EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMNACE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THIKA MUNICIPALITY, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

Signature: .... Date: ....

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L40/89939/2016

This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I would like specially thank my parents Juliana Wambui Waweru and Morris Ndegwa Waweru. My Siblings Eva Watiri Waweru, Duncan Ndegwa Waweru, Regina Gathoni Waweru and Joshua Kimani Waweru to whom I dedicate this work.

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

BAKE- Bloggers Association of Kenya

Wi-Fi – Wireless Fidelity

TTTI – Thika Technical Training Institute

MKU – Mt. Kenya University

AIHT – Amboseli Institute of Agriculture and Technology

ABSTRACT

The purpose for this study was to investigate the effects of social media on students' academic performance of students in tertiary institutions within Thika municipality, Kiambu County in Kenya. The study was guided by three research objectives. This include to find out level of exposure of this learners to social media, what the students use social media for and how social media has enhanced learners' interaction and performance in tertiary institutions within Thika municipality, Kenya. Past studies reveal that students use social media mostly to make friends and chat. Other studies also reveal there to be a negative relationship between social media use and academic performance, grammar and spelling. The study employed descriptive research design. A questionnaire and observation method was used to collect data. The target population was any student in a tertiary institution within Thika Municipality, Kenya. Researcher developed a survey questionnaire that contained section A demographic data and section B with 25 items. A pilot study was carried out and findings used to improve the clarity of some questions in the questionnaire. A sample of 245 respondents from tertiary institutions within Thika municipality was selected using the stratified sampling technique. The researcher identified the various departments within Thika Technical Training Institute, Mount Kenya University, Gretsa University and Amboseli Institute of Hospitality and Technology which were selected for the study, issued the questionnaires and collected the data. After data collection, the results were analyzed with the use of a spreadsheet package i.e. Ms. Excel and the result shown in frequency distribution tables corresponding percentages. The researcher observed there to be free wifi accessibility within the institutions and that the learners were quite active on their phones during break time. The study revealed that students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality use social media platforms mostly through smartphones. WhatsApp social site was found out to be the application that supports academic activities than the rest. It also revealed that the students' spend most of their time on this sites during which they could be studying. Due to this, the students perform poorly academically. A majority of the students agreed that they get some kind of satisfaction from visiting the social sites. They also agreed that they mostly use social media for socialization purposes. A higher number of the students disagreed that social media affects their performance and that it negatively affects their English language and spelling. Study also revealed that the students are unaware of the effects of spending a lot of their time daily on social media sites. The study recommends that the students should spend less time on social media site and be counselled on how to use social media for educative purposes. It also recommends that teachers should incorporate devices such as laptops or tablets when giving instruction so that the students can learn from them how to use electric devises for educational purposes. Lastly, the study recommends that the government of Kenya should revise their policies on social media usage especially for the youths.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A social media site is an online platform that a user can sign up, create an account, make friends, communicate, receive news, share information and keep up with their friends' day to day lives. (Techopedia, 2018) The user can then make more connections and control what content the online friends are able to see. This sites keep the users entertained and informed.

The roots of social media stretch many centuries ago. This has been fueled from the need for families and friends to communicate over long distances to strengthen their relationships. The earliest method of communication was delivering written documents door to door. Then postal service was introduced in 550 B.C. and the telegraph in 1972. The discovery of the telephone in 1980 and the radio in 1981 made communication easier across long distances. (Sauvik Das, 2016)

The social media site to be invented first was called six degrees (Hendricks, 2013). This site allowed people to create accounts and befriend other of its users online. It also allowed those who dint have accounts to do the same. Six degrees was highly used between 1997 and 2001. From this era followed the era of online blogging and direct messaging.

Social media site hit its stride in 2002 when Friendster was launched. One year after it launch, Friendster had over 3 million users. Friendster now only exists as an online gaming system. In 2003, LinkedIn was introduced as a professional social media site. Later in 2003 Myspace was launched. It became very popular with the younger generation. It inspired websites like Facebook which is popular today. In 2005 YouTube became live. Later in 2006 Facebook and Twitter were also launched.

There are a variety of social media sites today and many of this sites allow for cross-posting. This includes Facebook, twitter, Instagram, snapchat and WhatsApp. This sites have made communication to be much faster and economical, have successfully connected people from all

corners of the world and have improved educational research among other advantages. However, this is not without any shortcomings. Social media sites have exposed people to online bullying, unrealistic expectations of life and most evidently, time wastage.

Social media subscription in Kenya has increased over the past years. This includes for both personal use and business marketing use. Business have found a way to utilize the social media sites as that's where their buyers are. Social media is fast and effective in transmitting adverts and information. The social media population in Kenya is increasing. According to a report "State of the Internet in Kenya 2017" released by the Bloggers Association of Kenya. (BAKE, 2017), Social media usage in Kenya was as shown below;

Table 1: Social media usage in Kenya

PLATFORM	MONTHLY USERS
Whatsapp	12 million
Facebook	7.1 million
YouTube	8 million
Instagram	4 million
LinkedIn	1 million
Twitter	1 million
Snapchat	0.25 million

A large percentage of this users are the Kenyan youth that is, ranging between 18 to 35 years of age. It is at this age that learners are engaged in institutions of higher learning after completing their secondary education. The youth are known to be heavy users of social media. At this age the level of freedom is very high as they are mostly away from their parents. With the high penetration of mobile phones, it is increasingly hard to control or to know what social activities they engage in. The youth are also the most vulnerable to social media negative effects.

Consumer insight study found out that there is a very high consumption of smartphones in Kenya more so among the younger generation. The use of smartphones has surpassed the use of

computers by 42%. The rate of accessing the internet using mobile phones falls at 93%, using computers at 5% and by use of tablets at 2%. (Consumer Insight, 2018). The respondents were also asked for what reason they mostly used the internet for, 55% said to use it for educational purposes.The rest 45% which is a high number still for other reasons but education. So the question is, if not for educational purposes what is the youth using the Internet for? Could be for entertainment, passing time etc. But then again, how much is enough. The Internet has endless content in which one can spend an entire lifetime, never catching up.

