

Influence of Social Media on Study Habits of Undergraduate Students in Kenyan Universities

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Abstract: This study examined the influence of social media on study habits of undergraduate students in one of the Kenya universities. Social media is a very important communication development in the current world however it has posed a threat in the cultural morals of many students. The negative influence is on the rise and this investigation is focused to the study habits of undergraduate students. The research design used was descriptive survey and also employed both qualitative and quantitative (Mixed method) approach for data collection involving questionnaire administration and oral interview. While 15 other students were interviewed differently on face to face sessions and their responses recorded. Ten lecturers from the same school were also interviewed and responses were recorded for further analysis. Uses and gratification theory was used to guide this study. This theory posits that users of any media are not passive audience but rather active and always make choices for particular media consumption based on their motivations. The results revealed that many students' use social media especially Face book, Whatsap and Twitter that they spend increasing amount of quality time on these networks even during lecture hours. Findings of this study suggest that social media could negatively impact on the students' study behaviour, academic progress and that timed-off software should be installed to control its use by students. This study will be of immense benefit to the university administration as it has shown the potent dangers of uncontrolled use of these social media by students and therefore the need to put in place measures to forestall its alluded negative effects.

Keywords: Addiction, Face book, Influence, Social media, Study habits, Twitter, Whatsapp.

1. INTRODUCTION

Fist it is prudent to begin this section by highlighting on what exactly social media is and consequently examine their popularity and their effects on human study behavior with respect to University students. Many scholars have defined social media in different ways for examples according to Bryer and Zavatarro (2011: 327), social media encompasses technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation across stakeholders. This is a more elaborate definition because it captures the function and examples of social media. These technologies now include blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms, and virtual world. Coming up with my definition, I would refer social media as a social network of interactive communication that exist between people using a specialized electronic platforms for interaction such as Facebook ,Whatsap, Twitter, Myspace, Linkedin and Instagram. Note that my definition include interactive communication.Many research that have been conducted on social media deals with the effects of social media on human social behavior and some on the effects of social media on academic performance.

This is a shift to an investigation of social media on the study habits of the students in the institutions of higher learning. According to the following scholars, Allen, Evans, Hare, Mikami, & Szwedo, 2010, Anderson-Butcher, Ball, Brzozowski, Lasseigne, Lehnert, & McCormick, 2010; DeGroot, Ledbetter,Mao, Mazer, Meyer, & Swafford, 2011;

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Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolack, 2002; Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2008; Kramer & Winter, 2008; Regan & Steeves, 2010; Sheldon, 2008), online social networking and Internet communication is becoming wildly popular with adolescents and young adults. With such enormous increase of the youths using social network in the world, a lot of concern in fact cut across from parents, church leaders, politicians and educationist on the unknown effects of social media on various aspects of human life. It is therefore very important to check on the influence of social media on their academic study habit which is a very important activity for them in life.

Statement Of The Problem:

As observed in the above background of the study youths have become fully involved in social networking all the time and therefore it is important to check on the influence of this on their study habits. Tynes, (2009) confirmed that parents are very much worried because of their teens' habitual use of social media sites which make them to abandon their academic activities. He observed that even schools and the society at large are getting worried, notwithstanding that there are strict rules established by various school authorities on the use of these technological gadgets. This can also be checked in Kenyas context. Some researchers have already underscored a lot of importance of using social network by the youths and many others have also explored on the negative impacts of social media on behavior of the youths. Other group of scholars in an attempt to salvage the academics at this stage investigated on the effects of social media use on academic performance. The gap that came very clearly here is the investigation of the effects of social media on study habits of the undergraduate students which will eventually determine their academic performance in the long run. Many studies that have been done are in developed countries as it can be seen in the literature review. Moreover most of the studies focused on the effects of social media on moral behavior of the youths. This study narrowed itself down to the study habits of the undergraduate students in Kenyan universities to represent developing countries in Africa.

Objectives of the Study:

This study was guided by the following two objectives:

- i) To investigate the type of social media popularly used by undergraduate students in the university.
- ii) To investigate the effects of utilization of social network/media on the study habits of undergraduate students in the university.

Theoretical Frame Work:

According to Straubhaar et al (2014) Uses and gratifications perspectives dominates thinking about media consumption and behavior. This theory assumes an active audience. In other words users actively seek out media that meet their needs for knowledge, social interaction, and diversion. They further argued that it is possible to become so deeply involved with our favorite media activity that it acts like addictive drug. It is within this premise that can this addiction influence study habits of the students?

Uses and gratification theory was used to provide a framework or rather a guideline for this research. Uses and gratification observes that audience are not passive and do not accept the contents whatever media transmit without question. They select media according to their choices and needs. Consumers of media have a composition of motivating needs seek to satisfy the needs they select or reject any kind of media and its contents through different kinds of experience. Some media selections may indeed be made on the basis of need gratification, other kinds of exposures are based on personal, social, cultural, and emotional considerations that guide people in what they choose to consume from the media DeFleur (2010).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewed literature in this case covers the importance of social media, effects of social media on social behaviour, negative effects of social media utilization on academic performance and why social media addiction among the youths. According to Boyd (2007) report, teenagers and students embraced social media so as to interact with peers, for information sharing, re- formulating their personalities and thereby getting their social lives off the ground. Could this information be constructive in the field of education or destructive? This laid down the foundation of this study. Kord (2008) confirmed that the involvement of students in social media has increased considerably since 2004 and therefore the increase in access to social media may also be leading to the increase in negative effects. Since there is an increase in the

users and it is an addictive behavior, it is important to investigate its effects on study habits of the students. Current studies carried out by some researchers reported that 80% to 90% of students in the Universities are actively involved with at least a particular social media. This provided a lead to this investigation on a specific area of influence that is study habits. Michele and Kist (2008) who studied the risks in using social media (Facebook, MySpace and Twitter) mentioned that it increased youths' exposure to sexual harassment this is one negative impact. Kord (2007) confirmed that students' behaviours are easily influenced by social media sites because of distasteful comments posted to harass peers. Through social media, people can easily be duped or even lured into immorality.

According to Gross, and Acquisti, (2005), the internet's initially meant for academic information collection for research, but in recent times, it is increasingly used for communication amongst people and for entertainment business especially by students. In addition, Bonds-Raacke and Raacke, (2008) reported that social media has influenced the adolescents' way of thinking/reasoning and interacting including the way they collect information. The research study carried out by Shih (2009) showed that more than 90% of the teenagers in the US access the internet and above 75% used the internet at least once in a day just to socialize. If this is the case in USA, there is a need to assess this situation in developing nations. Another researcher Tynes, (2009) confirmed that parents are very much worried because of their teens' habitual use of social media sites which make them to abandon their academic activities. He observed that even schools and the society at large are getting worried, notwithstanding that there are strict rules established by various school authorities on the use of these technological gadgets. Abdullah et al (2009) and Lent et al., (2009) complained that many students lose the social grace of giving due respect to their teachers and even to their parents after so much involvement in the social media with its influences. It is good to observe that all the above studies were done in America and other countries outside Africa and due to cultural diversity it is not always easy to generalize findings this study was very necessary to give a perspective of Africa context. On contrary to the negative impacts, Oskouei (2010) proposed that internet is advantageous to both students and teachers if used as a tool of knowledge creation and dissemination. This positive influence was also investigated.

