ANALYZING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN CIVIC EDUCATION IN KITWE DISTRICT SCHOOLS
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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the Influence of Social Media Applications on the Academic Performance of Pupils in Civic Education in Kitwe District. Social Media applications have become means through which people communicate and has many benefits for different people in different segments of life. However, despite these benefits, social media also has become a source of distraction to the academic life of pupils thus affecting their performance in school.

In this research, data was collected using questionnaires and the interview guide. The respondent targeted included school administrators, teachers and pupils. From the responses given, the paper measured the rate of use, participation in activities and times spent on these applications. The relationship between social networking sites and academic performance was also examined.

From the data obtained, the researcher concluded that majority of leaners use social media regularly and that most of them spend more than 2 hours every day. Among the sites often visited includes Facebook and WhatsApp. The study further revealed that many pupils use social media applications for chatting, entertainment, and as a source of recreation at the expense of studying. Therefore, the study concluded that there is a direct relationship

between the use of social media and the academic performance of leaners.

Keywords—Social Media; Technology; Media Equation Theory; Social Infoamtion Processing, Civic Education

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Civic Education is the study of the political, social, cultural and economic situation of the society (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2013). By political situations, Civic Education talks about the political systems of governance and that includes the electoral systems and the role of political parties in a country. By economics, Civic Education refers to the way countries manage their economic affairs. In terms of culture, Civic Education studies the way of life of people and finally Civic Education studies how society is organized.

As a subject or course, Civic Education is of great importance in that, it helps people to know their rights, gain knowledge about their country, political systems, understand the ideas of democracy so that they actively become involved in the way they are governed (Branson, 1998). It is a subject intended to make individuals think about the welfare of others and not themselves. According to Gutmann (1987), Civic Education helps learners to cultivate virtues, knowledge, and skills that will help them to participate in politics. Branson (1998), goes on to say that Civic Education helps citizen to become responsible and contribute to society in a

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positive way and that if well conducted, it can have a positive effect on members of the public.

UNESCO (2010) notes that lack of knowledge in Civics in a nation may be a source of conflicts. Therefore, interests and concerns in Civic Education in Zambia grew because many people felt that it was important that their young ones are prepared for citizenship so that they take part in the civic affairs of the nation (Civic 2010). In addition, Civic Education in a democratic country like Zambia helps to prepare generations for the essential principles and values of democracy embodied with a high sense of responsibility and active engagement in the daily affairs of the community or nation (CCE 1994).

In the past, Civic Education was offered as an optional subject to pupils in secondary school at both Junior and Senior level in Zambia. These classes operated outside the normal timetable and the syllabus for this subjected was extracted from programs that Non-Governmental Organizations were trying to champion. By then, schools did not have teachers to handle this subject, so they had to improvise by selecting from the available staff within schools who were trained extensively through workshops provided by the Ministry of Education and Science (MOVES 2004). Years later, Civic Education became a compulsory subject for all pupils from grade 8 to 12. At senior level, it is offered as an independent subject while at junior level it was merged with other subjects as Social Studies (MOE 2013).

In most learning institutions in Zambia, Civic Education now is offered to teachers so that in turn, they too may offer the same vital knowledge obtained from this subject to their learners. In delivering lessons in Civic Education, teachers use different ways or methods so that the leaners gain knowledge by participating actively (William, 2002). Apart from the traditional approach of either teacher or pupil centered, another method that has recently emerged is using Social Media.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is defined as the interaction among people, through which they create, share, and exchange information via social media sites. The concept of social media according to Kaplan et al (2010) is based on four main pillars; partnership, participation, enablement and time. By using social media, users attain some form of sanctioning that allows a free forum for interactions (Duggan & Smith, 2013). When social media is used in education, it provides pupils or learners with the ability to get more useful information to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient.

In the delivery of lessons, social network tools afford learners and different institutions with multiple opportunities to improve learning methods (Eijkman, 2009). Through social networks, one can incorporate social media plugins that enable sharing and interaction. Besides that, social media network helps Learners to benefit from online tutorials and resources that are shared through social networks and Learners Management Systems (LMS). Social media brings many benefits in the education sector and it is a medium where learners can establish beneficial connection for their careers. One of the most significant

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aspects of using social media in schooling is that one can be an expert in a field and subjects. This is because social media could broaden one's perspective on various subjects and gives illumination, instant content that is new (Ufuophu and Ayobami (2012).

