



## Full length article

## Pattern of use of social media networking by Pharmacy students of Kenyatta university, Nairobi, Kenya



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## ABSTRACT

We investigated the use of social media networking among Pharmacy students of Kenyatta University, Nairobi Kenya to understand their use of social media platforms, the type of platform and purpose of use as well as the time spent daily on networking. Questionnaire was used to collect the information and it was found out that Pharmacy students used social media very well to communicate with real and virtual friends but not so much for academic improvement. Majority of the students use Facebook and Twitter for less than 30 min daily but spent longer time on WhatsApp and YouTube applications. In this study WhatsApp was the most popular among the students being used mainly to communicate with real friends unlike the Facebook that was employed mainly to communicate with real and virtual friends. The study showed rational approach to the use of social networking by Pharmacy students as most students carry out social networking during the weekend more than the week days that are laden with school activities.

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## 1. Introduction

One of the factors that influence human behavior is social norms (McLeod, 2008). Socialization has been identified to have a compelling influence on human behavior (Gecas, 1979; Goodman & Jinks, 2004). Technology has been identified as a key modifier of human behavior today (Clarke & Schoech, 1994; Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2011; Steyer, 2015). The advent of computer and internet has changed so much about human behavior (Weimann, 2006; Roudbaraki & Esfidvajani, 2011). For example, social networks give people the opportunity to re-connect with old friends and to make new ones. They are ideal platforms for trade ideas, information sharing, and many other activities. Social networks make it possible for users to stay abreast of the latest global and local developments, and participate in activities of their choice. Politicians, many world leaders and celebrities today are constantly in touch with their audience through social networking on social media such as tweeter, Instagram and Facebook. Professionals use

social media sites to enhance their career and business prospects. One can learn about other cultures and societies by connecting with people in those nation-states. Drawbacks to the use of social networks have been outlined to include addiction, cybercrimes and harassments, decline in productivity. Many introverts and socially reclusive users place too much emphasis on virtual interaction, and ignore the real world outside (Adler & Adler, 2008; Amichai-Hamburger, 2005; Amiel & Sargent, 2004).

Youths have high levels of social need and desires and they actively interact with their environment. These interactions and relationships can result in positive or negative changes in the behavior of the individuals that could have corresponding impact on the academic performance. It has been shown that youth who are mostly students use social media for a number of reasons. Currently numerous social media platforms target the youths and researchers have studied the effect of social media on the youths who are also students and the outcome of such studies are variable (Anurrit et al., 2011; Helou & Zairah, 2014; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2010; Liengpradit, Sinthupinyo, & Anuntavoranich, 2014). A study on thirty undergraduate and Post graduate students that use different social network platforms in Malaysia did not reveal any effect on the academic performance of the students (Banquil et al., 2009; Negussie & Ketema, 2014). Similar studies seeking to

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explore the relationship between the use of social media by the university students and their performance have been carried out in Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia and other parts of the world (Mbodila, Clever, & Kikunga, 2014; Kore, 2014; Negussie & Ketema, 2014).

Alwagait et al. (2015), all indicating that the academic performance of the students was not affected by the use of social media. The researchers were positive on the effect the use of social media by the students as they can exchange information on the platforms that can enhance their academic performance. Some other studies however indicated that the use of social media had negative effect on the academic performance of students (Asemah, Okpanachi, & Edegho, 2013; Okereke and Oghenetega, 2014). All these studies were carried out on students in disciplines other than pharmaceutical sciences. A study at University of Florida on educational use of social media sites by pharmacy students in the University of Florida revealed that social media sites are already being utilized in several ways within Pharmacy education and have the potential to be better utilized (Onge & Hoehn, 2015). The study focused on the educational use of social media in a typical developed country. No study has been carried out in a developing economy that specifically investigated the use of social media networking among Pharmacy students.