The positive aspect of online communities is that youths can utilize them for academic assistance and support (Lusk, 2010) but this cannot be concluded without this investigation. Due to the ability of social media to enhance connections by making them easily accessible, social media can yield many benefits for the young, for example providing a virtual space for them to explore their interests or problems with similar individuals, academic support, while strengthening online communication skills and knowledge. "Students who may be reluctant to speak up in class are participating in book discussion blogs and writing for real audiences. There are new Web tools emerging all the time that are enhancing learning (Brydolf, 2007)."

A closer study to this one is the Ohio State University study by Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris (2011) asserted that the relationship between social media and grades, reveals that college students who utilize Facebook spend less time on studying and have lower grades than students who do not use the popular social networking sites. Moreover, according to a new study by doctoral candidate Aryn Karpinski of Ohio State University and her co-author, Adam Duberstein of Ohio Dominican University, college students who use the 500 million member social network have significantly lower grade-point averages (GPAs) than those who do not. Nevertheless, another study found no correlation between heavy social media usage and grades. There was no significant difference in grades between those considered to be heavy users of social media and those considered to be light users. Additionally, there was no correlation between grades and the social media platform used. This study made an attempt of bridging three main gaps of knowledge namely; first is the socio-cultural context whereby this is a representation of the African and developing countries. Second is the historical gap. Most of the above studies are from 2011 backward and therefore this study will check if their remedial recommendations have been implemented and the third is topical gap in that most of the other studies were on the effects of social media on moral behaviour of the youths. This study focused itself to the effects of social media on study habits among the university students.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was guided by descriptive survey research design. Mixed method approach was used to guide the sampling techniques, designing of research instruments and eventually analysis of both qualitative and quantitative results. Simple

random sampling was used to select a representative group. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect both statistical and thematic data.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The survey established findings based on the lead research problem: The Impact of social media on the study habits of University Students in Kenya. A total of 64 students, 38 of whom were female and 26 of whom were male took part in the study. The findings were as follows:

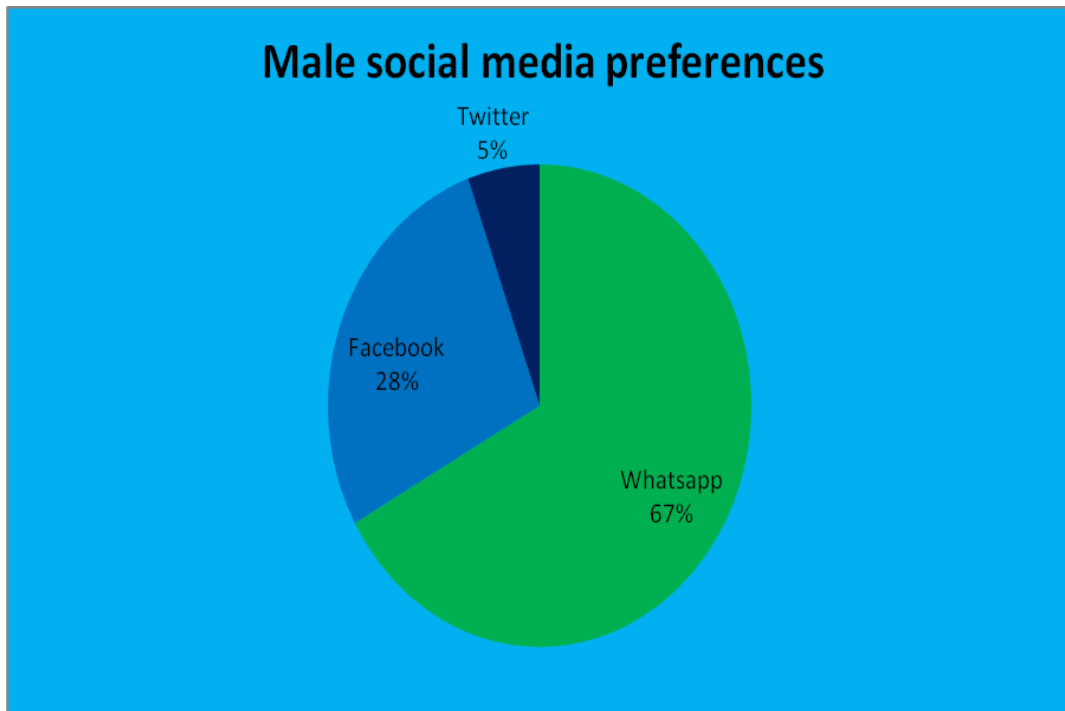


Figure:4.1

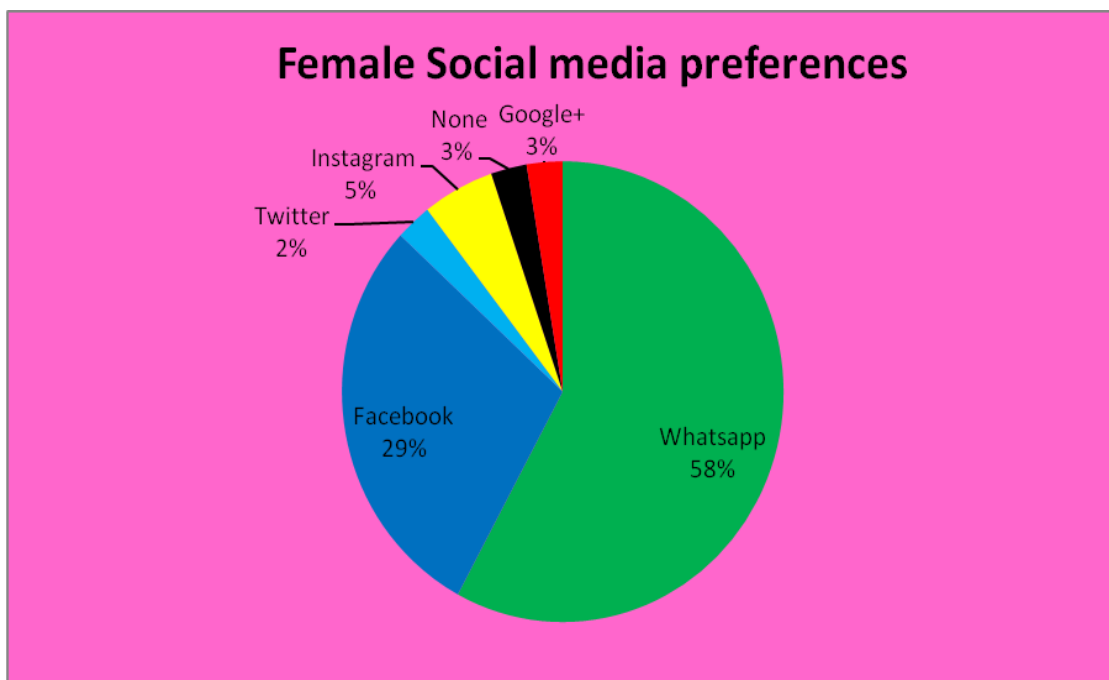


Figure 4.2

The results from figure 4.1 and 4.2 above shows that most of the male and female students are using Whatsapp followed by the face book then the others are almost out of use.