In tertiary education institutions within Thika municipality, the students are not an exception. The students can be seen to be on their mobile phones most of the time during their classroom break time or while moving around the town. The Wi-Fi availability anywhere within the school compound, most restaurants within the town and on some cases inside public transport vehicles increases their social media usage. Teachers have been known to complain on students' submission of stolen course projects and business plans as their own which is fueled by use of the Internet. Therefore, depending on for what purpose and for how long, social media usage is somehow related to the academic performance of students in tertiary education institutions within Thika municipality, Kiambu County in Kenya.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The internet today is powerful in communication. Use of the internet and social media today cannot be underestimated. The youth indulgence is extremely high hence the use of the same by students in tertiary institutions cannot be neglected. Studies show that learners give more consideration to social sites than to their studies. We know that the only way that learners can pass is if they spend time studying. Failure to study will cause poor performance. (Osharive, 2015). A study carried out by (Maya, 2015), revealed that social media use lowers academic performance and leads to less attention to school oriented activities.

A lot of concern is put on excellent academic performance because of the important role it plays in a person's life. Because of this, a lot of individuals are keen with the way that they can improve academically (Kyoshaba, 2009). Past studies reveal that social sites affects learners use of English. Students tend to use short form of words and mnemonics to chat with friends and

when this becomes habitual, they replicate the same in their academic work and examination, causing them to fail. (Obi, 2012).

Parents are worried of the effect social media could have on their children. It is known that many students use smartphones daily. Today the youth are heavily engaging in social media use. This includes the students in tertiary institutions. This research therefore sought to find out the level of subscription and use of social media by students at the tertiary level of education in Thika Municipality, Kiambu County, Kenya into social media sites and then determine the effect on their academic work.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to assess students' use of social media and to find out its impact on students' academic performance in tertiary education institutions in Thika Municipality, Kiambu County, Kenya.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the level of exposure of students to social media sites in tertiary academic institutions in Thika Municipality, Kenya.
2. To ascertain the use of social media among students in tertiary academic institutions in Thika Municipality, Kenya.
3. To establish how the use of social media has enhanced leaners interaction in tertiary academic institutions in Thika Municipality, Kenya.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were drawn to guide the study based on the research problem;

1. What is the level of exposure of students to social media sites in tertiary academic institutions within Thika Municipality Kenya?
2. What do the students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality use social media for?
3. How has the use of social media influenced the learners' interaction in tertiary academic institutions within Thika Municipality?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Findings from this study in relation to tertiary academic institutions within Thika Municipality, Kenya would be of great relevance to students, researchers, parents, teachers and all the various bodies that would be interested for one reason or the other.

For instance, findings from this study will enable trainers, teachers and school administrators to be aware of effects of social media on their students. With this, they can be able to know what the learner needs in terms of Wi-Fi availability, adequate computers as well as counselling sessions on social media use.

The study will also equip academicians and stakeholders of education in Thika Municipality and rest of Kenya with information of how they can encourage constructive use social media in schools to improve students' performance as it is the primary goal of educational institutions.

The Kenyan government armed with this information can also be able to come up with policies and regulations of social media use for the best interest of the society. For example, cyberbullying, posting nude photos, spreading wrong information/news and encouraging negative acts is punishable by law in some countries.

Also, the society will be more aware of the various social media sites, their uses, children involvement, what signs parents should look out for to ensure that their children are safe online and still perform academically to the best of their ability.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Among the drawbacks is that students of tertiary education institution come from different backgrounds and social class. Those from the middle and high class are able to acquire electronic gadgets e.g. laptops, smartphones, tablets hence have access to the internet. The students from low class families might not have the privilege of this resources hence they might not be able to relate with the research questions and may lie.

Other limitations that may arise are misplacement of questionnaires by the participants, erroneous filling of opinion poll or some of the participants not filling the questionnaires at all.

1.8 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study assumes that all the students in tertiary academic institutions within Thika Municipality are familiar with social media and have access to at least one of the applications.

The study also assumes that the respondents to be chosen by the researcher from any of the tertiary institution within Thika Municipality are a representative of the entire Municipality.

Lastly, the study assumes that the researcher will receive the necessary cooperation from all the respondents and that they shall fill the questionnaires truthfully.

1.9 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AS USED IN THE STUDY

Social media sites: This are platform that lets people to make accounts and connect with others. After the connections are established, the users can share information for educational, marketing or entertainment purposes. They are also known as social networking sites. Examples include; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat.

Education: This is the issuance of instruction from teacher and student so that the student acquires knowledge, skills and attitudes. Education can be formally in a classroom or informally from day to day activities e.g. playing, socializing, use of social media etc.

Academic performance: This is a way to know whether a student has achieved objectives set by the teacher/instructor after instruction or how much of short or long term goals in relation to their education they have accomplished. This can be measured through the use of oral tests, continuous assessment tests or examinations.

Tertiary education institutions: This are institutions that offer vocational or professional courses after completion of high school. They cover a period of one to seven years. They include

certificates, diplomas, bachelor's degrees, post-graduate diplomas, masters programs and doctorate programs. Also referred to as postsecondary education.

1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one covers the background of study area, the problem statement, the purpose for the study, study objectives, research questions, significance of study, its limitations and assumptions and definition of terms used the study.

Chapter two is on review of literature where past studies relevant to the study objectives are discussed,

Chapter three consists of the research methodology used in this study, which details the methods that will be adopted to ensure that valid and reliable data is collected.

Chapter four presents data analysis, presentation and interpretation whereas

Chapter five gives the summary and conclusions from the study. It also provides recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION OF LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter we get to research and discuss on other people's findings related to our study. This reviews are from studies in the past covering different regions and different kinds of educational environment. Social media is a global tool, so the youth from anywhere are engaging in it. We seek to see their findings and how we can use them in our research.

