

Influence of Social Media on Secondary School Students in Garowe

Case Study: Gambool Public Secondary School (GPSS)

High-quality Research Support programme (HQRS)

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1. Chapter one: Introduction

The aim of this research paper was to investigate the influence of social media on secondary school students, and took Gambool Public Secondary School GPSS in Garowe as a case study. The researcher interviewed three GPSS teachers and held two separate FGD with 12 GPSS students. One session was with girls and another with boys. Each involved 6 students. The paper's findings are that social media has an impact on students' performance and interaction with other students as well.

GPSS banned the use of social media by its students as a solution to decrease the impact of social media on them.

1.1 Objectives

The overall aim of the paper is to identify the influence of social media on secondary school students including both positive and negative impacts.

Specific objectives:

The specific objectives of this paper are:

- To identify the negative impact of social media on secondary school students
- To explain how secondary school students mostly use social networks
- To know which mobile social networking applications students visit the most
- To discuss the benefits of social media with the high school students

1.2 Research methods

The researcher has used qualitative research methods for data gathering for this paper. The researcher especially used interviews and focus group discussion to investigate the use and influence of social media on the secondary school students:

1.2.1 Interviews:

The researcher interviewed three lecturers at GPSS. The teachers were asked about the school regulation of the use of social media, its affect to students' educational performance, its opportunities for teachers and other questions – see the interview questions in the annex.

1.2.2 Focus Group Discussion:

During this research the researcher carried out two main focus group discussions (FGD) targeted at students of GPSS. The first FGD targeted 6 boy students from different classes of GPSS. The other FGD was held with 6 girls from the same school. The FGD asked same questions of both FGD sessions: if they use social media; which purpose they use for; how

many times they visit it per day; does the use of social media affect their performance and their education in general and other questions (kindly refer to FGD questions annex at the bottom of the study).

1.3 Importance of the topic:

During the last couple of years, the use of social media has increased especially among students in secondary schools in Garowe and most of the schools banned the use of social media in schools and even the use or carrying of mobile phones by students during school. In many cases, management of the school collected the mobiles from the students and never returned them as punishment. Sometimes they have called the parents and given them the mobiles. Due this situation the researcher thought that it is crucial to investigate why school management are not allowing the students to carry phones and use social media during the school; and on the other side what purpose students use social media for; and what they spent doing most of their time doing on social media.

1.4 Research limitations

The researcher encountered two main challenges during the conduct of this research, which are:

1. Scarcity of resources and previous studies: the research did not find any studies in the Somali context investigating the same topic, and there are challenges to starting from the beginning. However, the researcher was able to find another studies conducted in Nigeria and the USA examining the same or similar questions as this paper examined.
2. Time: the time given to conduct the research for the paper was very short and it was difficult to carry out the research thoroughly during this short period of time. Thanks go to Dr Ann Laudati who helped to prepare solid arguments and questions to investigate the question in the short time which produced this paper.

1.5 Structure of the paper

This paper is composed five chapter as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction

In chapter one, the researcher outlined the structure of the paper, introduction, the importance of the research and its aims.

Chapter two: literature review

Chapter three: Methodology

Chapter four: Content and analysis

Chapter five: Conclusion and recommendations

2. Chapter two: literature review

As mentioned above in chapter one – Importance of the research – there was no research carried out in Somalia, and Garowe in particular, to investigate social media and its positive and negatively influence on secondary school students. It was difficult for the research to find previous studies about the topic especially in the Somalia context. However, the researcher did find similar studies carry out by Nigerian (Anthonia & Aduba Doris) and American researchers (June Ahn, 2011). The Anthonia and Aduba study was focused mainly on gender difference when it comes of use of social media and social media sites. They concluded that social media do not have a positive influence on students, instead it influences negatively in their overall attitude, socially, academically, emotionally and health-wise. June Ahn is focused on adolescents and the use of social media sites and its features. This research considered specific controversial questions including does adolescent participation in social media sites expose them to harm or help them develop relationships? Does social networking site use affect student learning or academic achievement among other questions?

3. Chapter three: Methodology

The data for this paper on influence of social media on secondary school students – using GPSS students a case study- was collected through a qualitative approach. Focus Group Discussion and Key Informative interviews were conducted to collect the data.

