saudi Arabia, *Computers in Human Behavior*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.09.028>

⁴Asemah, S., Okpanachi, R. (2013). Influence of social media on the academic performance of the undergraduate students of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(12), pp. 90-96

⁵ Reuters. (2009). Study: Face book, Twitter Use At Work Costs Big Bucks. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/urnidgns852573c4006938800025765b00619a idUS399557440920091026>.

⁶Kolan, B., Dzakza, P. (2018). Effect of social media on academic performance of students in Ghanaian Universities: A case study of University of Ghana, Legon, *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1637>

⁷Research into the online behavior and attitudes of Australians in relation to movie and TV piracy (2013).Intellectual Property Awareness Foundation. <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=1bff7481-b92a-4bc7-a2e7> Retrieved from

⁸Landry, T. (2014). How Social Media Has Changed Us: The Good and The Bad. Retrieved from <https://returnnonow.com/2014/09/how-social-media-has-changed-us-the-good-and-the-bad>

3. Research questions

- a. How much time do 3rd & 5th year law students' spend using social media?
- b. What are the positive and negative impacts of using social media by 3rd & 5th year law students'?
- c. What type of measures taken to address the negative impacts of using social media on 3rd & 5th year law students' academic performance?

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Description of the Study Area

The Oromia State University School of Law is a study area. Undergraduate and post graduate programs are offered by the school of law in regular and weekend sessions at both the headquarters and its branches. The law school also provides free legal aid as part of its community outreach efforts. This study focused on third & fifth year regular law students. There are thirty, third & fifth year regular law students in total.

4.2 Research Design and Approach

This action research used a mixed approach, which means quantitative and qualitative research methods. Descriptive research design applied to get concrete result. To support the research, information relevant to the action research were gathered from both primary and secondary data. Primary data collected from 3rd & 5th year law students' of the study area. Interview with purposefully selected thirty (30) regular 3rd & 5th year law students' were conducted. Secondary data collected from previous studies, literatures, documents, books, and electronic materials related to the study.

The instruments for data collection are interview, observation, review of previous studies and analysis. To gather data for the three research questions, interview, observations, review of previous studies and analysis were used. The interview questions are for the law students'. The interview contains several questions to gather information from the law students'. The interview questions contain clear and simple questions that enable the law students' to provide accurate information. Each question in the interview is intended to answer the research questions. Personal observation which is participatory was used because the researchers are instructors of these law students'. Quantitative data analyzed by using descriptive statistical methods such as summation, averages, and percentages. The qualitative data analyzed and interpreted thematically against the research questions.

5. Scope and Delimitation

The study focused on identifying and addressing negative impacts of social media on students' academic performance. Specifically the action research focused on law students who are using social media through checklist interview. The interview check list is for fourth & fifth year regular law students'. This study limited only on the variables of social media users.

6. Significance of the Study

Social networks are becoming more popular among university students and are a new way of spending free time and serve as a separate channel for finding the necessary information, both educational and entertaining. Therefore, it is urgent to examine the question of what the impact of social media have on their followers, in particular, how the use of social networks affects the academic success of students. This study discovered this information, giving the researchers an opportunity to explore and gain new knowledge. Furthermore, it can be used for future studies.

7. Structure of the Study

The study is organized into three major parts including the introductory part discussed above. The second part discusses the positive & negative impacts of using social media, & measures taken to address the problems on academic performance of third & fifth year regular law students based on the data collected and analyzed. The third part is conclusion.

8. Presentation, analysis, interpretation of data, findings and Actions for problems

This part presents the data gathered, the analysis and their interpretation based on the questions raised in the study. The total numbers of interviewees' are thirty; twenty six (26) male and one (4) female. The interviewees' responses are evaluated based on the following parameters.

Table 1 Total number of interviewees' from 3rd & 5th year regular law students'

No	Sex	Dep't	Year	Program	Number of interviewees'	Total
1	Female	Law	3 rd & 5 th year	Regular	4	4
2	Male	Law	3 rd & 5 th year	Regular	26	26
						30

Source: Survey 2024

8.1 Time spend by 3rd & 5th year regular law students in social media

A huge number of individuals today don't speak to their lives without every day visits to interpersonal organizations, draw data from the news sources of internet destinations, convey through remarks from different networks, and so forth.¹ For the number of hours spend by interviewees' on social media question number one (1) of the interview question addressed this.

The frequency of social media users spend on average 3 – 5 hours per day in social media is fifteen (50%); twelve (40%) spend 1 – 3 hours per day; three (10%) spend more than six hours per day. The largest part of interviewees' uses social media 3 – 5 hours per day.

Table 2 Time spend by third (3rd & 5th) year regular law students in social media

No	Time spend in social media per day	Number	Percent (%)	Total
1	3-5 hours	15	50	15
2	1-3 hours	12	40	12
3	More than 6 hours	3	10	3
				30

Source: Survey 2024

These law students' mainly use social media like face book to communicate with friends, to post their photos, and for entertainment. They use Tik Tok to watch videos mainly for entertainment. They also use you tube for entertainment. They invest a short time for academic purpose in social media.