2.2 EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

"By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in man – body, mind and spirit."- Mahatma Gandhi, the educationist. We can define education as the process of giving and receiving particular knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. To evaluate the efficacy of learning, assessment is done regularly and individual students' performance can established.

Over the years, education has evolved due to new technologies. This includes online learning which enables learners to study without being physically in a class. Students can undertake different courses from great distances and even do the exams online. Quality of classroom learning has improved as use computers, projectors and internet as an academic research tool.

The dependent variable for our study is the academic performance of the students. External factors may affect students' academic performance. This includes learning facilities, proper guidance, family issues and social media usage among others.

2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND EFFECTS

Technology is growing immensely and is causing major changes in the world. Barriers in communication have fueled new technologies and new ways to allow for communication globally. Social media sites have become popular and are in use in every corner of the world. However this comes with a series of concerns as they are also very popular with students.

Findings from the 4 most popular social media sites are as below;

2.3.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social media site where people can share photos, video, messages It allows users to create groups, events, pages among others. (Rouse, 2014). Facebook is also available in 37 different languages. Facebook is the most effective way to keep up with classmates from primary and secondary schools.

Facebook serves as a socialization tool. (Golder, S.A., Wilkinson, D. and Huberman,, 2007) Many people and in our case, students in tertiary institution have Facebook accounts and spend a majority of their time online. (Gail Salaway, Judy Caruso ,Mark Nelson and Nicole Ellison , 2018).

In contradiction, according to (Pasek J., More E., Eszter H., 2009) A positive effect of Facebook on academic performance was identified. This study revealed that the best students academically tend to be online for longer time periods.

2.3.2 WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a smartphone based social site. It uses the internet to send messages, pictures, audio and video clips. WhatsApp has progressively replaced instant messaging. It also operates at a lower cost than direct messaging. WhatsApp can also be used on the computer desktop however the phone has to be connected to the desktop too fro it to operate. This application is popular with teenagers due to features like sharing in groups, voice note messages and 24 hour status updates. (Webwise, 2018)

As discussed earlier, there were 12 million WhatsApp users as of 2017. Mostly, the youth. Therefore it is important to discuss how this has affected education globally or in Kenya. A report by (The Star, 2018) claimed that WhatsApp may have fueled the unrest in schools experienced in 2018 across Kenya. This is after students manage to sneak mobile phones into schools. This students within a certain locality form groups on WhatsApp through which they communicate and plan strikes. This then affects their academic performance.

In tertiary institutions, mobile phones are allowed so it is not illegal. But WhatsApp is known to be the major communicating tool for this students and it is a very powerful communicating tool. In tertiary institutions students of one class are encouraged to form a WhatsApp group by their course tutors on joining the institution. This is where any information about classes, homework and discussion on a class concern etc. is shared.

2.3.3 Twitter

It lets people communicate by sharing short messages to a maximum of 140 characters. It is like a microblog (Goel, 2018)

In Kenya the hashtag #KOT – Kenyans on Twitter, is very popular. It is used by Kenyans when discussing matters political, development, education, health, government, health etc. affecting Kenyans. Twitter has a more mature following. Although, students from universities and colleges are known to share funny memes on current occurrences here. They have to spend a considerable amount of time catching up and making memes. Therefore, twitter use might affect students' academic performance.

Some teachers have used twitter for academic activities. A study was conducted and Twitter was discovered to be a tool for which educators strongly felt could be used in the future for classroom instruction (Haythornthwaite, 2016). It ranked before any other social media site.

2.3.4 Instagram

Instagram is smartphone based social media site made specifically to allow user to share photos and videos only. It is fast growing in its sign up. 3 months after its launch in 2010, the site had 1 million users. By June 2016 the number of users had risen to 500 million. The majority of its users are between ages 18 and 19 years according to a study by the Pew Research center (Rahim, 2017)

2.4 OTHER RELATED LITERATURE

Studies have been conducted over the years that depicted an effect of the sites on academic performance of learners. Some of the factors to put into consideration are such as duration of use, time of use, nature of use among others.

A research study discovered that most students' use social media sites for socialization purposes rather than for academic purposes (Oye, 2012). A school is a socialization agent. However, it is not the main purpose for students seeking tertiary education. This would mean that social media is a time waster for students.

Elsewhere, a study done by (Shana, 2012) revealed that students mostly sign up to social sites to make friends and chat. According to this study only 26% of the learners said to use social sites for academic reasons.

A study carried out on universities in the United Kingdom discovered there to be a negative correlation between Facebook and the students' performance. (Madge C., Meek J. and Wellens J., 2009). The study did not however cover which students were using the application and at what time they were using it. The research findings were restricted due to the fact that the study sample was homogenous.

Another study, (Pasek J., More E., 2015) discovered that Facebook use had a positive impact on students' performance. They found out that students who had higher grades used Facebook more frequently. Also, (Paul J. A., Baker H. M. and Cochran J. D., 2012) suggested there to be a negative effect on performance by spending too much time on social sites.

Internet use has been found to cause physical and mental health issues which greatly affects a person's quality of life. According to (Akhtar N., 2013) addiction to the internet due to excessive use among students' can cause academic issues. He suggested that internet addiction can lead to student spending less time studying, poor performance, lack of engagement on out of class activities and lack of interest to be in class.

A research by (Orodho, 2003) to determine uses and gratifications of internet among university students in two specific institutions found out that the university students use internet to communicate with their friend's partner(s) for example boyfriend, girlfriend or spouse that is in regards to socialization only.