As much as social media is been appreciated as it eases communication and promotes social interaction, there is also evidence that in some cases it destroys and promotes divergent behaviors especially among the youths (Thio, Taylor, & Schwartz 2002). According to Ndaku (2013), usage of social media among leaners today has reached high levels. That being the case, therefore, it is proper to assume that in one way or the other, social media has impacts on the way pupils perform in their academics in different ways.

In January 2018, Samsung Company in South Korea announced their launch of a Smartphone (Samsung Galaxy J2 Pro) that cannot connect to the internet[1]. Essentially, this is a low-end android Smartphone with the modems ripped out, making it perfect for kids but more especially for students. Samsung Company went further and offered South Korean students aged 18-21 years especially those in exam classes to exchange their phones that access internet with the new gadget so that they can concentrate on their studies.

The Samsung Galaxy J2 Pro allows the user to perform basic functions such as making calls, sending messages and it features an offline DioDict4 dictionary to help in translation. When it comes to advancement in technology, countries like Zambia always look up to

developed countries like South Korea but if they can come up with such an initiative, then social media largely is a distraction to many school going children. In brief, it is believed that social media applications have impacts on the performance of pupils in academics. This impact can be either positive or negative.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a descriptive case study design. This design was adopted to determine the status of that population with respect to the variables involved (Wiersman, 2005). The researcher studied and explained the situation as it exists (Wiersman, 2005). Furthermore, this design not only gave descriptions and explanations of activities, people and objects, but it also identified and predicted relationships between variables of the study.

Target population

In this research, the researcher targeted the learners, teachers of Civic Education, and Administrators from Kitwe District of Copperbelt Province.

Sample Size

In this study, one hundred respondents (100) from seven (7) schools were picked; Seventy-nine (79) pupils, fourteen (14)- Civic Education Teachers and seven (7) administrators.

Sampling Technique

Typical Case Sampling, which is under Purposive Sampling Technique was used in this study. Purposive sampling was used on the part of teachers as the research targeted Civic Education Teachers. On the part of pupils, random sampling was used. The rationale behind this decision was to help the researcher

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[1] Source - https://gadgets.ndtv.com/samsung-galaxy-j2-pro-2018-4578

reach the targeted sample quickly and because this technique is useful when related items are involved (Kothari, 2013).

Instruments for Data Collection

The researcher was the main instrument for data collection. Questionnaires and Interview Guides were used for this purpose. Two different questionnaires were designed: one for learners and the other for administrators and teachers. The questionnaires comprised four sections; A, B C and D. Section A covered the background information of the respondents while sections B, C and D reflected the objectives outlined in chapter one.

Procedure for Data Collection

Primary data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The researcher personally collected data from the target respondents. In some cases, drop and pick method was used where it was not possible to collect the data at the time the researcher was in the field. The researcher distributed the questionnaires in person to ensure that the respondents get them and that only the intended filled them. The researcher who later recorded the responses personally conducted interviews.

The above method made data collection simpler for the researcher and it facilitated accuracy in the data collection as it entails a personal appeal (Mugenda, 2003). The respondents were not forced to participate, and they were given time to study the questionnaires before attempting to answer them. As for teachers, Civic Education Teaches were given priority.

Data Analysis Techniques

The researcher collected the questionnaires from the respondents and later examined and analyzed them. This allowed the researcher to build ideas inductively while deterring him from imposing extant theories or his own beliefs on the data. The findings obtained from the questionnaires were interpreted and discussed. Emerging themes and categories supported by the narratives of the participants were also discussed. Quantifiable data obtained from questionnaires was codified and analyzed using Microsoft Excel as an analysis tool.

Triangulation

Since positivist researchers frequently question the trustworthiness of qualitative research, a few strategies were adopted to ensure credibility and dependability of the findings (Shenton 2004). The data that was collected was tested against the existing literature to see if they agree. The researcher compared the results when social media was used and when it was not. However, for the most part, the researcher relied on the actual words of the participants when analyzing and coding data to ensure that the meanings derived remain true to the voice of the participants.

