

AN ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON MENTAL HEALTH OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Ngunyi, H.¹, Irungu, C.²

¹Kirinyaga University, KENYA, ²Daystar University, KENYA,

Correspondence: hngunyi@kyu.ac.ke

ABSTRACT

Studies on how social media platforms are being used as tools for individuals to interact, connect and support one another have been done in the past. A great number of youth are spending significant amount of time accessing social media sites. Scholars are yet to reach a consensus on whether usage of social media is beneficial or detrimental on the mental health of young adults. This study explored the effects of social media access on the mental health of university students. The study used phenomenological research design. The target population was 10,000 students. The sample size was 309 students drawn from 5 purposely selected schools. Data was collected using randomly distributed questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS's descriptive statistics and presented using frequency tables, pie charts, graphs, cross tabulations. The findings revealed that university students are spending upto six hours of their time in a day on social media to access content on fun, video games and sports. Results showed that time spent on social media had no significant effect on the mental health of students and this could be attributed to the fact that the content students' access of social media enables them to cope with stress and other issues which could have a detrimental effect on their mental health. Based on the findings, there is need to encourage university students to find additional activities they could engage in while on social media which could contribute to the lives in a better way such as blogging, online jobs, and listening to motivational material.

Keywords: *Social media, University Students, Mental health, Stress*