There have been contradicting research findings on social media effect on students' performance. But this could be due to different external conditions from the learners' environment. We can only rely on other people's findings as a pathway for our case study. Our research objective is to find out the effect of social media sites on the academic performance of students in tertiary academic institutions in Thika Municipality, Kenya and to determine its impact on students.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Formulation of theories is done to help one understand existing knowledge or happenings. Theoretical framework tries to explain the reason as to why the study problem is in existence (Swanson, Richard, 2013). This will help in understanding various concepts that are related to our study problem. The uses and gratification theory will be the base for our study.

2.6 USES AND GRATIFICATION THEORY

It focusses on the reasons why individuals use certain media. This theory was brought about in 1974 by Elihu katz., Michael Gurevitch and Jay Blumler. One of the implications of this theory is that individuals use certain media so as to get some gratification. The users of this media have several options to choose from by use of criteria of which of the available options satisfy their personal needs. (Uwem, 2013) suggested that while people are suing the different media, they try to customize their experience so that they are able to fulfill their gratifications.

This is the case for social media sites too. The uses and gratification approach is a good base for our study. Social sites have a wide range of provisions from which different users are able to use and satisfy their needs (Uwem, 2013). This point of view will help researcher to understand what gratification the target population under study seek to fulfill, whether the needs are met and what impact the student acquires from the use of the social media site.

2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

| Facebook |
| WhatsApp |
| Instagram |
| Smapchat |
| Twitter |
| YouTube |
| Tumbler |
| Skype |
| Pinterest |
| LinkedIn |
| Telegram |
| Reddit |
| Flickr |
| Myspace |
| Viber |

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

| Students' academic performance |

MODERATING VARIABLES

| Time appriateness |
| Time duration |
| Nature of usage |
| Addiction |
| Age influence |
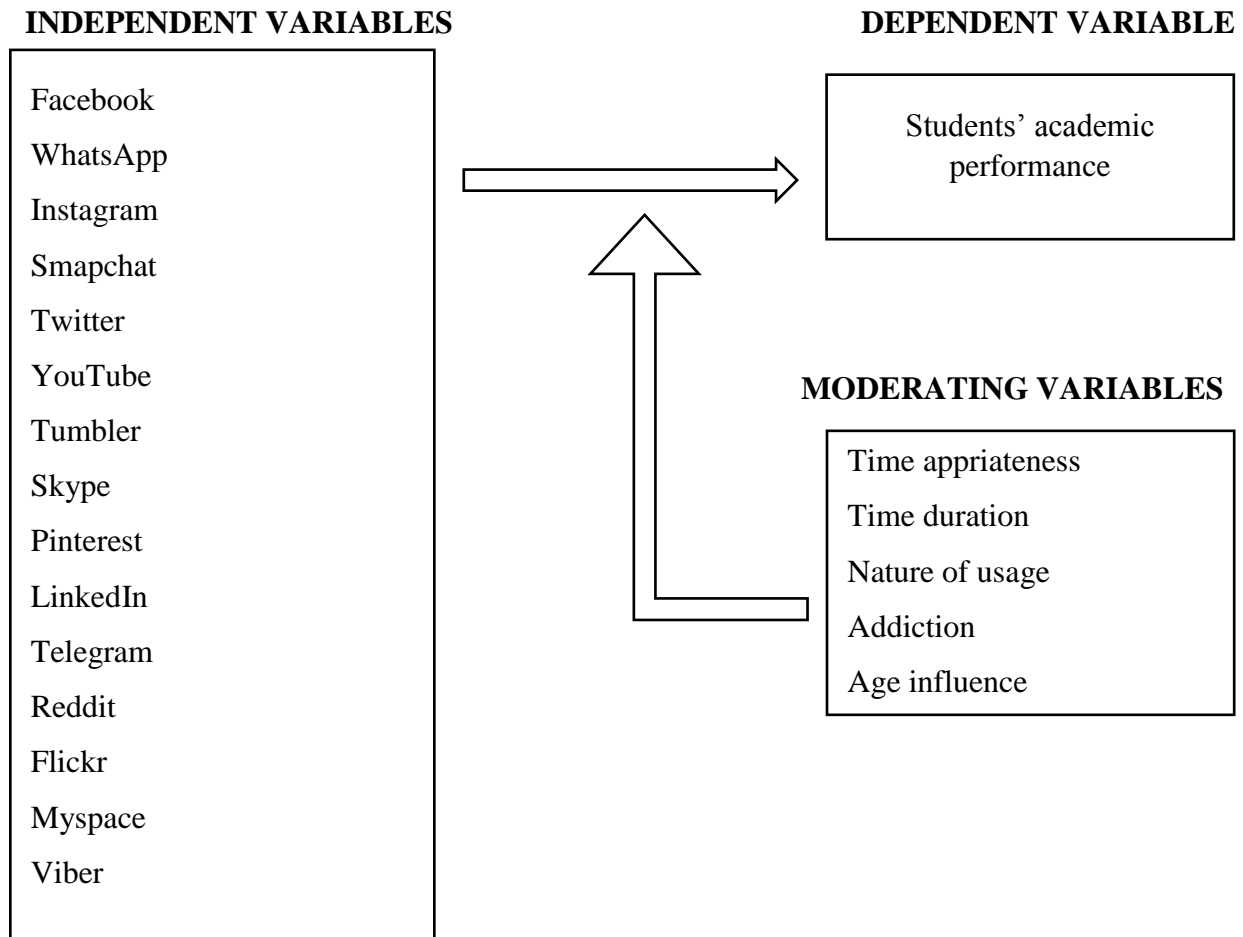
Figure 1: Conceptual framework

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives the details of the study approach. It describes the targeted population, the sample size and sampling technique to be used. The instrument used to collect the data is also described as well as how reliability and validity will be accomplished. Also, it consists of data collection procedures and how the data will be analyzed.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The strategy that is chosen on how to the different components of the study are integrated in a logical manner, ensuring that one addresses the problem under study is known as a research design. It consists of a guideline on data collection, measurement and analysis (nyu, 2009).

The descriptive research design is used for this study. It concerns the current status. It describes "what exists" with relation to the variables in a situation. Descriptive research design consists of three methods: survey methods, case study methods and survey methods.