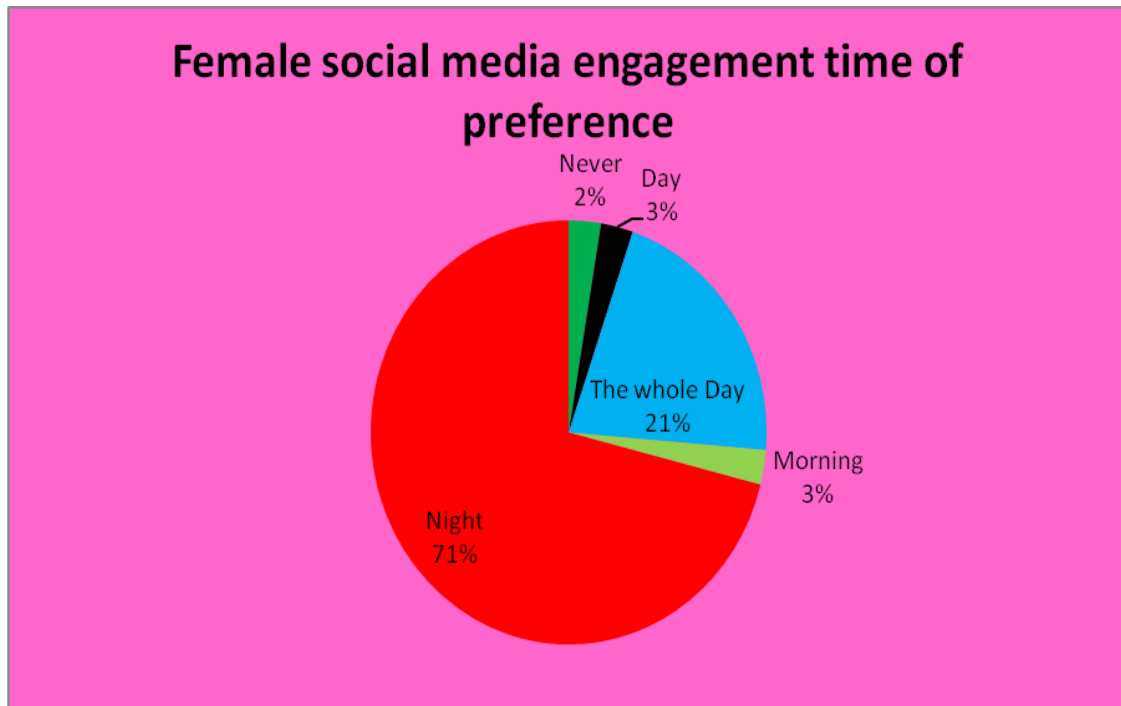


Figure 4.3. Source collected and data

Figure 4.3 and 4.4 respectively tested social media engagement time of preference. The results show that both male and female engage themselves in social media at night. This is an indicator that shows that the students' day time class studies are not affected by social media.

