



QUALITY MATTERS

Theme: The Influence of Social Media on Higher Education Students' Academic Performance

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A Quarterly Newsletter of the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA)

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QUOTE OF THIS ISSUE

“Social media is changing the way we communicate and the way we are perceived, both positively and negatively..”

Amy Jo Martin

“I think there should be regulations on social media to the degree that it negatively affects the public good.”

Elon Musk

“What is interesting is the power and the impact of social media... So we must try to use social media in a good way.”

Malala Yousafzai

“The information you get from social media is not a substitute for academic discipline at all.”

Bill Nye

“Make sure you're also HAPPY in Real Life and NOT just on Social Media.”

PK Kasirim

If you have comments and suggestions on this issue of the newsletter or want to contribute to the next issue, please contact our office,
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This newsletter is published every three months by the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) of St. Mary's University (SMU). The objective of the newsletter is to inform the SMU community as well as the business and industry, government and non-government stakeholders and others who might be interested to know about the activities and accomplishments of the institution in fostering quality education and research in the Ethiopian Higher Education setting.

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FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

*Dear Readers,
Welcome to Vol.15.No.59*

This edition of QM has adopted the influence of Social Media on higher education students' academic performance, and, for that matter, a small paper has been written on the issue to highlight some of the merits and demerits of social media on higher education students' performance. Presently, social media has got great recognition by higher education institutes and their students and is becoming the trend of the 21st century modality of teaching and learning.

As usual, to consolidate the issues raised in the paper, the newsletter has interviewed Dr. Fikadu Mulugeta from Addis Ababa University to share his scholarly views on the issue to our readers.

The newsletter has also news column in which varies internal and external educational activities have been discussed. In the news column, QM talks about St. Ledeta College of Business' experience visit to CEIQA, and St. Mary's participation in Validation Workshop held at Adama.

Happy Reading!



RESEARCH CORNER

The Influence of Social media on Higher Education Students' Academic Performanc

Tekeste W/Michael (PhD, SMU)

The advancements in science and technology have enormously changed the life of people in all walks of life across the world including Ethiopia. Among these legacies of development of science and technology that greatly affects the life of people all over the world is the establishment of Social Media. The term social media is often used synonymously with social networks that include: Face book, Twitter, MySpace, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc. (Alsaif, 2016). Among these, Facebook is gaining popularity among students of higher education. Currently, according to Statista (2019), Facebook has over a billion users, and out of these 50% of them log on every day.

Social media has also got enormous recognitions in higher education institutions all over the world. If we take Facebook alone, in 2007 the number of universities and colleges who were using social media was very large. At that time, 92% of college students had an account on Facebook and by 2008, 99% of college students had an account on Facebook (Alsaif, 2016). In Ethiopia also, Facebook is the most used social media, particularly the young and university students use Facebook. For instance, according to a research conducted by Yirga (2015), in Asosa University, thirty-three percent of the respondents used Facebook for

mailing, 60% for chatting, and the remaining 27% for posting messages.

In another study, 20.4% of the students used Facebook for finding new friends, 69.6% for communicating with the existing friends and the remaining 15% for academic purposes. In one day, 8.5% of the students used social medias for about 1 (one) hour, and 63.9% of the students greater than 2 hours, and 13.3% of the students used for about 3-6 hours and the remaining 15.3% of the students for about 7-9 hours (Lisanu, 2020).

In Hawassa University Facebook is also the most commonly used social networking site. According to Gizaw, Bole, & Asferi (2018), from those who responded as familiar with social networking sites, 98% or 391 students have a Facebook account. 94% are using Youtube, 81% are using Twitter, 62% have a LinkedIn account, 21% are using google+, and 21% are using Skype.

Even though social media site, plays a vital role in the renovation of the conventional teaching and learning practices across the globe (Lad, 2017), its advantages outweigh the disadvantages, it is advisable to analyze the extent to which social media is having its positive and negative impacts on higher education students so that the necessary caution can be taken in its implementations.



Several studies revealed that the major factors on which social media has its impact in the life of students include: their academic performance, social behavior, health and privacy issues (Alsaif, 2016).

In this small paper, therefore, efforts have been made to outline the supposed benefits and drawbacks of the application of social media within higher education contexts.

Positive Effects of Social Media on Education

The advent of social media has changed the way higher education students communicate, interact, share, and socialize over the course they are taking at educational institutions. Students now have the opportunity to participate in social discussion by sharing images and pictures, posting their comments, disseminating ideas (Kaplan, 2010). Furthermore, social media fulfills the quest of the 21st century way of life by creating digital generations. According to scholars (Lad, 2017; Vivakaran, 2018), social media, when students spend much time working with new technologies during their stay at HEIs, familiarize them with new technology or make them digital literate, which will help students build skills that will aid them throughout their lives or career.

