

Social & Digital Media Usage Amongst High School Students in The Drakenstein Local Municipality, Western Cape-South Africa

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Abstract

The rapid rise of social and digital media usage among high school students in the Drakenstein Local Municipality, Western Cape, South Africa has sparked discussions on its effects on academic performance, social interactions, and mental health. This study explores the extent of social media engagement, its benefits, and associated challenges. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative surveys (n = 500 students from 10 schools) and qualitative focus group discussions (n = 10 groups, 6–10 students each).

Findings reveal that while social media enhances collaboration, learning opportunities, and self-expression, excessive use contributes to academic distractions, sleep deprivation, and cyberbullying.

The study recommends school digital literacy programs, promoting healthy screen time habits, and encouraging parental involvement to foster a balanced approach to social media use.

Keywords: Academic performance, cyberbullying, digital literacy, learning opportunities, mental health