Researcher used both survey and observation descriptive methods.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

Target population is the entire group of people from which the researcher is interested to make a conclusions about their study (explorable, 2009). The target population has different characteristics and usually, it is not possible to carry out the study on the entire target population so a generalization has to be made. It is also known as the theoretical population.

This study was conducted in Thika Municipality which is in Thika town constituency, Kiambu County Kenya. Thika is an industrial town in Kiambu County. According to (Worldpopulationreview, 2018) Thika Municipality has a population of approximately 200,000 people. The target population shall be any of the students in the tertiary education institutions within the Municipality accredited by the authority. The student population varies depending on

facilities within the respective institutions. The student population is approximately 50,000. There are several tertiary education institutions in Thika Municipality as in this link: https://www.kenyaplex.com/colleges/colleges-by-location/thika

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

3.4.1 SAMPLE SIZE

A research population is the entire target population from which data needs to be collected. A sample is chosen from the population. The characteristics of this sample is taken as a representative of the entire population. The sample size refers to the number of units from the target population from which the research data is collected.

For our study we used the following formula to get the sample size. (Qualtics, 2018) This equation is most appropriate when the target population size is very large and exact population size is unknown.

Appropriate sample size = (z-score)^2 × Standard deviation × (1-Standard deviation)/(margin error)^2

Hence using a 5% significance level, a standard deviation of 0.2 and a margin error of +/- 5%.
Using the Z- score table 95% gives us 1.96.
$((1.96)^2$ x 0.2(1-0.2)) / $(0.05)^2$
(3.8416 x 0.16))/0.0025
= 245.8624

We truncated to 245 respondents.

245 students from the tertiary academic institutions in Thika Municipality were selected and their response used in the study.

3.4.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A stratified sampling technique was used. Stratified sampling is a technique whereby the researcher classifies the target population into groups called strata. Then, a simple random sample from each of the strata is selected. Data is then collected and analysis done from the sampled strata. (stattrek, 2018)

The targeted population i.e. students in tertiary education institutions in Thika Municipality were divided into strata. In our research we categorized the strata by sex and department within the different tertiary education institutions.

Table 2: Sample distribution by sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	125	51.02%
Male	120	48.98%
Total	245	100%

Table 3: Sample distribution by department

Department	Frequency	Percentage
ICT	60	24.49%
Business	60	24.49%
Mathematics	60	24.49%
Sciences	65	26.53%
Total	245	100%

Table 4: Sample distribution by Tertiary education Institution in Thika Municipality

Tertiary institution	Department	Female frequency	Male frequency	Total	
				Frequency	Percentage
Mt. Kenya University (MKU)	ICT	8	7	60	24.49%
	Business	8	7		
	Mathematics	8	7		
	Sciences	8	7		
Gretsa University	ICT	8	7	60	24.49%
	Business	8	7		
	Mathematics	8	7		
	Sciences	8	7		
Thika Technical Training Institute (TTTI)	ICT	8	7	60	24.49%
	Business	8	7		
	Mathematics	8	7		
	Sciences	8	7		
Amboseli Institute of Technology and Hospitality (AIHT)	ICT	8	9	65	26.53%
	Business	8	9		
	Mathematics	8	9		
	Sciences	5	9		
Total		125	120	245	100%

3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Data for this study was collected using two method; Distribution of questionnaires and also through recording of observations.

a) Questionnaire

The instruments selected for this study is constructed by the researcher and are related to study objectives.

The instrument contains section A (demographic data) and B(study data). Section A is made up of four items measuring the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent. Section B is made up of 25 items which consist of closed questionnaires and Linkert scales.

The questionnaire will be administered by the researcher. The participants will be asked to respond to each items.

b) Observation

The researcher will also visit the study institutions to observe and record about;

 i) Wi-Fi availability for the students within the institutions.

 ii) Students' interaction with their phones during break hours.

Information observed will be recorded and used afterward to arrive at a conclusion.

3.6 PILOT TESTING OF THE INSTRUMENT

The first draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor.

The Second draft was then be tested on a small pilot sample of respondents from the target population. Researcher will pick 10 respondents who represent 4.08% of the entire study sample.

From their feedback, some improvements were done where necessary before the actual study.

3.6.1 VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Validity is defined as the extent to which the interpretations of the results of the study test are relentless. Validity checks whether the test serves the purpose for which it was intended to serve. The questionnaire designed was then vetted, corrected and approved by the project supervisor before it was distributed for data collection.

3.6.2 RELIABILITY OF THE INSTUMENT

The reliability of the instrument refers to evaluating the instrument measures stability, consistency and the dependability of instrument scores.

The reliability of the research instrument was determined using a test retest method whereby researcher will administer the same test twice with an interval of two weeks. The test was administered to the pilot sample of respondents selected for so as to acquire the desired information for the study.

3.7 PROCEDURE

The researcher went to each respective institution selected for the study and identified the various departments and respondents. Then, collected the required data by use of questionnaires and observation method.

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher. A total of 245 copies of the printed questionnaire were distributed to get responses from the sample students and after collected on the spot by the researcher. Some of the irregularities that occurred during data collection were corrected immediately. Respondents were each given between 20-30 minutes to fill the questionnaires.

The researcher also recorded observed data on an observation form. The response rate is to be representative of the sample. Data was to be collected during lecture hours for efficiency.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

The collected data was subjected to editing and entry tasks/activities to ensure accuracy, consistency and completeness. This study was to be based on both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

The spreadsheet package i.e. Ms. Excel was used to analyze the collected data and results displayed in frequency distribution tables inclusive of percentages

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The respondents were not be required to identify themselves on the questionnaire. This anonymity and impersonality is expected to in no doubt enhance the rate of return of the questionnaire and objective response.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows the data collected and tries to discuss and interpret it in relation to the study objectives. Descriptive statistics are used to analyze collected data.