Furthermore, a number of scholars have listed out several noticeable advantages of social media for teachers and students. For instance, according to Zargar, 2018; Siddiqui & Singh, 2016:

- Social media gives a way to the students to effectively reach each other in regards to class ventures, bunch assignments or for help on homework assignments;
- Many of the students who do not take an interest consistently in class might feel that they can express their thoughts easily on social media;
- The access of social media provides the opportunity for educators to teach good digital citizenship and the use of Internet for productivity (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016).
- Teachers may also publish on social media approximately elegance activities, faculty activities, homework assignments with a view to be very beneficial to them. (Zargar, 2018, p. 150).

Negative Effects of Social Media on Education

The major negative effect of social media, as several scholars indicate, is its liability to distraction. On social media several eye-catching or attention grabbing posts may appear and students can be trapped by these ‘unrighteous posts and these students get so much involved in the social media activities and they become social media addicts’ (Lad, 2017, p. 2). These days students tend to lose their focus from studying and rather enjoy browsing on Social Media in classrooms and in most cases, ‘teachers may no longer be able to understand who paying interest in the classroom is’ (Kaplan, 2010).

Thus, most students have the habit of killing time on non-instructive, immoral and inappropriate activi-



ties, for example, futile visiting and chatting with the opposite sex etc. (Al-Mashaqbeh, 2016). Due to this addictive behavior, these students may not be able to carefully follow lectures, and achieve low grades. In addition to this, these students may create disturbance for other students and expose their classmates a failure in their education.

In addition to these, students not only lose their class attention but also put off things and may not be able to submit their assignment and projects on time (Lad, 2017). To make it worse, many students rely on the accessibility of information on social media and the web to provide answers to their assignments and to conduct research, and to complete projects.

The popularity of social media, and the speed at which information is published, has created a lax attitude towards proper spelling and grammar (Willems, Adachi, Bussey, & Iain, 2018). This reduces a student's ability to effectively write without relying on a computer's spell check feature and also develop illegible hand writing.

Using social media unwisely exposes the society in general and higher education students in particular to unwanted political upheaval. Unless users use the social media properly, it may have a 'devastating effect in countries like Ethiopia where ethnic conflicts are pervasive' (Luke, 2017). Information obtained from social media may not necessarily be genuine. False information can cause social disturbances. For example, it is a common experience that students are often times deceived by fake information disseminated by

social media and engage in inter-ethnic violence. In this regard, Zelalem (2018) states 'many inter-ethnic conflicts outbreak at the higher education institutions in the country happens as the result of misinformation delivered by social media'. Desalegn (2017) also points out oftentimes students are deceived by fake news by people having different agenda. Many of the bloggers and writers posts incorrect records on social sites which leads the education device to failure (Zargar, 2018). Furthermore, (Raut & Patil, 2016) suggested that:

- Because of social media students lose their ability to engage themselves for face to face communication.
- Students, who attempt to multi-mission, checking social media sites at the same time as analyzing, display decreased instructional overall performance. Their ability to concentrate at the challenge handy is significantly decreased by the distractions which are delivered about through YouTube, Facebook or Twitter.
- Many studies also indicated that multitasking activities not only affect study times but also it reduces brain's ability to effectively retrieve information (Lisanu, 2020).

The other negative impact social media can bring is health problem. Unless users use it properly and with the required care, too much manipulation of social media exposes users to a variety of health problems. Several scholars warn social media users.

Use of social media sites with sheer negligence can have mental as well as physical effects on one's



health. Students do not take their meals on time, do not take proper rest and by continuously being on phone or laptop can also have adverse effects on their eyes. Such acts make students lazy and unmotivated to study or even go out and meet people' (Al-Mashaqbeh, 2016).

These days students' willingness to spend more time studying and looking up accurate information has reduced because the ease of accessibility to data on social media (Kaplan, 2010; Lisanu, 2020).

With the extensive use of Social Media, students these days are depending more on such platforms to gain information and knowledge rather than looking out for the same in books, journals or notes. As it is easy to extract information online, reading habits of students along with their learning and research capabilities are reducing (Lisanu, 2020).

Conclusion

In the above paper, small efforts have been done to focus on most significant advantages and disadvantages of social media on higher education students' status. The benefits of using social media in the education sector are not questionable. However, because of the novelty and captivity nature of the technology, students may be captured by its attractive application and use it for their personal interest rather than applying it for educational purpose. In addition to these, too much use of Social Media can have adverse effects on students' minds and they may also be exposed to bad posture, eye strain, physical and mental stress (Raut & Patil, 2016).