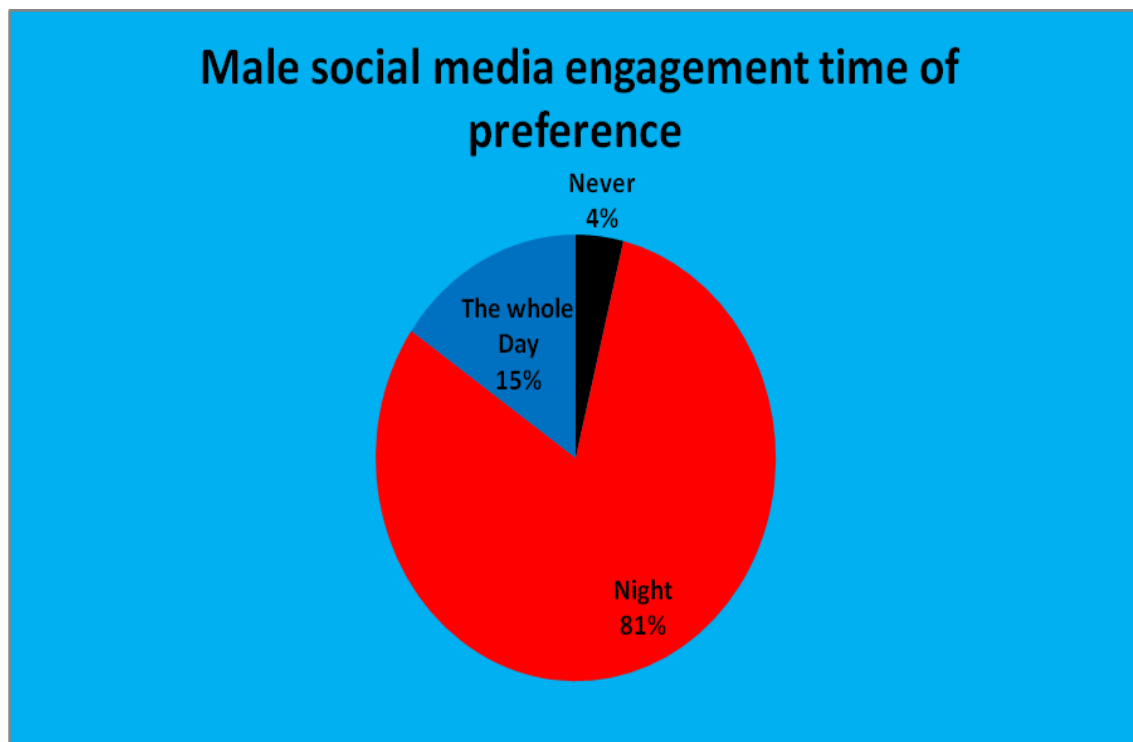


Figure 4.4: Source collected and analyzed data

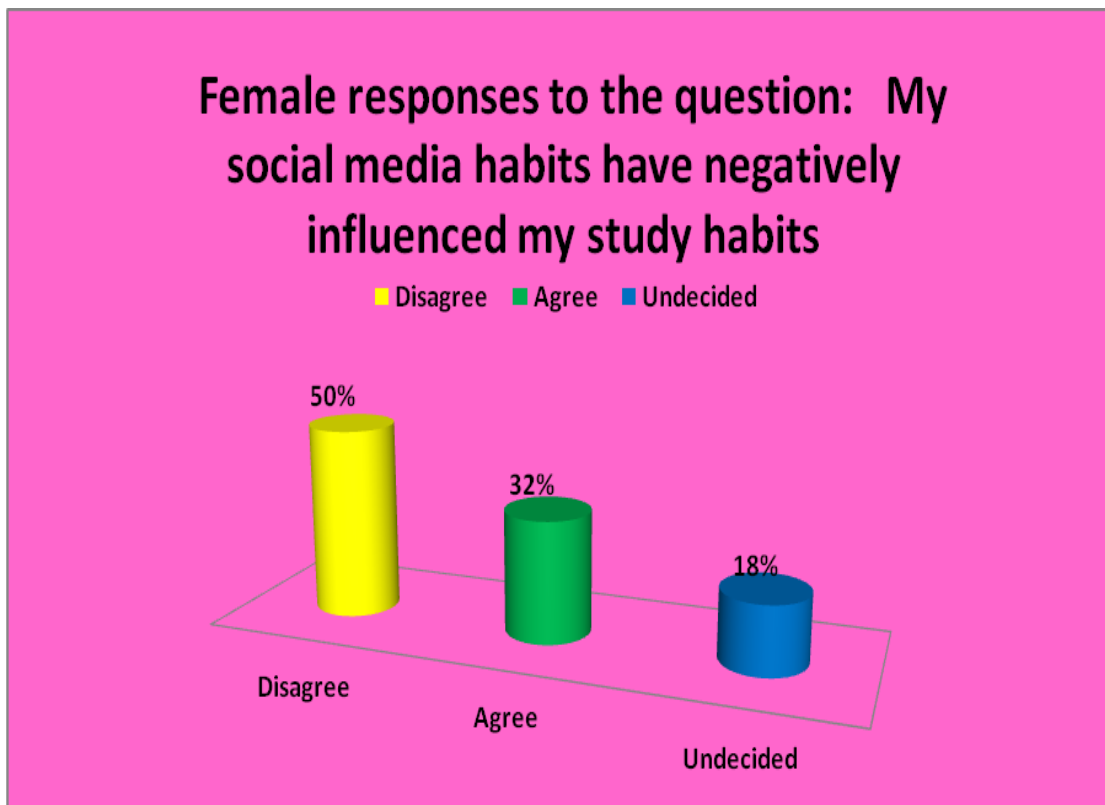


Figure 4.5: Source collected and analyzed data

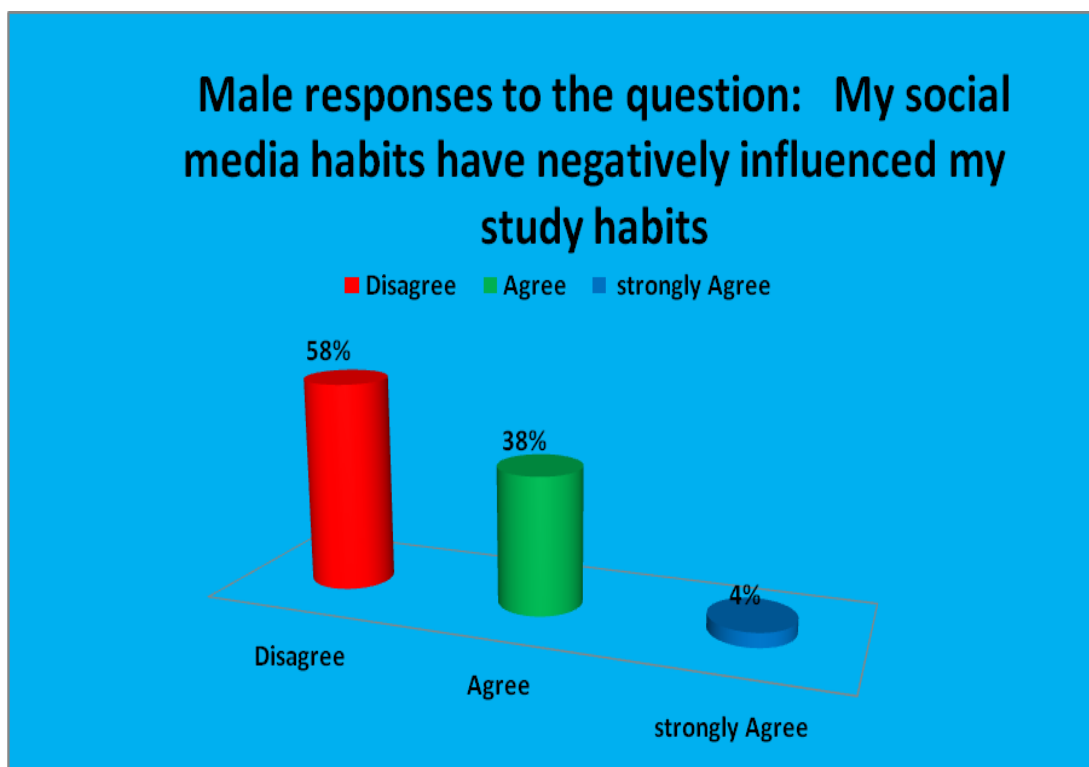


Figure 4.6: Source collected and analyzed data

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 are the results in response to the students believe in the negative effects of social media to their study time. The results are in contrary to the believes by the lecturer that social media affects students study habits negatively.

The results show that 50% of male and 58% female students disagree that the social media affects their study habits negatively. Without ignoring the negative effects completely 32% of the male students and 38% of the female students agreed that social media affects their study habits negatively.

