ABSTRACT

Globally, internet use has become an integral part of education and everyday life. Statistics indicate that up to 90% of students in schools have access to the internet. Reports from Kisumu County Director of Education indicate that 6290 (8%) students out of 78630 who use the internet experience academic problems which would affect academic achievement. This was the highest as compared to the neighbouring Counties, where Homa-bay reported 3624 (6%) out of 60408, Siaya 2036 (4%) out of 50906 and Nyamira reported 1455 (3%) out of 48502 students. Problems reported to affect academic achievement include truancy, absenteeism, lateness and exam leakages. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of internet use on academic achievement among students in public secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. Objectives of the study were to; determine the prevalence of internet use among students, determine gender differences in internet use among students, establish the influence of educational, social and recreational uses of internet on academic performance of students, and to determine the perceptions of guidance and counseling heads on effectiveness of strategies put in place to monitor internet use in public secondary schools in Kisumu County. The study was guided by a conceptual framework in which internet use was the independent variable while academic achievement the dependent variable. The study adopted descriptive survey and correlational research designs. Population of the study comprised of 3,540 form 3 and 4 students, 14 Deputy Principals and 14 Guidance and Counseling Heads. Simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 318 students. Saturated sampling was used to select 13 Guidance and Counseling heads and 13 deputy principals. Questionnaire and Interview Schedules were used to collect data. A pilot study was carried out on 1 deputy principal, 1guidance and counseling head and 36 students using test-retest method. Reliability of the instruments was established using Pearson's r with a confidence level of 95%, $p \leq 0.05$, and a coefficient index of 0.89 obtained. Experts from the department of Educational Psychology, Maseno University ascertained validity of the instruments. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and means. Influence of internet use was established using Pearson's product moment correlation. Qualitative data was transcribed, organized into themes and sub-themes then reported in an ongoing process. The study established that recreational use of internet was most prevalent among students (mean 2.80), followed by social use (mean 2.45), and least was educational use (mean 2.08); a significant difference between gender and internet use was established; $U= 10450$, $p=0.020$. There was a positive relationship established between educational use of internet and academic performance; $r = 0.78$, $p=0.00$, a positive relationship between social use of internet and academic performance; $r =0.14$, $p=0.011$ and a positive relationship between recreational use of internet and academic performance; $r =0.12$, $p=0.031$. Counseling strategies were reported to be more effective in monitoring internet use (mean 3.12). The study concluded that recreational, social and academic uses of internet had influence on academic performance. It was recommended that school counselors help students use internet towards positive academic achievement through counseling strategies. Findings of this study may benefit students, teachers, parents and administrators on instilling guidelines and making policies for appropriate internet use.