4.2 GENERAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4.2.1 Response rate

Table 5: Response rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaires returned	245	100%
Questionnaires not valid	0	0%
Total	245	100%

The study was conducted on 245 respondents who are students in tertiary academic institutions within Thika Municipality, Kenya. All the 245 questionnaires issued were returned and were valid. Therefore the response rate was 100% of the sampled respondents. This was possible due to the fact that the researcher issued the questionnaires during class time and offered help where needed to understand each question. The respondents were also very cooperative. This implies the data collection procedure was very effective.

4.2.2 Gender distribution

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	120	48.98%
Female	125	51.02%
Total	245	100%

Of the 245 questionnaires received 125 are by female respondents and 120 are by male as was planned for the research.

4.2.3 Respondents age

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by age.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
17-20	47	19.18%
20-25	182	74.29%
26 and above	16	6.53%
Total	245	100%

74.29% of the respondents lied between 20 to 25 years. This implies that most students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality lie between this ages.

4.2.4 Level in tertiary institution

Table 8: Respondents level in tertiary institutions

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Year 1	50	20.41%
Year 2	82	33.47%
Year 3	63	25.71%
Year 4	50	20.41%
Total	245	100%

20.41% of the respondents were in year 1 of tertiary education, 33.47% in year 2, 25.71% in year 3 and 20.41% in year 4.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Table 9: Respondents accessibility to the internet

Access to the internet	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	245	100%
No	0	0%
Total	245	100%

Of the 245 respondents, the whole 100% of them had access to internet. Although the access could be through different means i.e. smartphones, cyber or personal computers. This implies that in one way or another all the respondents have access to the internet.

Table 10: Device used by respondents to access internet

Device	Frequency	Percentage
Smartphone	221	90.20%
Computer	24	9.80%
Total	245	100%

The research found out that 90.2 % of the respondents mostly use smartphones to access the internet. This is highly because smartphones are becoming progressively affordable by the day. A large percentage of students in tertiary institution are in possession of them. Some of the respondents within the 90.2% could also use computers sometimes. While the remaining 9.8 % used mostly computers in a cyber café or personal computers. Also among the 9.8 %, some could be due to loss of smartphone in recent past and were trying to secure a new one.

This implies that most of students in tertiary institution within Thika Municipality have smartphones, hence were aware of and could easily install and use the mobile enabled social media sites

Table 11: Respondents registered accounts on social media

Social media	With accounts		Without accounts		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage

platforms						
Facebook	215	87.76%	30	12.24%	245	100%
WhatsApp	228	93.06%	17	6.94%	245	100%
Twitter	182	74.29%	63	25.71%	245	100%
Instagram	189	77.14%	56	22.86%	245	100%
Snapchat	121	49.39%	124	50.61%	245	100%

For this particular question, the respondents ticked on every box where they have an account. The option they did not have an account with was left blank. The research found out that over 87.76% respondents had Facebook accounts though some did admit to be inactive on the platform i.e. not frequent users. They admitted to peak in once in a while as it is the most convenient way to keep in touch with old friends and family whose phone contacts they don't have. The research also found out that 93.06% of the respondents have WhatsApp accounts. This high number is highly attributed to the high number of students with smartphones in our earlier finding.

Researcher noted that WhatsApp has become a popular method for sending messages other than the traditional direct messaging method. This is because it provides other features such as WhatsApp status, sending document, pictures, videos, audio calls and video calls unlike the older methods. This makes WhatsApp the most popular with subscription among the respondents. 74.29% of respondents had twitter accounts. This lower percentage is because twitter is more popular with a more mature population. 77.14% of the respondents had Instagram accounts. Snapchat which is also popular with the female gender had 43.39% of respondents' accounts.

Note: Respondents had different accounts depending on personal preference. Each and every respondent had at least one of the social media accounts.
This implies that there is a very high percentage of social media use among students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality.

Table 12: Social media frequency of use

Social	Extremely	Very Often	Often	Rarely	Not at all	Total

media site	often										
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Facebook	14	6.51%	76	35.35%	98	45.58%	16	7.44%	11	5.12%	215
WhatsApp	29	12.72%	128	56.14%	59	25.88%	9	3.95%	3	1.32%	228
Twitter	9	4.95%	27	14.84%	86	47.25%	26	14.29%	34	18.68%	182
Instagram	14	7.41%	25	13.23%	83	43.92%	46	24.34%	21	11.11%	189
Snapchat	2	1.65%	28	23.14%	16	13.22%	68	56.20%	7	5.79%	121

Note: This was based on only the respondents with the respective registered social media accounts.

Of the respondents with accounts on different social media accounts, 35.35% on Facebook users, 79.18% on WhatsApp, 60% on twitter, 63.67% on Instagram and 35.1% on snapchat admitted to be frequent and active users.

This implies that Facebook and WhatsApp are the leading social media sites in terms of activity among the respondents in Thika Municipality. This also implies that due to the privacy and ease of access that smartphones provide, it is very easy to get distracted by the social sites as notifications are sent to your phone. So it very hard for a day to go by without logging into the social sites.

Table 13: Time spent on social media daily

Time in hours	No of respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	32	13.06%
1-2 hours	115	46.94%
2-3 hours	78	31.84%
More than 3 hours	20	8.16%
Total	245	100%

As per the findings, most of the respondents spend between 1 to 3 hours daily on social media platforms. This is quite a lot of time considering that they have to study too. For most

respondents, during the day are in for classes. They have a few breaks during the day. Most by 5.00 pm are free.

So what activities are they engaging in after classes? This time that they spend online on social media sites is mostly in the morning before classes and in the evening after classes. Social media has a lot to keep them entertained and to pass time if they don't have to study or do assignments.