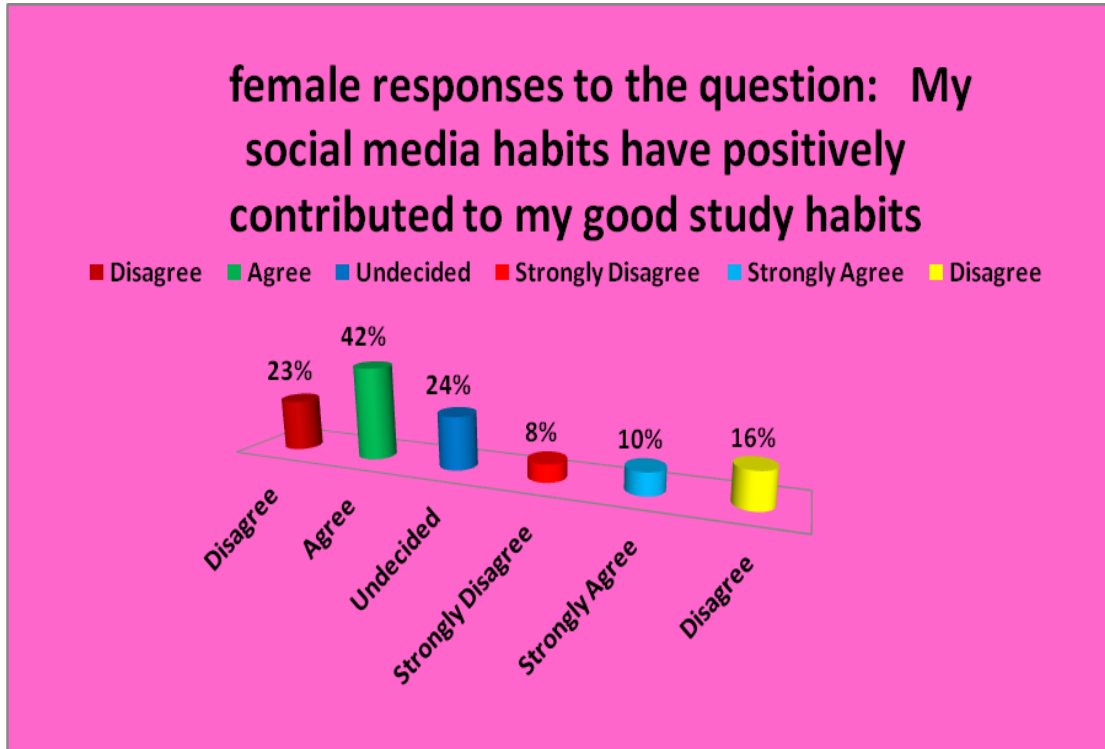


Figure 4.7. Source Collected and analysed data

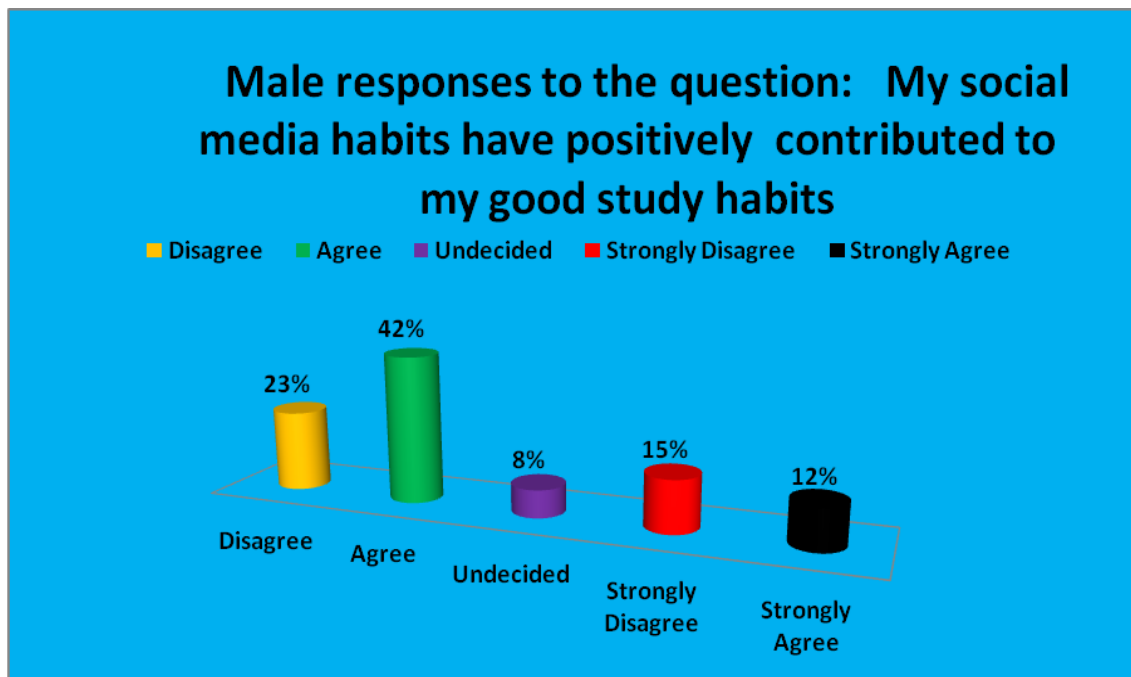


Figure 4.8: Source collected and analyzed data

Figures 4.7 and 4.8 were testing if their social media habits have contributed positively to their study habits and a good percentage are in agreement that it has positively supported them in their studies. 42% of the male and 42% of female students agreed and 10% and 12% respectively also strongly agreed.

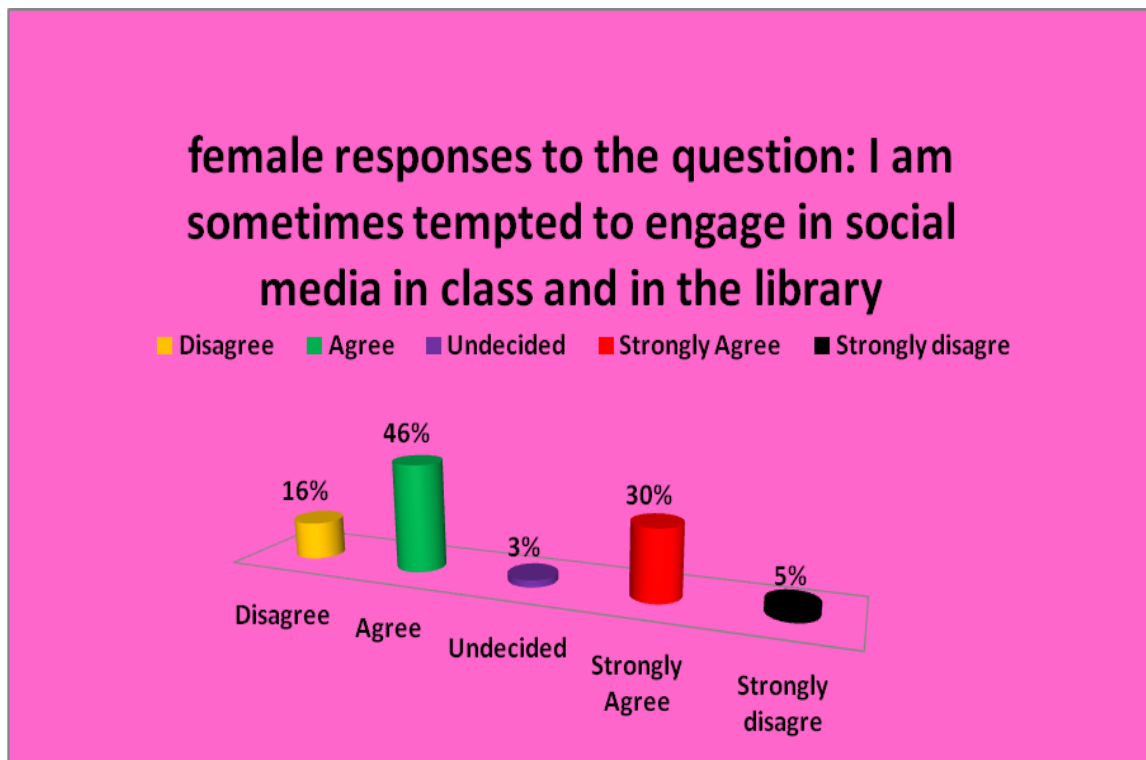


Figure 4.9: Source collected and analysed data

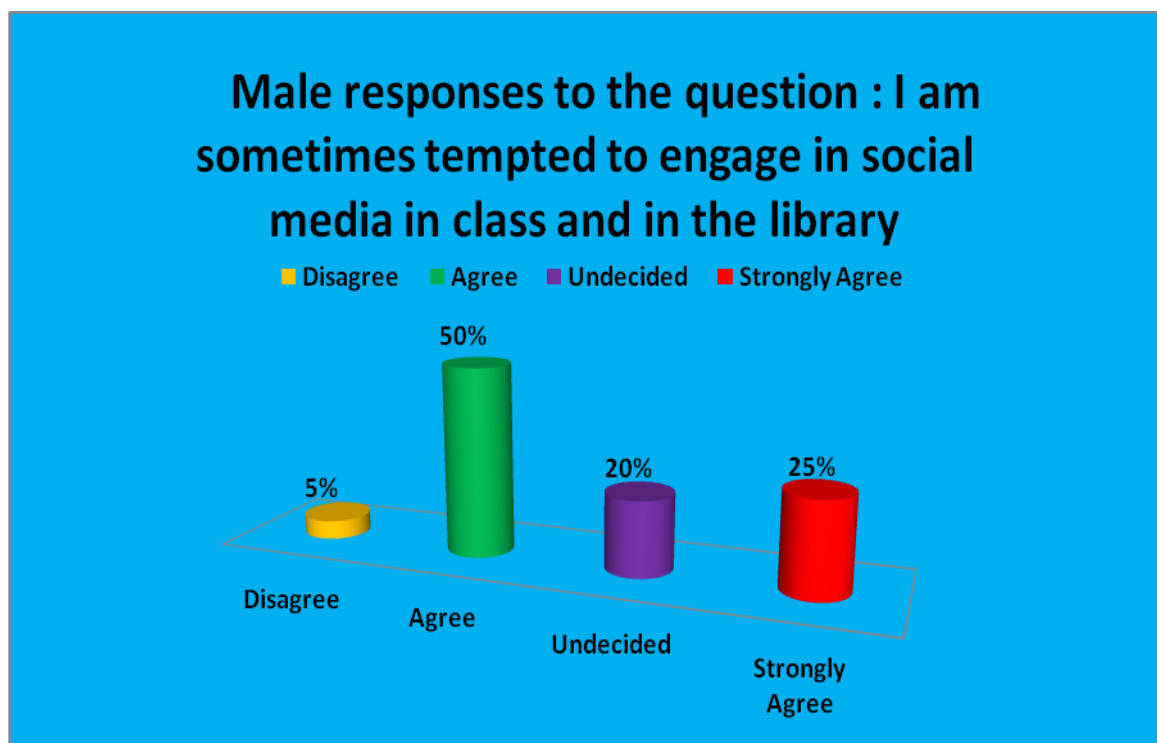


Figure 4.10: Source collected and analyzed data

Figures 4.9 and 4.10 are results of a question which was testing students' temptation to engage in social media in class and in the library. The results shows that temptation is strong but the students have strong self control. Among the male students, 46% and 30% agreed and strongly agreed. Among the female students, the urge is even stronger whereby 50% and 25% agreed and strongly agreed on that.