Limitations of the Study

Due to resources, the researcher only focused on few pupils from selected schools and teachers in the district as the whole population of the district could not allow interviewing/questioning all. Besides that, some respondents found it difficult to respond to the questionnaires openly as they perceived it as a way of telling their parents of what they think is affecting their studies. However, assurances were given to them that this was just an academic exercise not meant to expose any one.

RESULTS

The total number of respondents used for this study was 100 (N=100) of which fourteen (14) were teachers, seven (7) administrators and seventy-nine (79) pupils.

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Majority of the respondents were learners (75%) aged between 15-23 years. This was followed by those above 36 years (15%) and then by those between the age of 24 to 35 years (13%). Looking at this statistics, majority of respondents are pupils indicating that the research was meant for them.

To Examine the Effect of Social Media on Academic Performance among the pupils.

When the respondents (pupils) were asked if they use any type of social networking websites every day, the figure below shows the responses that was obtained.
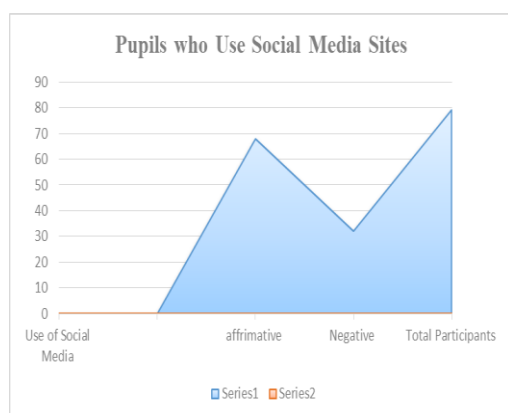
When a follow-up question as to how many social networking sites they use in a day, 56% of pupils responded that they use more than two, mainly WhatsApp and Facebook though a few of them also utilize Twitter and Instagram as well as WeChat. On the other hand, thirty percent (30%) said that they use one or two at most while the remaining said that they have access to more than five (5) types of social media.

When active users of social media whether one or more were further asked if they think social media contributes to their academic performance, the responses were somehow mixed thought 74% strongly disagreed.

In addition to that, on the disadvantages of using social media, the following responses were obtained from the respondents: some of the respondents said that Social Media has led to:

Reduced Library

On the disadvantages of using social media, seventy percent (70%) of the respondents felt that the use of social media has led to reduced use of the library. They pointed out that of late, pupils shun away from the library and instead they rely on the information obtained from social media as the truth at the expense of true information.

Unnecessary Multitasking

In addition to that, 68% of the respondents further said that the use of social media has also contributed to unnecessary multitasking. The respondents said that many pupils now study with the gadgets on the other hand, thus leading to unnecessary multi-tasking at the expense of studying.

Poor Communication

The respondents also said that the use of social media has also contributed to poor communication among the leaners. This was the view of more than 80% of the respondents. They said that with the use of social media, pupils have become poor in terms of communication especially when it comes to writing of composition. Other respondents further said that social media has also reduced the formation of study groups among pupils and that it leads to unproductive use of time as well as health complications.

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To Identify the Benefits Obtained from Using Social Media.

The second objective sought to identify the benefits that users of social media gets from such sites. To start with, eighty percent (80%) of the respondents felt that social media has no benefit to them at all. While the remaining felt that social media benefits them in one way or the other. Among the benefits explained included enhanced improvement to access of material as social media provides easier means of getting access to the materials. Other respondents further said that the use of social media also helps them to study in groups and share exam tips.

In addition to that, from responses obtained, the researcher assumed that 57% of the respondents believed that the use of social media is essential in today's life in different ways and not in academies such as in business and in communication. Their response had nothing to do with the education sector, but they just pointed out that it is beneficial today. However, 43% of the respondents did not see the need of using social media today especially where pupils are concerned.

To Establish How Civic Education Can Help Pupils Integrate Social Media Applications in Their Studies

On the third objective, the researcher sought to investigate how Civic Education can help pupils integrate social media in their studies. In responding to the questionnaires and the interview guide, the following responses were obtained; to start with, since Civic Education is the study of the political, social, economic and cultural affairs of a nation, more than 90 % of the leaners, teachers and administrators included felt that the knowledge offered in

Civic Education will help leaners to become responsible thus helping them to integrate social media in their studies.