In order to spare higher education students' academic lives, stakeholders (educators and parents) should work together and ought to keep an eye on what their students are doing while using the social media (Alsaif, 2016). Particularly, instructors who need to utilize social media in their courses to enhance students learning ability ought to encourage their students to use Social Media wisely because students might require closer supervision and direction (Alsaif, 2016).

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INTERVIEW

An Interview with Dr. Fikadu Mulugeta Asfaw

Dr. Fikadu Mulugeta Asfaw is an Assistant Professor at Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Behavioural studies, Department of Educational Planning and Management

He has a BEd in teaching English from kotebe College of Teachers Education in 1993, MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Languages in 2001, MED in ICT in Education in 2006 and a PhD in Educational Policy and Leadership in 2013 from Addis Ababa university.

He was also an Associate Vice President for Continuing and Distance Education from 2007-2010 at Addis Ababa University has authored and co-authored English for Ethiopia textbooks for grade 1-8 currently, he is serving as a researcher and education policy expert in different projects in Ethiopia and Africa.



QM had an interview with Dr. Fikadu Mulugeta to share his view on the influence of Social Media on higher education students' academic performance. Here is the interview extract:



QM: What do we mean by Social Media?

Fekadu: Social media is a collection of the websites and applications which are used as communication, social interaction and content sharing and collaboration platforms. It has platforms that provide access to users to share contents and also collaborate and interact among the users. What makes social media more useful and common point of discussion these days is the ease it has brought on interaction and certain level of anonymity. However, unless it is guided with knowledge and care its disadvantage in losing one's data and identity will have negative effect on overall human relations and communication.

QM: What are the Social Media platforms the students are using?

Fikadu: Currently, there are a number of social media platforms that are used globally and some are used in specific countries. The most commonly used ones are Facebook, WhatsApp and Messenger globally but in Ethiopian context telegram, Instagram and Tiktok are also being used very often by many. Currently the younger generations are using these platforms as means to share their thoughts and views among themselves. From practice and just personal observation, I feel that Telegram, Instagram, Tiktok and Facebook are being used by many Ethiopian students. However, there is a need to conduct study on the media platforms being used by Ethiopians. Though there are arguments that social medias are not as such used in developing countries such as Ethiopia, patterns and the demand for connectivity indicate that simple more

interactive social media platforms with a potential to share graphic images are commonly used by the young.

QM: How has the use of social media impacted the academic performance of Higher education students?

Fikadu: Use of any technology or media influences teaching and learning at any level in either in a positive or negative way. Currently, knowledge is at the tip of everyone's figure if he/she has the access for the technology. The opportunity that technology has brought to the sector is a lot and social media is also one of the contexts where HE students can collaborate, learn and share their thoughts so that their performance will be impacted. If the social medias are used properly and with knowledge students can benefit out of them. However, if social Medias are used to share and collaborate on contents that are not contributing to education and self-development, the impact of the social media will be negative as it consumes much of their time and attention. The point here is the potential to use any social media for better advantage and learning is in the hands of professionals.

QM: Do you think that there exists a difference between male and female students in their use of social media?

Fikadu: I can't tell this from the outset. But if we look at access to technology, males seem to have better access than females. Thus, by implication we can infer that males use social media more than females.



However, the difference between male and female students in social media use is not that much if their socioeconomic backgrounds and academic exposures are similar. Gender is not that much considered as a factor for social media use in our context.

QM: How do social media specifically impact the academic achievement of female students in higher education in Ethiopia?

Fikadu: This can be seen in relation with the argument I have mentioned above. It is not their gender that matters rather it is the access for connectivity. Once we have provided equal access for connectivity the impact of social media on academic achievements of the students will not be that much different due to gender. Technology is one means that can narrow the gender gap though it is dependent on access. So it is not the social media that will have effect on the students rather it is the access for it.

QM: What are the benefits of higher education stakeholders (students, management, and instructors) obtain from social media?

Fikadu: HE stakeholders have to harvest the benefits of technology available indifferent formats and platforms. Social media can make communication, interaction and collaboration effective and on time. These are the activities that all the stakeholders are engaged in HE. Thus, proper use of the social media make HE achieves its goal with minimum cost and limited resources. As a result, HE stakeholders should collaborate to use social media as a platform to

achieve the teaching, research and community service goals of the sector.

QM: Do you think higher education students in Ethiopia are addicted to social media? If so, what is the level of addiction?