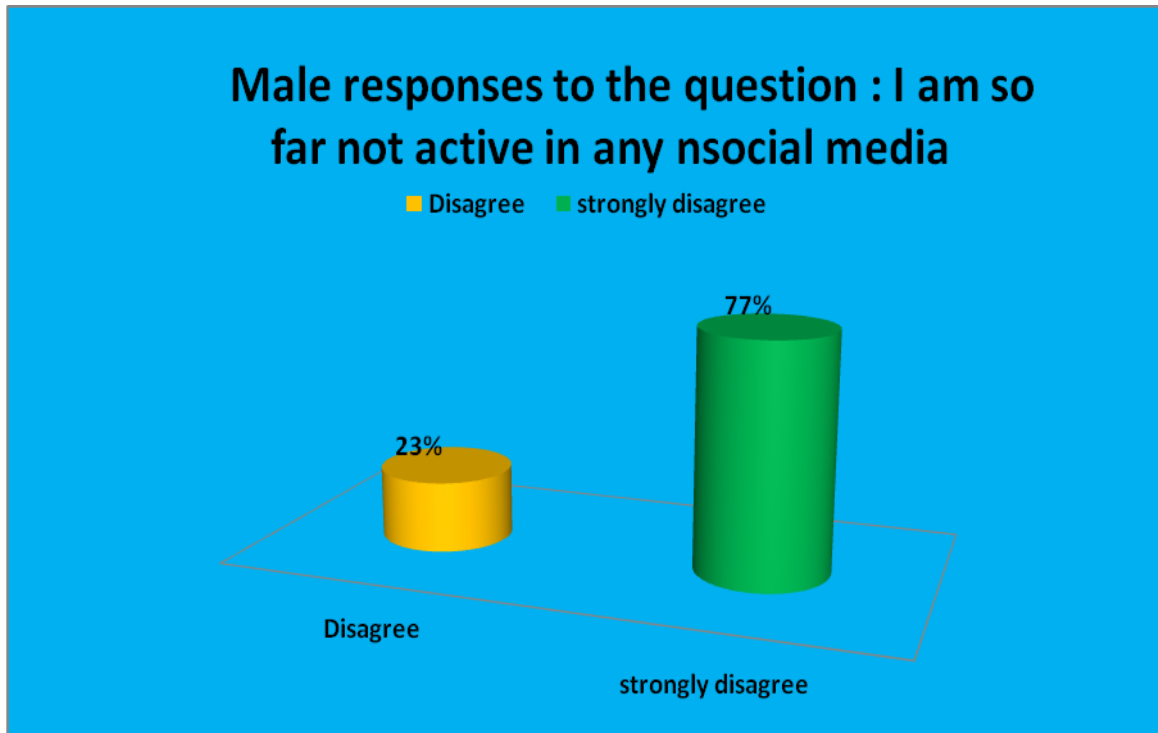


Figure 4.11

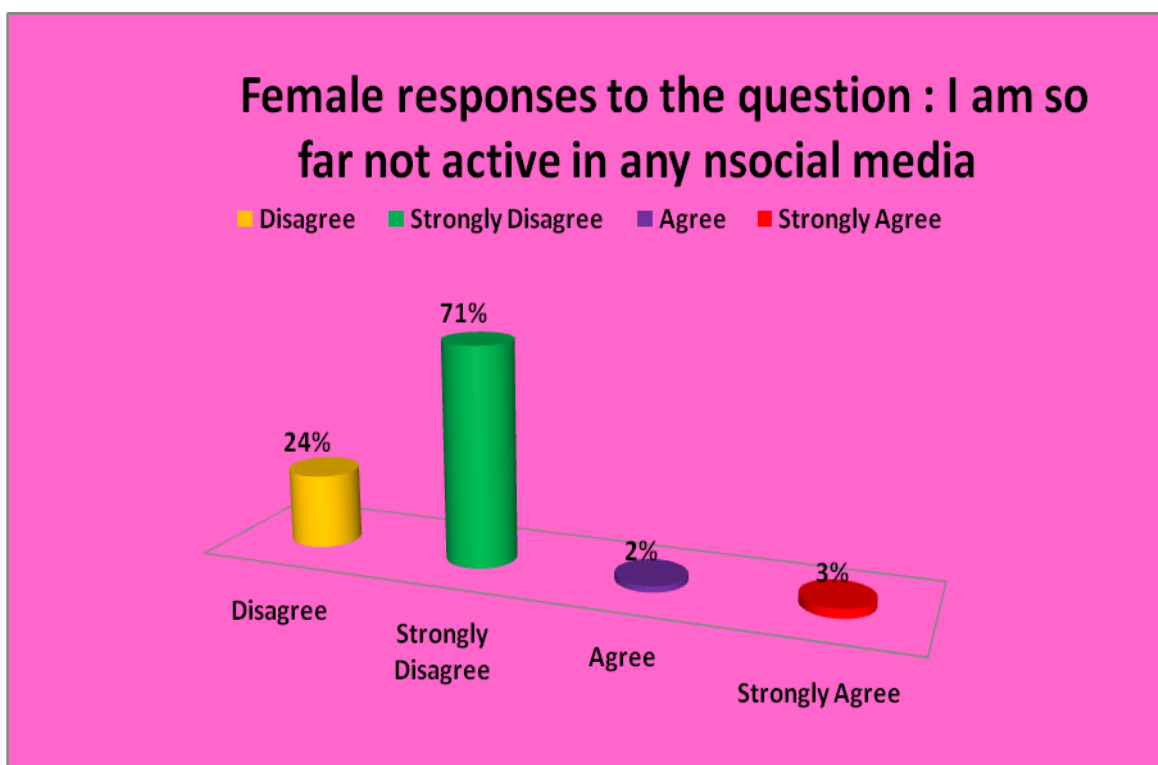


Figure 4.12:Source collected and analyzed data

Figures 4.11 and 4.12 are responses of the students question on being not active in social media. Respondents show that they are very active in social media. 77% and 23% of the male students strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they are not presently engaged in any social media. 71% and 24% of the female students strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they are not presently engaged in any social media.