3.1 Key informative interviews:

The paper conducted qualitative interviews with teachers as key informants who had in-depth knowledgeable about social media and its effect on educations and students' performance in particular. Each interview lasted for about half an hour.

The three teachers were from GPSS:

Teacher 1: has been a Maths teacher since 2007 and vice principle of the school as well.

Teacher 2: is a Geography and History teacher for the last four years.

Teacher 3: has been teaching Maths for the last two years.

3.2 Focus Group Discussion:

FGD were used to understand the perception of the students concerning social media, how they use it and how it affects their study. FGD focused on students both female and male, from different classes, from first class - Form I - to the last class of the secondary - Form IV. The researcher brought together 12 student in two separate sessions, six boys and six girls, and asked what purpose they use social media for, how much time they spent, the impact of social media and how does social media help in their studies.

4. Chapter four: Discussion and analysis

4.1 Education in Somalia

After the collapse of the central government in Somalia the education sector ended up in the hands of the private sector and was mostly managed by individuals, particularly primary and secondary education. This meant there was an absence of public regulations and policies to regulate the use of technology and other developments of 21th century including how students handle and benefit from the increasing technologies. The school we took as case study was a public school but the school has not enacted a clear policy to handle the increase of social media impacts and the use of social media among the students. The exception is that the school has enacted a regulation, originating with the school's discipline committee, which has totally banned the use of social media in the school environment. The question is, has this ban solved social media problems? The teachers responded during interview 'of course not' as there are a large number of students that use social media in the school.

4.2 Social media and education

4.2.1 Use of social media:

It's difficult to find a direct link between education and social media networks especially in secondary school but, as been revealed by the FGD, most of the students who participated unanimously responded that they use social media networks especially Facebook, (*12 out of 12 said yes we use it*) which is mean that 100% of the participants are using social media. Despite the ban of social media in school, teachers indicated that they have more than two thousand students in GSS school and all or most of them use social networks. But what we do not know is what do the student use social media for? Let is discuss in the coming section: *purpose that students use social media?*

4.2.2 Mostly used social network

The FGD also revealed that the students use different social media networks, some of them use a number of social networks such as Facebook, Whatsapp etc. but mostly spend their time, and frequently use, Facebook 83.3% (*10 out of 12*), while only 16.6% (*2 out of 12*) mostly use the Whatsapp application.

4.2.3 Purpose of using social media:

The students use social media for different purposes: most of them use it as a communication tool to connect and chat with friends and family members around the world. 75% of the participants responded that they use it for chatting.

A small number, 25% of the students, responded to questions 2 and 9 of FGD questions that they use social media for educational purposes through following lecturers and communicating with other classmates to exchange idea and assignments.

4.2.4 Impact of social media:

Both interviewed teachers and students responded that the social media have an impact on education. 100% or 12 out of 12 students responded YES, social media have an impact on our studies in the FGD. Also the students and teachers focused on the negative impact of social media for the students in particular.

Negative influence:

Most of the FGD participants from GSS School unanimously pointed out that the main negative impacts of social media on them is as follows:

1. Time consuming; they are spending most of the time chatting with friends instead of reading and preparing for the exams which is eventually influence their educational performance.
2. Influence on performance: being busy on social media for a long time and especially being busy on it during the class eventually led to a decrease in students' grades and marks. One of the students shared a personal story with me: when he was doing the exams of standard eight, he spent most of the time on Facebook during the last subject. It was revealed in his marks as he got the lowest grade he ever got.
3. Most of the participants described that one of the main impacts of social media in their studies was that social media limits their activities and interactions with other students. In other words, Facebook isolated the students from interacting with other students in live communication, as s/he is on social media when the students would otherwise get time to discuss and interact each other.

FGD participants who revealed that social media limits their studies (who responded YES social limit our studies) were 58.3%, or 7 out of 12 of the participants.

In the other hand, the interview with teachers indicated that the students who are using social media the most are the ones who get the lowest grades in the school (Teacher 1 interview). This teacher also pointed out another phenomena which has affected secondary school students: a number of them have contact with friends who escaped from the school and emigrated to outside the country especially to Europe, and having contact with those friends effects their desire for education and the school and makes them think to follow the path of those friends who emigrated abroad.