Responding to the question of how many hours they spend studying Civic Education using social media, 70% responded that they spend 1 to 2 hours while the rest pointed out they spend more hours chatting at the expense of studying

In addition to that, the following responses were given on what the respondents use social media sites for.

Why do you use Social Media Sites For	
Socialize and make new friends	50%
Remain updated about what is trending and checking updates	27%
Collaborate with fellow students and study (Civic Education)	05%
As a source of recreation and relaxation	18%

As shown above, 50% of the respondents said that they use social media to socialize and making new friends, 27% just to check on the status of their contacts, 5% use it for study while the remaining 18% use it as a source of recreation and relaxation.

In addition to that, some respondents also felt that the use of social media in academics will make understand certain topics such as those to do with human rights, democracy as well as citizen participation. The respondents further felt that when used productively, social media will help leaners understand and apply what they learn in Civic Education in the community.

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DISCUSSION

Impacts of Social Media on the Academic Performance of Pupils in Civic Education

From the findings presented, it is very clear that social media has impacts on the academic performance of pupils. The results obtained from the analysis presented reveal that there is not much difference on the responses given by male pupils and female pupils. They all seem to agree on one thing, that is, social media affects the academic performance of pupils positively and negatively depending on how one uses it. However, the overall conclusion from the research is that social media affects pupils in a negative way and rarely does it help them improve their academic performance and it is the reason why some pupils have been underperforming at grade 12.

Therefore, from the above responses, it can be assumed that almost all the respondents have access to one or more forms of social media and they have knowledge of the existence of social media. Besides that, the general overview from the responses obtained from the questionnaires was that most of the leaners spend a lot of time on these social network sites at the expense of studying. This revelation confirmed the BETUZ General Secretary's report (2013) that in some parts of Zambia especially in urban areas there has been poor academic performance of pupils during the exam because of the influence of social media as they (pupils) spend a lot of time browsing instead of studying.

When the respondents were asked for the disadvantages of using social media networks for pupils, the following responses were given by both pupils and administrators/teachers who participated:

Reduced Library use

In the past, pupils relied on the books found in the library for their research and they were encouraged to visit the library frequently to do their research. However, with the advancement in technology, pupils have resorted to rely more on the information that is easily accessible on internet through social networking sites. However, it must be mentioned that most of these social sites today contains unfiltered information (obscene) as they are rarely not monitored. This poses a danger not only to the academic life of pupils but also to their well-being morally. Nevertheless, generally, the reliance on social media reduces their learning and research capabilities and, in many cases, resulting in accessing information not suitable for pupils, thus lowering their grades.

Unnecessary Multitasking

Another disadvantage pointed out is that in some cases, when pupils are studying, they end up multitasking in the name of researching when in the actual sense they spend a lot of time on browsing and chatting with their friends. This results in reduced involvement in studies as the attention given to social media makes them loose attention and focus. What results from such an endeavor is poor performance as most of their time meant for studies is channeled to chatting. The result of such is poor performance in their activities. This is to say, pupils get lost in the web at the expense of studying.

Poor Human Communication and Lack of Study Groups

About 75% of the respondents, administrators and teachers included pointed out that most of the times, pupils chat with their friends on social networks instead of studying. They went

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further to say that in the past, pupils used to form study groups where they used to share ideas and discuss school issues. However, this is no longer the case in some schools as one can rarely see groups of pupils discussing academic issues. This has even trickled down to the employers when these pupils graduate because in most cases they take with them some of the words they use in their media site circles.

The respondents further said that pupils have stopped studying in groups like it used to be in the past, the only groups that are available now are WhatsApp groups or some groups on Facebook, which they use just to chat and converse issues that are not academic in nature. Most of the pupils have appointed themselves as administrators on groups that does nothing to help them academically and parents rarely monitor such groups, as they may not be aware of their existence.

Moreover, their use of jargon words or shortened forms of words make them rely on the computer syntax and spelling check feature. This reduces their masterly over the language and their creative writing skills. Therefore, to some pupils, it has even worsened their mastery of the language especially when in composition kind of writing.

Benefits Obtained from Using Social Media

Responding to the questions under the second objective as to the benefits pupils derive from using social media in school, some respondents pointed out the use of social media has many benefits to learners if they use it effectively. In discussing the data obtained, the researcher summarizes it in the following sub heading.