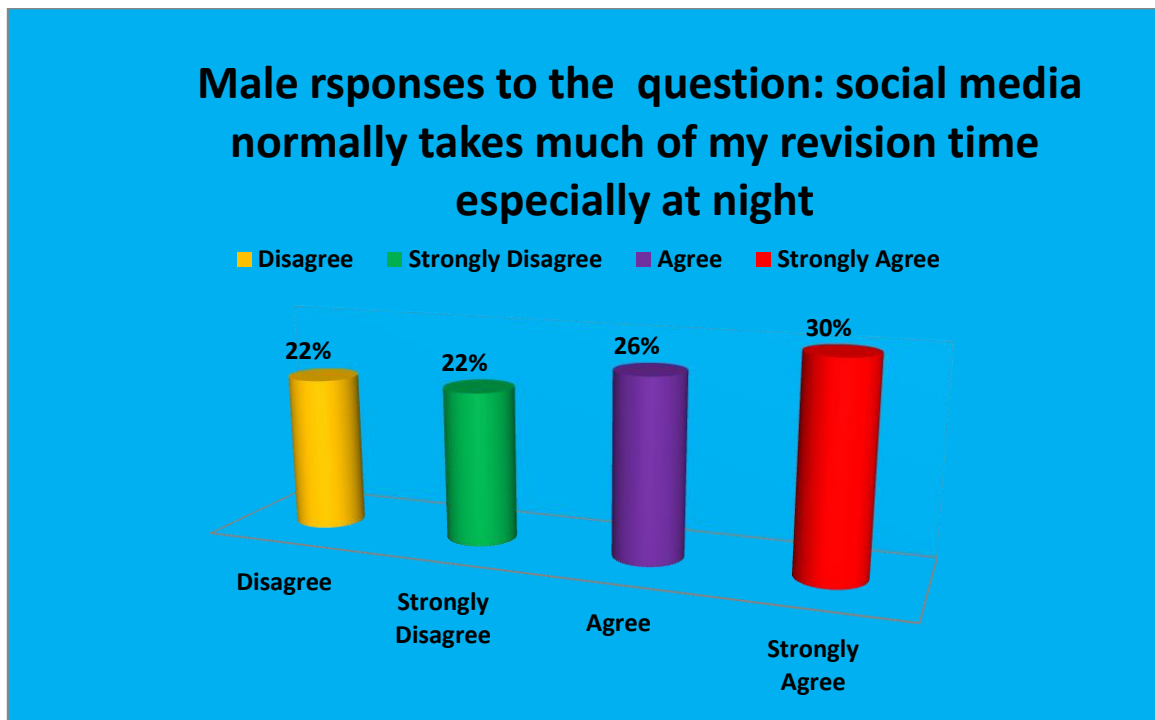


Figure 4.13 Source collected and analyzed data:

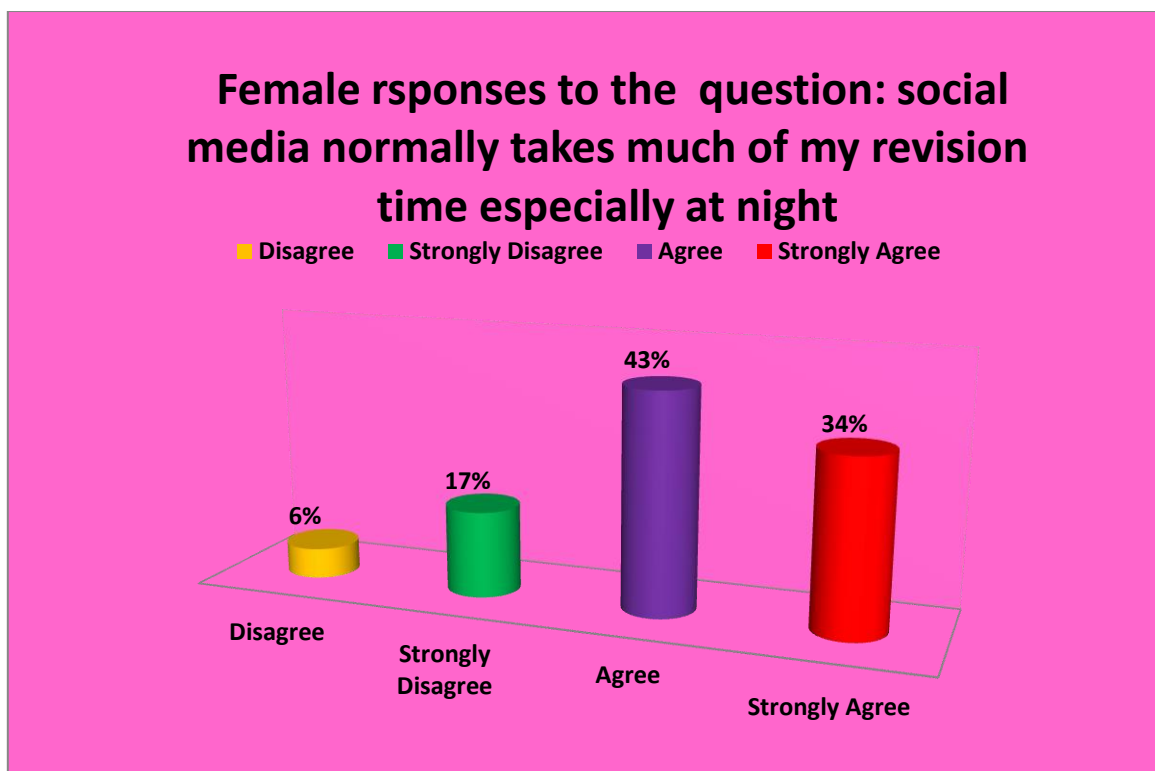


Figure 4.14: Source collected and analyzed data

Responses about the negative effects of social media during revision time especially at night can be seen in figures 4.13 and 4.14. The results show that 26% and 30% of the male students agreed and strongly agreed respectively that social media affect their revision time especially at night. It is higher in the side of ladies whereby 43% and 34% agreed and strongly agreed to that effect.