Positive influence

The students responded to our questions about *how do you use social media in your studies?* 41.6% or 5 out of 12 responded that social media help them to find new words and download new lessons shared by other peers and teachers, while 16.6% or 2 out of 12 said they follow lessons shared by the teachers and others. However, the students did not reveal as much about positive impact of social media as they tended to focus on negative influence as discussed above.

4.2.5 Time:

Both in interviews with teachers and FGD with students the time that the students spent in social media were discussed. One of the FGD questions asked about the balance of time that each participant spent in social media per day. The response indicated that the students fall into three categories: category one, which was 33.3% of the respondents, spent between 6 to 8 hours per day, while category two, which was 41.6% of the participants, spent 3 to 5 hours of their time, whilst the last category spent half an hour to 2 hours per day and this category represented 25% of the participants.

In conclusion the researcher found out that the students spend a considerable portion of their daily life interacting through social media.

5. Chapter five: Conclusion

5.1 Key findings:

This paper presents the following key findings:

1. The researcher found that most secondary school students use social media despite the ban from the school management, mostly outside the school or during break times. The majority of the students frequently use the Facebook platform with other networks like Whatsapp.
2. Most of the secondary students use social media as a communication tool and chatting platform, while a small percentage use it for educational purpose such as following teachers and other class mates on Facebook.
3. The paper found that social media has an impact on students' academic performance especially for the ones who spend most of their time chatting with friends. This impact included decrease in marks and grades, which can lead eventually to failure and dropout. It also influences their interaction with other students and other activities. The study found that the students who spend more time on social media become socially isolated. On the other side, the positive influence of social media is that it connects the students to each other and with teachers when they are not in school.
4. Students spend a lot of time on social media, mostly for entertainment purposes and some of them follow and contact teachers.
5. Gambool Secondary School has banned the use of mobile phones and social media at school to control students' intention during classes and decrease distraction.
6. It is surprising that students and teachers agreed that despite the school's ban on the use of social media, it does not object to the students continuing to use social media in school, and as a result in many times teachers withdrawing mobiles from the students as a punishment tool.
7. In terms of gender difference, the paper did not find much difference between boys and girls in terms of the use of social media but the FGD and teachers interview revealed that its very infrequent for the girls to use social media in school time. One of the teachers added that the girls are committed and focus on the class.

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following points:

1. The ban of social media is not an ultimate solution for students' problems with social media, as most of them - especially girls - use a social network when they come out of the school. The researcher recommends that teachers, school management and parents spend time to figure out another solution which enables the students to benefit from social media.

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2. The research would like to recommend that researchers investigate and research the benefits of social media for students as well as the creation of social media platforms for students.

References:

1. Dr. Anthonia U. Nwanbueze & Aduba Doris, Influence of Social Networking on Secondary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria, no date indicated.
2. June Ahn, The effect of social network sites on adolescents' social and academic development: current theories and controversies, Journal of the American society for information science and technology, August 2011.

Annexes:

Annex I: Interview questions

1. What do you teach?
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. How do the students use social media in the class room?
4. Do you allow the students to use social media during school time?
5. When did social media start to become prevalent in the classroom?
6. What are the impacts of social media on the students?
7. What is the effect of social media on the academic performance of the students?
8. Who is using the most social media in school; girls or boys?
9. What do you think the ban of use of social media in school?
10. The ban of social media in school is writing policy or just a verbal ban which become practiced law?
11. How would you change or modify the policy if given the power to do so?
12. What you think are the limits of using social media in education?
13. What opportunities do you think social media can have for teachers?
14. Is there anything else you think is important for me to know about the use of social media in education?

Annex II: FGD questions

1. Do you use social media?
2. What purpose you use social media for?
3. Which social media you use the most?
4. How do you use social media in your studies?
5. What do you think is the impact of social media on your learning?
6. How does social media help you in your studies?
7. Does the social media limit your studies? How?
8. How much time do you spend on social media sites per day?
9. What do you spend the most time doing in social media?