Expands Leaners' Horizons

The respondents pointed out in this age, an insurgency in technology provides various opportunities for studies and education that can be accessed by everyone in the world. They said that social media offers plenty of prospects for leaning and interaction. They said that when pupils use technology in their classrooms, they get to explore and experience the world not only by using books and writing assignment, but also by adopting a new form of communication.

With social media, pupils share not only personal information, but also familiarize themselves to other sites that offers academic content. In so doing; they are engaged with each other instantly, therefore, the use of social media makes it easier and faster to connect with pupils about class-related topics. It all goes back to the point where they said that pupils themselves form groups that will help them prepare for the exam. A lot of topics in Civic Education are also found on the internet and as such, learning Civic Education for them is easier as they are able to share ideas with their fellow pupils on academics.

One female teacher pointed out that she formed a *WhatsApp* group in her class to communicate with leaners. The group was exclusively for academic purposes and as such, no other stuff apart from those that are academic in nature could be posted and that it has worked a lot in that she communicates with them even when she is not feeling well or unable to attend lessons. She even shares with them exam tips and with that kind of interaction with them, she said it has helped her leaners a lot. Other things that she shares, or posts includes notes extracted from textbooks, thus giving pupils who cannot afford to buy certain textbooks a chance to have notes online.

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Easy Access to Information

Some teachers and pupils also mentioned that with social media and internet, pupils swiftly communicate information to friends, family and other connections. This information is a lot more than just hysterical videos or photos of themselves and friends on a trip to pleasure resorts, Mukuba Mall or other new places. The information may be about views, opinions, trips, projects, study material in Civic Education and other useful stuff with each other. They also exchange information for classes and examinations. This capability to access, appraise and share information is fantastic without even being aware that they are developing such skills day by day. This may help them in future as the world now has evolved and using technology is a must.

Furthermore, some respondents said that social media may also be used to improve communication between administration and members of staff or between pupils and subject teachers like earlier pointed out. While many different types of communication tools are available when it comes to communication, they said that the advantage of using social media platforms almost every day, people have access to their phones that contains these sites and that the probability of them getting information is very high as they use phones for different things. They further said that this is not a question of whether they use it or not for academics, pupils will always find means of using social media and so by incorporating studies in these sites will benefit them in many ways.

To Establish How Civic Education Can Help Pupils Integrate Social Media Applications in Their Studies

As shown in the fourth chapter under the third objective, 80% of pupils do not use social media for studies at all but just for chatting and establishing contacts. According to the studies conducted by Jessica et al in 2013, their findings revealed that females use social media more than males and so the impact on them will be more than it could be on males. However, 90% of pupils of both sexes revealed that they use it for chatting, exchanging information as well as watching songs and downloading movies that are shared by their friends. The responses did not depend on one's sex, but it was general and no segregation in terms of sex was made.

CONCLUSION

From the data collected and analyzed, it can be concluded that the use of social media by pupils has negative influences on their academic performance in Civic Education. The outcome of this study marries well with the findings of some researchers mentioned in chapter two. For instance, in one of the studies conducted, Junco (2012) mentioned that the time pupils spend on Facebook and WhatsApp will affect their overall performance at school. He said that the more time pupils spend on social media, the more the academic performance is affected.

Secondly, the researcher concludes that, most of the pupils spend a lot of time on social media chatting with their friends instead of studying. Though some pupils denied that claim, the overall response was that chatting is what most pupils spend their time on and on average; pupils spend more than 2 hours per day on social media. This further leads to addiction

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such that pupils fail to do anything productively. It was also revealed that social media also leads to health complications that may indirectly affect their academic performance.

In this research, it was further revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp are the major applications that pupils mostly use, as they are easy to operate and understand. Regardless of the times that pupils spend on social media, the general conclusion is that there is a direct relationship between use of social media and academic performance and this relationship in most cases is negative.

On the other hand, some teachers pointed out if social media is monitored and that when pupils are controlled, they can use it to their advantage but that needs a lot of maturity on the part of pupils and that this involves all stakeholders. Left to pupils alone, social media is a distraction and, in most cases, leads to the poor performance of pupils not only in Civic Education but also in other subjects

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