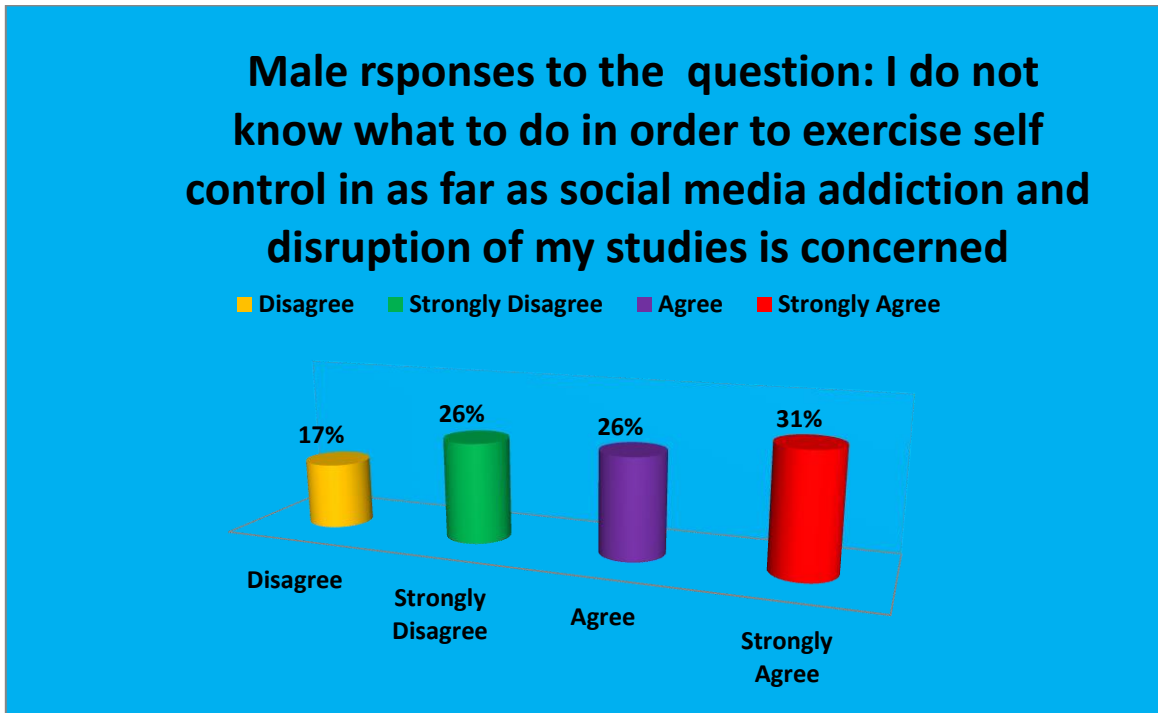


Figure 4.15: Source collected and analyzed data

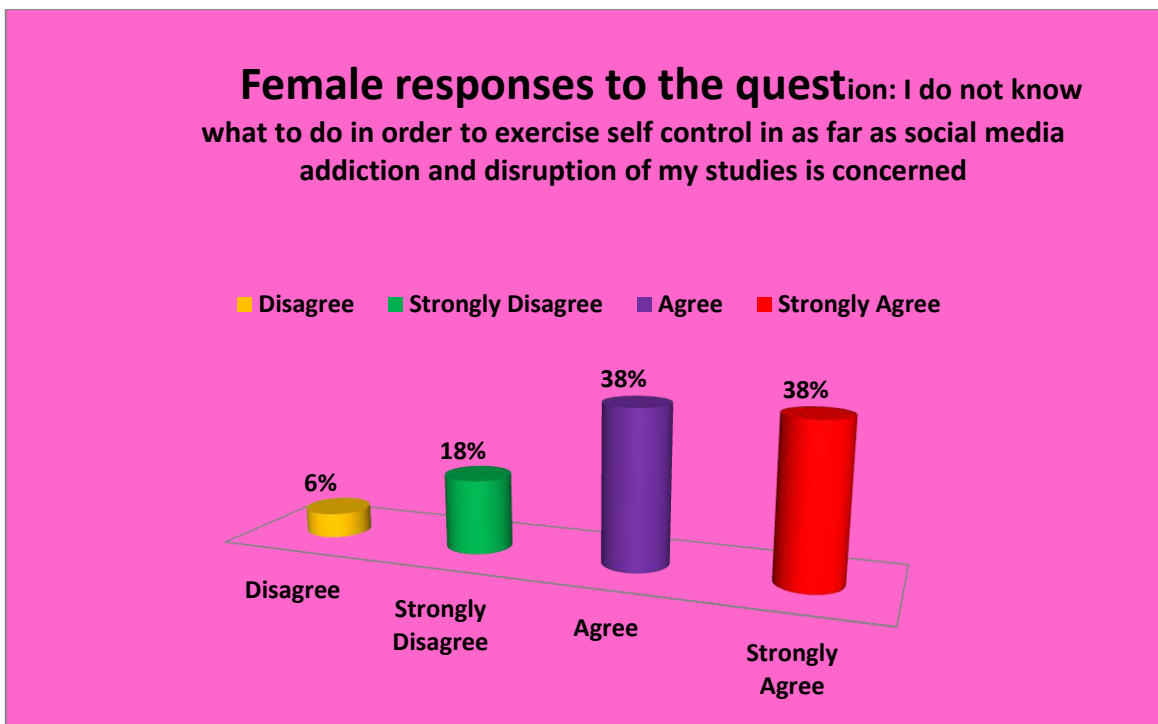


Figure.4.16: Source collected and analzsed data

Figures 4.15 and 4.16 above shows clearly that the respondents are unable to exercise self control as far as social media addiction and its disruption of their revision time is concerned.

This study established that female respondents had a higher to social media compared to their male counterparts. This could be attributed to their love for exploration and social networking. The female respondents embraced new social networking technologies better than their male counterparts. For male students, 26% and 31% and for female 38% and

38% respectively agreed and strongly agreed that they are unable to control the interference of social media to their revision time at night.

5. DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Discussions of the findings are based on the following objectives:

- i) To investigate the type of social media popularly used by undergraduate students in the university.
- ii) To investigate the effects of utilization of social network on the study habits of undergraduate students in the university.

Based on the investigation of the type of social media popularly used by undergraduates in the universities in Kenya, the results of this study shows that Whatsapp is the most popular followed by the face book the rest are rarely used and some are completely not in use. The respondents who preferred WhatsApp to other social media networking technologies attributed the same to its user-friendly interface, its real time transmission abilities, and its versatility and multimedia capabilities.

The respondents who preferred Facebook to other social networking technologies owed the same to its wide spread popularity the world over, its ease of access and its user-friendly interface. Some respondents pointed out that its wide reach makes it suitable for cross-cultural social interactions with users across the globe. Respondents who preferred twitter expressed their interest in twitter owing to a tag of class associated with the social media network. Respondents who preferred Instagram attributed it to its multimedia processing capabilities.

The second objective investigated effects of utilization of social network on the study habits of undergraduate students in the university. Responses here are interesting in that the students stated that social media does not affect their studies negatively during the day. In fact Respondents acknowledged that social media in deed contributes positively to their study habits. They indicated that social media enables them to receive timely class updates and facilitate their group discussions. They indicated that social media helps with sharing study materials like notes and also play a great role in team building through social media groups. Respondents acknowledged that social media plays a pivotal role in enhancing collaborative learning among students; this means that it has arguably more positive effects on learning than otherwise. While on the other hand social media addiction at night affects their revision time. They also asserted that they are completely unable at this point to exercise self control. This finding agreed with Michele and Shonna (2007) who stated that approximately 51% of 21 Millions of youths/students that engage in social media sites on daily bases have been socially affected more so negatively. Social behaviour can be either positive or negative in the sense that users are often times susceptible to the negative aspect of it especially when users (students) come in contact with deviant behaviours

Report from the interviews:

The results from the interviewed students also greatly reflected the views obtained from the questionnaires. However, the report from the interviewed lecturers shows that they think that social media negatively affect the study habits of the students. All of them cited the rampant use of social media in examination cheatings. They also cited situations whereby they have found students engaging in social media while lectures and tutorials are on.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, social media is both supportive to the students study habits particularly during the day but at the same time its addiction at night hours affect negatively their revision time. In addition to this point the respondents agreed strongly that they are unable to exercise self control over the interference of social media to their revision particularly at night. The findings of this study also shows that all the students are highly involved in social media whereby the majority are using Whatsapp followed by the facebook. Gender variations in the use of social media is not prominent it is closely similar. Male respondents seemingly embraced 'class' better than their female peers in as far as social media usage is concerned. This is evident in the number of males who preferred twitter to other social media. The survey further established that the most preferable time for social media engagements by all respondents was nighttime, gender notwithstanding.

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A solid majority of the respondents from across the gender divide admitted to being tempted to engage in social media in class or even in the library for social reasons rather than academic reasons. The study further established that social media usage for both genders stood at over 70%, attributable to increased access to smart phones and the Internet.

About 80% of the female respondents and over 50% of the male respondents agreed that social media takes much of their revision time, especially at night. About 70% of the female respondents and over 50% of the male respondents agreed to being helpless in as far as exercising control over social media addiction and disruption of their studies is concerned.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, it is prudent to make the following recommendation:

Curriculum developers should include in the ICT curriculum topics on appropriate use and management of social media among the students at all levels of education.

Students should be aware that overindulgence in social media is addictive and time wasting hence exercising self-control as early as possible.

Guidance and counseling therapeutic programmes should be organized by the universities to remedy the students who are already addicted by social media and has affected their moral and academic behaviours negatively.

Recommendation for further study:

Many a times we tend to think that social media only influences negatively the youths adults are also vulnerable to the same and a study should be conducted on the effects of social media on domestic lives. Another study can also be the effects of social media on time management in an organization or the impact of social media on moral behaviours of the adults in a particular organization.

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