In Kenya a study was carried out to correlate self-regulation of Facebook use and academic performance of the students in universities but the study did not target Pharmacy students (Wanjohi, Mwebi, & Naftal, 2015). Medical sciences courses such as Pharmacy, Medicine and Nursing programs are highly demanding on students, requiring time for lectures, practical sessions and practical reporting that little or no time is left for any other thing (Egan, 2013). It is probable that students offering such courses are likely to have little or no time for anything else than those that would improve their academic performance. Study on the use of social media platforms and time spent on such platforms by Pharmacy students in Kenya are non-existent. The aim of the present study was therefore to investigate the use of social media by pharmacy students in Kenya using Kenyatta University students as case study. The objectives of the study were to determine if pharmacy students have time to use social networking, the social platforms that Pharmacy students know and use frequently and the purposes for which the platforms are used. The study also seeks to gain understanding on the time students spend on social networking and the perception of the students on the social media platform that is helping them or could be of help to their academic performance. The outcome of the study would assist in determining whether or not there was a relationship between the use of social media and the academic performance of Pharmacy students. There are six universities that currently offer Pharmacy education in Kenya and Kenyatta University is the second, after University of Nairobi, of the three Government Universities to offer Pharmacy program in the country (Ogaji, Kahiga, Gacuno, & Mwangi, 2016). The university is technology driven and provides modern facilities and infrastructures for internet and communication activities to both staff and students.

## 2. Methodology

The target population in mind was the pharmacy students in Kenya and the source population was drawn from Kenyatta University School of Medicine. The samples for this study were obtained from all the five levels of Pharmacy program and the study participants were the willing students that attended classes on the day the study was conducted.

The cross-sectional survey design was used. The survey questionnaire was developed and administered to Pharmacy students of

Kenyatta University from level 3 to 5 which are the professional levels. Levels 1 and 2 receive their lectures in the basic sciences Departments and could not be reached at the time of administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered in the respective class immediately before lecture. The questionnaire which was written in English Language was self-completed by the students who participated willingly and no incentives were provided for completion of the survey.

The questionnaire collected demographic data such as gender, age, level of study.

Some other questions were asked to understand the usage of social networks among the students e. g What is your most frequently used social media platform. Which of the social media platforms has the most potential to improve your studies, which of the social media platforms do you use frequently? Reasons for use of social media, peak period and daily length of use, categories of people you use social media with, your peak period of social media use, what is your maximum daily time spent on any social network? The choice of the social media platforms included in the questionnaire was based on preliminary investigation on the most popular platforms known to some selected students outside of the Department of Pharmacy of the University. We also made a google search on the widely used social media platforms to arrive at the selected platforms included in the questionnaire. The questions were explained to the respondents by the distributor of the questionnaire.

The retrieved questionnaires were arranged according to level of study, age range of respondents, and frequency of use of social media platforms. Data from the survey was analyzed using simple percentages of the occurrence.

## 3. Result

### 3.1. Demography of respondents

Eighty nine copies of the questionnaire were administered and all were retrieved from the professional year levels 3–5. This represented 47.59% of the total student population of 187 students in the Pharmacy program of the University obtained from the class list. The respondents comprised of 49.5% males and 50.5% females and were between 17 and 35 years with the age range of 17–24 having the highest representation of 74 (83.1%) respondents and age 35 and above had the lowest with one respondent. The distribution of respondents indicated that 29 (32.60%), 30 (33.70%) and 30 (33.70%) were drawn from level 3, 4 and 5 respectively. All the respondents own mobile internet enabled telephones and have access to desktop computers in the university library and student computer centers within the university. Less than 20% of the students had either ipad or laptop of their own.

### 3.2. Social media platforms used in social networking by pharmacy students

Table 1 shows the use of some of the social media platforms by Pharmacy students of Kenyatta University. Use of the social platforms were classified into daily use, use often, use sometimes, will not use, have not used and do not know about the platform. Majority of the students' use of social media platforms was sometimes (23.4%) followed by daily use (21.6%). The results also show that 'Will not use' (18.9%) was higher than 'have not used' (16.18%) which in turn was higher than 'use often' (10.5%). About 10.35% of the responses showed lack of knowledge of the listed social network platforms. Fig. 1 shows that WhatsApp was the most widely used social platform by the students followed by Facebook and Google+. Fig. 2 shows the choice of time Pharmacy students use

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