This implies that the students spend a considerable amount of time on social media sites other than studying after classroom learning. This can be detrimental to their academic performance. Students have different capabilities and strengths. There are those who are able to grasp everything during classroom learning. Others require to do personal studies on the same in order to understand and comprehend. The later would be disadvantaged if they spent most time on social media than reading. Also the distraction that social media brings may cause one to forget learnt material easily.

Item 9 sought to find out whether using mobile phones increases the time the students spent online. The study found out that the respondents were in agreement that smartphones increase the time they spent online this is due to its mobility.

Item 10 sought to find out whether the respondents sleep late or wake up early so as to spend more of their time on social media. Majority of the respondents admitted to the act.

Table 14: Specific purpose for social site visit

Specific purpose to visit social media site	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	226	92.24%
No	19	7.76%
Total	245	100%

A majority of the respondents i.e. 92.24% admitted to visit social media with a specific purpose. Only question is what is this specific purpose?

According to uses and gratification theory discussed earlier, people use social media to get certain gratification. So the specific purpose could be to satisfy a certain need. This need is discussed in the next section.

Table 15: Satisfaction from social site visit

Satisfaction from social site	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	224	91.43%
No	21	8.57%
Total	245	100%

91. 43 % of the respondents admitted to get satisfaction from visiting social media sites. When asked why, most stated reasons such as ability to interact with others (socialize), learn new things and know current affairs.

This is in line with a research by (Orodho, 2003) whose intention was find out what gratification the internet provides for students in Mt. Kenya University and Gretsa University in Thika Municipality found out that the university students use internet to communicate with their friend's partner(s) for example boyfriend, girlfriend or spouse that is in regards to socialization only.

Table 16: Purpose for social media use

Social media use	Frequency	Percentage
Academics	16	6.53%
Socialization	229	93.47%
Others	0	0%
Total	245	100%

93.47% of the respondents admitted to use social media for socialization purposes other than for academic reasons. This is the majority of the entire population.

This implies that most students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality use social media mostly for other purposes other than for educational purposes.

Table 17: Time on social media versus on studies

More time on social media rather than studies	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	77	31.42%
No	168	68.57%
Total	245	100%

A majority of the respondents disagreed that they spend too much time on social media than on studies. They could have understood that this also included the classroom learning hours. However from our earlier findings we found that the majority of the students spend between 1 to 3 hours daily on social media sites. This is quite a long period of time and is bound to affect their performance negatively.

Table 18: Social media site supporting academic work

Social site	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	12	4.90%
Twitter	6	2.45%
WhatsApp	189	77.14%
Instagram	10	4.08%
Snapchat	0	0%
Other	28	11.43%
Total	245	100%

The study found WhatsApp to be the social site that the students feel supports their academic work more. This is because they are able to form academic groups within the application where they can share course materials, notes, and other relevant information to their academics.

WhatsApp is also a platform where distance learning groups can be able to stay abreast with information regarding their course, assignments, institution news etc.

The students are encouraged by their teachers to form this WhatsApp groups immediately they join the institutions for easier communication.

Some of the respondents stated Gmail and YouTube to be the applications that support their academic work more. It is however good to note that Gmail is not a social media site but an emailing site. YouTube is a social site from which subscribers only post videos. YouTube can have very highly educational videos. However it requires a lot of data bundles to watch a single video which the students cannot easily afford unlike WhatsApp. WhatsApp is affordable and user friendly.

Table 19: Social media effect on spelling and English language

Social site effect on English language & spelling	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	81	33.06%
No	164	66.94%
Total	245	100%

A majority of the respondents disagreed with that using social media sites affects their spelling and English language negatively.

Item 23 was concerned with finding out the level of academic performance of the respondents. It was discovered that a large portion of the respondents claimed to have average academic performance. This could be due to the fact that they feel that they could probably perform better where it for some other external or personal conditions. Could social media sites be one of them? Of the 245 respondents, 207 (84.49%) agree that social media does have an impact on their academic performance. The other 38, disagreed with the claims.

Table 20: Kind of impact of social media on academic performance

Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	154	74.40%
Negative	53	25.60%
Total	207	100%

Of the 207 respondents, 74.40% of the respondents agreed that social media has a positive impact on them in relation to academic performance.

Table 21: Perform better if not for social media

Perform better with no social media	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	66	26.94%
No	179	73.06%
Total	245	100%

A majority of the respondents admitted to have average academic performance. This means that they feel and know that they can perform better than they do. However, when asked if they think they can perform better if they stopped using social media, a 73.06% of the respondents did not think that stopping using social media would improve their academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a summary of the research findings and makes conclusions. Then, it gives recommendations on what should be done about the study problem. Lastly, it gives suggestions for further research from the basis of the study results.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose for this research study was to determine the impact of social media sites on academic performance of students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality, Kiambu County, Kenya.

The first objective of this study was to find out the level of exposure of students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality to social media sites. In relation to this the study found out that all the respondents have access to the internet in one way or another through smartphones or computers.

The study reveals that the students mostly use their smartphones to access the internet and social media sites. This is fueled by the affordability of the smartphones. This smartphones increase accessibility to the social media sites as they are mobile.

The study also found out that each one of the respondents has signed up on at least one of the social media sites.

The second objective was to find out what the students within tertiary institutions in Thika Municipality use social media for. The study revealed Facebook and WhatsApp to be the most popular social media sites among the respondents in terms of account sign up. WhatsApp is in the leading position.

The study also reveals the most frequently used social sites to be WhatsApp and Facebook respectively. WhatsApp has more subscribers than Facebook among the respondents and it is

also the most frequently used. WhatsApp is more smartphone based than computer based so this could be the reason why. It has replaced direct messaging due to the added features it brings.

The study also revealed that most students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality use social media mostly for entertainment purposes rather than educational purposes.