8.1.1 Steps done to change habitual behavior

The research team set up assignments for consecutive five days in a row to help them manage their time and determine when and why to use social media. The assignments were especially for the eighteen law students who used social media for a long period of time every day. The research team set up a schedule and venue for executing the assignments in order to successfully implement a plan to control their time of using social media. One of the assignments is to shift use of social media for leisure purposes, such as endless chats, to using it for academic purposes. They were instructed to use social media to find and read content related to the courses they are taking this semester. The assignment was completed in the classroom, not at home, with appropriate follow-up provided by the research team during morning and afternoon sessions, each lasting two to three hours with tea break. The five-day follow-up proved to be fruitful.

Law students were able to use social media for academic purposes, as opposed to merely for entertainment or social interaction, by virtue of the assignment and it's follow-up. The research team developed questions for these students from the subject criminal law II course for the following round, which took place over two days. They were permitted to use social media to search for sources while doing the assignment in class to ensure proper follow-up. Actions taken by the research team alter behavioral pattern as to the use of social media. After realizing the significance of social media for academic purposes, the law students started to allocate a significant amount of time for academics. They started to plan a short period of time to visit friends, entertainment, and engage in other like activities via social media.

Table 3 Time spend in social media by 3rd & 5th year law students after the follow up

No	Purpose	Time spend in social media per day	Number of interviewees	Percent	Total
1	Academic	5 – 7 hours	27	90	27
2	Non Academic	1 – 2 hours	27	90	27

Source: Survey 2024

8.2 Impacts of social media on law students' academic performance

According to the results of survey, it was found that nineteen (63.4%) revealed that they don't encounter any problem due to social media usage; eleven (36.6%) revealed that social media has negative impact on their academic performance. These interviewees' revealed that sometimes they don't have time to make assignment or study because they had long been on social media.

Table 4 Impact of social media on 3rd & 5th year law students' academic performance

No	Impacts of social media	Number of interviewees'	Percent	Total
1	Positive	19	63.4	19
2	Negative	11	36.6	11
				30

Source: Survey 2024

As conclusive remark, the social media impacted either positively or negatively the academic life of interviewees'. All most all interviewees' cannot leave their mobile phone even during class session.

¹Gilbert M. Talaue et al., The impact of social media on academic performance of selected college students, International journal of advanced information technology (IJAIT) 8 (4/5): 32 (2018)

8.2.1 Measures taken to alter behavioral pattern as to negative impact of using social media

The research team scheduled discussion over the course of consecutive six days in response to the interviewees' revelations regarding the negative impacts of social media use. The discussion took place for two to three hours per day with tea break. The objective of the discussion is to change the interviewees' perception that social media negatively affects their academic achievement. A brief lecture on how, why and when to use social media was given to the interviewees' in order to accomplish the objectives.

The lecture directed the interviewees' to practice using social media for a longer time for academic purposes, such as searching up academic materials to read, searching for academic materials to do assignments, watching academic videos, and so on, and to use it for short time for leisure, chatting with friends, or other activities. Following the consecutive lectures, the research team proofed progressive development regarding the interviewees' positive perception as to the impact of social media use. This indicates that interviewees' have progressively changed from using social media for entertainment, conversation, and enjoyment to using it for academic purposes.

8.3 Post follow up benefits obtained using social media by law students'

After the follow up the interviewees' agreed as they are satisfied of using social media for academic purposes. The interviewees' said that after the follow up we started to spent a lot of our time to use social media for searching and reading academic materials, to discuss with fellow students, search relevant materials to do assignments, project works, researches and others similar activities, and watching academic videos. This is in line with today's science and technology advancement which confirms it is important to use the new technology tools of social media compared to the traditionally methodology which impedes opportunities in learning activities.¹ Social media have free web application that enhances communication and learning.² Students have experienced positive impact from social media tools for learning which has enabled them to carefully choose important information which can assist them for academic purposes.³ They are able to utilize valuable information through the availability of relevant sources on their platforms which are readily available.⁴ Students are able to do their research effectively by using libraries in the internet they can also be able to evaluate and synthesize the information easily.⁵

Table 5 Post follow up benefits obtained using social media by 3rd & 5th year law students

Category	No of interviewees'	Percent
Disagree	3	10
Strongly agree	27	90

Source: Survey 2024

Table 5 indicates that 27 (90%) of law students strongly agree that social media positively impacted their academic purpose, and 3 (10%) disagree that social media positively impacted their academic purpose.

9. Conclusion

Based on the findings, social media becomes an integral part of law student's full life, took up most of their spare time.

Before action taken by the research team law students' of the study area mainly use social media like face book to communicate with friends, to post their photos, and for entertainment. They use Tik Tok to watch videos mainly for entertainment. They also use you tube for entertainment. They invest a short time for academic purpose in social media.

After the series follow up by the research team law students were able to use social media for academic objectives, as opposed to merely for entertainment or social interaction. After realizing the significance of social media for academic purposes, the law students allocated a significant amount of time for academics. They planned a short period of time to visit friends, entertain, and engage in other like activities via social media.

A brief lecture on how and why to use social media was given to the interviewees' in order to alter behavior about negative impact of using social media. Following the lecture, the research team proofed progressive development of behavior of law students from using social media for entertainment, conversation, and enjoyment to using it for academic purposes.

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¹Id (n) 13 at 82

²Id

³Id

⁴Id

⁵Id

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