Fikadu: I am afraid to say yes to this question. Ethiopian HE students have still a challenge to have access for technology. On the other hand, those who have the access do have limited contents they are sharing with on the social media platform. Therefore, it is very early to talk about addiction at this level. Rather we can talk about the tendency and the contents that most social media users are spending their time on. If you are asking me so, I can say that many, though I have no scientific study on it, from my observation, are spending much of their time on non-academic contents and very social and political issues that they are not even in a position to contribute for the interaction. Just, my rough assessment shows that a good number of social media users, in our country, seem to spend time on sharing others non-academic contents. Social media provide the opportunity to share one's contents and collaborate on content development but I see that many are not doing that and HE institutions are not also working on that line.

QM: How do you see the use of social media in academia developing over the next few years?

Fekadu: The future is for technology and social media are the ones in focus. Due to the change in demography and economic activities, interaction and



collaboration will not always be face to face. Meetings, discussions and even collaborative works will no more require people to travel across the globe. Thus, social Medias which had very limited role in education in the past are determinant in the near future in the academia. Even recently COVID 19 has shown us how technology is unavoidable means to survive in the pandemic. So it is HE institutions that should work to use the social media platform as an opportunity to reach at their customers or academic community.

QM: Any final thoughts on social media and education?

Fekadu: My final thought is that the way how social media is portrayed in our country has to be corrected and we have to also encourage the young to be part of the collaboration, interaction and even content development for the social media. Whether we like it or not, the future is not the same as the past. Thus, HE institutions should also work to make the future generation fit for the unknown context. Parents and students need to also take time to get the most out of technology. Last but not least higher education leaders and teachers should also look into the opportunity that the social media platform has brought into the academia. Social media has to be taken as any environment where people can interact, collaborate and exchange knowledge.

NEWS

St Lideta Lemariam College Visited CEIQA

Two delegates, Meaza Ayele and Mouhaba Alemu (a board member of the College), of St. Lideta Lemariam College of Health Science and Business College had a half-day experience sharing visit to CEIQA of SMU on August 4, 2021. The purpose of their visit to the Center was to learn from the experience of the Center in relation to Internal Quality Assurance (IQA), and its best experience in implementing quality related activities in the Institute.

Ato Shegaw, Director, Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance, explained the various activities and development of the Center since he joined it.

In his discussion, he mainly focused on plan preparation and evaluation, monitoring, and tracer study.

He finally expressed the challenges he encountered in accomplishing the Center's tasks.

At the end of his briefings, the participants expressed their feeling of satisfaction with the experiences they got from the Center. W/t Meaza said that the experience she has shared from the Center has great contribution to review her institution's strategic plan and the challenges she learned from the Center can help her to be cognizant of the possible problems she may encountered in her plan accomplishment in future.



At last, the participants requested the Center to organize a one day similar experience sharing session so that their institute management committees would get similar experience to set up new offices. And the two institutions agreed to learn from each other and work together in the future.

At the end of the discussion, the participants, were able to have a look at the various documents of the Center and visited the Academic Resource Development Unit (ARDU).



SMU Participated in Validation Workshop



St. Mary's University took part in a Validation Workshop held at Adama on July 16, 2021. The one-day workshop was organized to validate the draft proclamation of Higher Education Quality Commission Establishment. The new proclamation is to replace the previous proclamation, which was thought to have had limitations in ensuring HERQA's autonomy. The new one, being upgraded to Commission level, shall have greater autonomy as it is structured to report to the House of Representatives, not the Ministry of Science and Higher Education as has been the case to date.

Organized by HERQA, the workshop had participants drawn from public and private universities. St. Mary's was represented by Ato Shegaw G/Medhin, Director, Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance. The organizers appreciated St. Mary's for its well-prepared comments on the draft proclamation in written form.

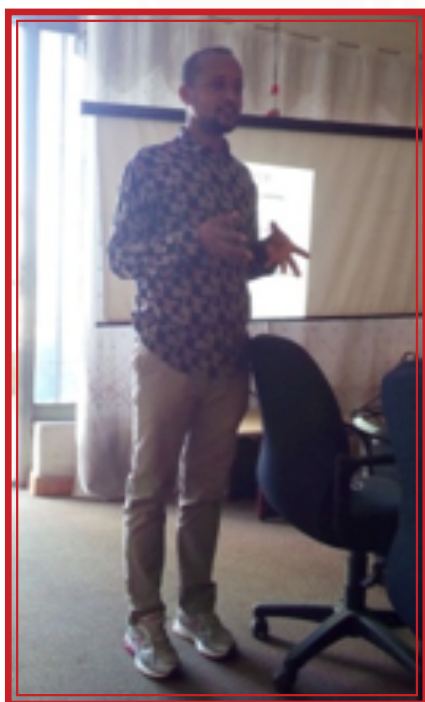
Pedagogical Training Given

The Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) has given a three-half-day pedagogical training, from September 22 to 24, to the instructors coming from the non-teaching professions. The aim of the training was to enhance their knowledge and skills of trainees on:

1. Classroom Management
2. Active Learning
3. Continuous Assessment

The training was given by Ato Manaye Adela, Ato Solomon Bekele, and Ato Daniel Zewedei. A total of fifteen instructors participated in the training.