Lastly the study sought to find out how the use of social media has enhanced leaners interaction in tertiary academic institutions in Thika Municipality, Kenya. The study found out that;

Majority of the students spend most of their time while not in class on social media sites. This is the time that personal learning should be taking place. In learning we know that practice makes perfect. According to the theories of learning and forgetting, we know that learning goes through a series of stages. Information is kept in the short term memory for a while and then with constant practice it is stored in the long term memory. Information in short term memory is easily forgotten due to decay or displacement. (Anderson J.R, 2000) Social media materials can easily displace learned material with so much time dedicated to it. So if students dedicate most of their time to social media than learning it is expected that this will affect their performance negatively.

The study also found that the students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality not only spend considerable amount of time on social media but also use the platforms mostly for socialization rather than educational purposes. This without a doubt leads to poor academic performance.

The study also found out that the students stay up late and wake up early so as to use social media. This could be due to what was also discovered in the study that, they are usually trying to satisfy a need to interact with others and they feel as if they are missing out on something if they don't catch up with the latest from their friends.

The study reveals that it is around this teen age of an individual that one is excited by the thrill brought about by social media sites. Therefore this age bracket within tertiary institution is likely to be more susceptible to the negative effect of the same. And hence, affect their studies.

The study also found the students' to be suffering from addiction to social media. This means that social media has become a "necessity" to day to day life of the learners demanding for their attention, time and financial resources which are required more at this level to their education.

Also, the study found out that some social media sites promote academic group work, sharing of resources with fellow classmates and also act a communicating platform with the lecturers. WhatsApp was found to be the social site that supports academic work more because it not only provides all the resources discussed, but is also provides affordable and user friendly platform for both students and teachers.

The findings reveal that social media does indeed have a negative effect on the students of tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality indirectly in a manner that the learners are unaware of. This is mostly influenced by the amount of time the students spend on social sites other than on academic activities.

The findings also reveal that students, at any level of the education system in Kenya, who use social media are more likely to perform poorly academically than those who do not.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the conclusions made in this study, the recommendations can be;

i. Students should decrease the amount of time they spend surfing on social media sites so that they can focus on their studies.

ii. Teachers should be encouraged and empowered to use technological device such as laptops and tablets so that their students can emulate them in using this devices positively for educational purposes.

iii. The researcher recommends that students in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality should be given constant counselling and guidance by their teachers and parents on how to use social media for educative purposes. This goes for all students at any other level in the Kenyan education system.

iv. Social networking sites should be developed in a way that they enhance academic activities in order to avoid setbacks in the students' academic performance.

v. The government of Kenya should review their internet use policy for its citizens, especially for the youth.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher has the following suggestions for further study;

i. The impact of WhatsApp on the process of education in tertiary institutions in Kenya should also be researched.

ii. Researcher recommends an in-depth study of how social media sites can be incorporated in learning activities should be carried out.

iii. Researcher recommends for the study of a particular student over time in controlled conditions in consideration to two instances; before and after they begin to use the social media sites.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

The following booklet contains questions which are part of a research about the effects of social media to students' academic performance in tertiary institutions within Thika Municipality, Kiambu County, Kenya. The information given will be handled with confidentiality.

Please tick with a (√) in the box with the appropriate response.

Thank you.

SECTION A (DEMOGRAPHIC DATA)

1. What is your sex?

   ☐ Male

   ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

   ☐ 17-20 years

   ☐ 20-25 years

   ☐ Above 26 years

3. In what department are you?

   ☐ Information Communication Technology

   ☐ Business

   ☐ Mathematics

   ☐ Sciences

4. In what academic level are you in this institution?

   ☐ Year 1

   ☐ Year 2

   ☐ Year 3

   ☐ Year 4

SECTION B (STUDY DATA)

1. Do you have any access to the internet?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

2. What device do you mostly use to access the internet?

   ☐ Smartphone

   ☐ Computer

   ☐ Other (Specify)..

3. Are you aware of any websites you can make friends and socialize (social media sites)?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

4. Which of the following social media sites are you aware of?(You may tick more than one option)

   ☐ Facebook

   ☐ Twitter

   ☐ WhatsApp

   ☐ Instagram

   ☐ Snapchat

5. Are you a registered member of any social media site?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

6. Which of the following social media sites are you a registered member? (You may tick more than one option)

   ☐ Facebook

   ☐ Twitter

   ☐ WhatsApp

   ☐ Instagram

   ☐ Snapchat

☐ Other (specify)..

7. How often do you use the social media sites?

Social media site	Extremely often	Very Often	Often	Rarely	Not at all
Facebook					
Twitter					
WhatsApp					
Instagram					
Snapchat					

8. How much time do you spend on social media sites in a day?

☐ Less than 1 hour

☐ 1-2 hours

☐ 2-3 hours

☐ More than 3 hours

9. Do you feel using mobile phones to access social media sites increases the time you spend online?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Have you ever stayed up late or got up early to spend more time on social media sites?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. Do you visit social media with specific purpose?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. Do you find satisfaction when you use social media?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes. Why?..

If no, why?..

13. What purposes do you mostly use social media for?

☐ Academics

☐ Socialization

☐ Other (Specify)..

14. Do you spend more time on social media sites than you spend on your studies?

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. Do you feel that social media is a distraction to your learning activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Do you think using social media sites is posing any negative effects on your studies by any means?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

17. Do you think using social media has any positive effects on your studies?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

18. Does social media provide a useful platform for academic group work?

☐ Yes

☐ No

19. Do you use social media to communicate to lecturers (or tutors) for academic purposes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

20. Do you use social media for spreading knowledge and information to your classmates?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. Which social media site do you think supports your academic work more?

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter

☐ WhatsApp

☐ Instagram

☐ Snapchat

☐ Other (specify) ....

22. Does social media affect your spelling when writing examination as well as your English language negatively?

☐ Yes

☐ No

23. How is your academic performance?

☐ Excellent

☐ Average

☐ Poor

24. Do you think social media sites have an impact on your academic performance?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If Yes, What kind of an impact is it?

☐ Positive

☐ Negative

25. Do you think you can perform better if you stop using social media?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank you for your participation