In a discussion, which took place after the training, most of the trainees indicated that they liked the training and benefited a lot from it and requested the Center to organize similar training in future.





Partial View of the Training Participants

Virtual links on Quality Assurance

Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) www.anqahe.org

Asian Pacific Quality Network (<http://www.apqn.org>)

ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) www.mqa.gov.my/oqan/

Association of African University (www.aau.org)

Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (AQAAIW)
www.mqa.gov.my/aqaalw/index01.cfm

Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) www.canqate.org

Central and Eastern Europe Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CEENQA)
www.ceenetwork.hu

Central Asian Network for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CANQA) www.canqa.net

Center for International Research on Higher Education (<http://bc.org/avp/soe/cihe>)

Ethiopian Ministry of Education (<http://www.moe.gov.et>)

Eurasian Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) www.eaqan.org

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (<http://www.enqa.eu>)

European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education (EQANIE) www.eqanie.eu

Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (www.higher.edu.et)

Institute of International Education (www.iie.org)

International center of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE) www.the-ice.org

International Council for Open and Distance Learning (www.icde.org)

International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (<http://www.eric.ed.gov>)

International Network for Higher Education in Africa (NHEA) (<http://www.be.edu>)

International Network for Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
<http://www.inqaahe.org>

Program for Research on Private Higher Education (PROPHE)(www.allbany.edu/eaps/prophe)

Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia (<http://www.qsae.org>)

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK) (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>) Talloires network
(www.talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu)



St. Mary's University

Programs Offered



Undergraduate Degree Programs (Regular/Extension)

- ◆ Accounting & Finance
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Tourism & Hospitality Management
- ◆ Computing Science

Undergraduate Degree Programs (College of Open and Distance Learning)

- ◆ Accounting
- ◆ Management
- ◆ Marketing Management
- ◆ Financial Economics
- ◆ Rural Development
- ◆ Agricultural Extension
- ◆ Agri-Business Management
- ◆ Cooperative (Accounting & Auditing)
- ◆ Cooperative (Business Management)
- ◆ Educational Planning & Management
- ◆ Economics
- ◆ Sociology
- ◆ Public Administration and Development Management
- ◆ Agricultural Economics
- ◆ Banking and Finance
- ◆ Logistics and Supply Chain Management

Graduate Programs Offered in Partnership with Open University of Tanzania (OUT)

- ◆ Master of Project Management
- ◆ Master of Arts in International Cooperation & Development
- ◆ Master of Science in Economics
- ◆ Master of Human Resource Management

Postgraduate Programs (Regular)

- ◆ MSc in Quality and Productivity Management
- ◆ MA in Social Work
- ◆ MA in Development Management
- ◆ Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- ◆ MBA with HRM Concentration
- ◆ MSc. in Agricultural Economics
- ◆ MA in Project Management
- ◆ MBA in Accounting and Finance
- ◆ MA in Marketing Management
- ◆ MA in Development Economics
- ◆ MSc. in Computer Science
- ◆ MA in Higher Education
- ◆ MA in Sociology

Graduate Programs Offered in Partnership with Universita Cattolica del Sacro Coure, Italy

- ◆ MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship

Graduate Programs Offered in Partnership with IGNOU (Distance)

- ◆ MBA (Master of Business Administration)
- ◆ MSW (Master of Arts in Social Work)
- ◆ MEC (Master of Arts in Economics)
- ◆ MPA (Master of Arts in Public Administration)
- ◆ MARD (Master of Arts in Rural Development)
- ◆ MSO (Master of Arts in Sociology)
- ◆ MPS (Master of Arts in Political Science)
- ◆ MCOM (Master of Commerce)

Short Term Training

- ◆ Business & Computer Science areas
- ◆ Higher Education areas

Services through SMU's Testing Center

- ◆ TOEFL (Internet-based test)
- ◆ GRE (Internet-based test)
- ◆ Praxis Exam
- ◆ CISI Exams
- ◆ Recruitment tests

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