

**INFLUENCE OF WHATSAPP USAGE ON SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS AMONG
STUDENTS IN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KENYA, NAIROBI COUNTY,
KENYA**

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Accepted, October 26th, 2023

Abstract

The study is about the influence of Whatsapp usage on social behavior among students in Technical University of Kenya, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was anchored on the problem behaviour theory. The study adopted mixed method research design. The study was conducted at Technical University of Kenya with a target population of 16000 students. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 391 respondents. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. The instruments were scrutinized by experts in the study area to judge the items' validity. There was a reliability statistics to test the internal consistency within items which were established using the Cronbach's Alpha where a threshold of 0.7 was accepted. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected from the field. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and reported in narrative form. Both descriptive (means and percentages) and inferential statistics (for testing research hypothesis) were applied through one-way analysis of variance at the level of significance of 0.05 for quantitative data collected. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26 was used for data analysis. There was a statistically significant correlation between the use of WhatsApp and social behavior among students in Technical University of Kenya, Nairobi County ($r=0.654$; $sig. =.0125$). The study recommended that the university management should establish mechanisms of limiting the internet access to students. The relevant authorities and stakeholders to develop and pass policies for banning some sites that "corrupt" students' mind. The findings of this study may benefit university administrators, the government, particularly the education stakeholders, in formulating policies that may control the usage and consumption of social media content that negatively influence their social behavior.

Keywords: *Whatsapp Usage, Social Behaviours, Students, Technical University*

INTRODUCTION

The importance of social connections cannot be underestimated regarding individual needs and those of their social grouping (Zyl, 2009). Consequently, if society can be harness this human ability that is innate to manage then it can experience better interactions and connections (Zyl, 2009). Social media is one method of networking and creating links with

different social groups. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the social media refers to human interaction in which individuals build, share or exchange knowledge in virtual social groups or networks. It is dependent on internet-based and mobile technology. Social media and traditional media have a significant difference with reference to issues such as acceptability, cost, geographical reach, usability, immediacy, cost and permanence. Video sites, blogs, wikis, blogs, and other online interactions are just a few examples of the tools that are termed as "social media." Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Foursquare, Snap Chat, Viber and Youtube are the most popular social networking platforms in Kenya.

The four primary pillars of collaboration, participation, enablement, and time form the foundation of the notion of social networks as discussed by Bertot et al. (2010). Characterized by the social interface, the social media is both participatory and collective by its very nature. It enables interactions among its users another and establish groups in order to socialize, pursue or share information same interests or goals. Social media may be beneficial to its users since it provides them a platform to talk. Its effectiveness in democratizing the media is enabled by production and transmission of information from anyone with internet connection on a budget. Due to the temporal incentives of social media, individuals may submit material almost immediately (Duggan & Smith, 2013). The amount of time used for social networking rose by 37% in 2012 as compared to 2011, according to studies by Anderson and Bushman (2002) conducted in the United States. Additionally, Martnez, Vanesa, and Jone (2014) highlight how teenagers' use of social media has facilitated communication. A significant impact is evident on how often they engage in "sexting," which encourages immoral sexual behaviours.

In South Africa, Shava and Chinyamurindi (2018) shown that information and communication technology (ICT) more quickly adapted by the youths than any other age group segment. The emergence of social media, particularly the popular sites Facebook and Instagram, has contributed in this. There have been calls for additional research on teenagers' usage of ICT platforms like social network websites, particularly in rural areas, as a foundation for interventions that improve both communication and learning. According to the authors, there is a substantial positive association between the dependent variable (social media usage) with the three independent factors (knowledge, habit, obligation and sharing) with regard to the use of Facebook amongst the study population of rural South African youth.

In Nigeria, Adegboyega (2020) found that online platforms usage by students had adverse impacts towards their behavior socially. Additionally, statistically significant changes lacked in participants' perceptions of how social media affects instructors' social behaviour regardless of their gender, age, or educational background. Therefore, one of the recommendations of the study was that to help pupils behave more socially, primary school teachers must educate them on appropriate usage of social media platforms.

Technology and its misuse by students create challenges for administrators and parents. Therefore, according to Susan (2006), teachers and parents should be on the forefront of educating students about the drawbacks and benefits of social network platforms, as well as appropriate and inappropriate usage. Karpinski and Kirshner (2010) added that excessive usage of network sites is mostly notable among students who demonstrate a carefree attitude, a luxurious lifestyle, and usually violate the rules. They are also quick to imitate bad behaviour, ignorant to teachers and parents, and not concerned about their studies, among

other things. Shih (2009) felt that social media has dominated most students' focus to the point where they have developed social media dependency. These studies recommend that access to social media should be restricted and controlled, and students should channel their idle time to their studies.

Statement of the Problem

The main problem being addressed by the study is that of social behavior of the students where most students at the university and colleges depict deviant behaviors borrowed from social media usages. Students learn some bad morals from the social media where there is a lot of naked pictures of both men and women posted to attract following and fame. The influence of social media on morals has become negative to students who are still young and learning the world when they are exposed to pornography and violence (Hinduja and Patchin, 2014). The university students are exposed to violence extremism from social media where terrorist groups and gangs operate twitter account like in the case of Alshabaab terrorist group in Somalia that operates twitter account where they expose atrocities they have committed to innocent citizens in the Horn of Africa (Hinduja and Patchin, 2014). Social networking platforms have been seen as a source of bad influence on students. Hinduja and Patchin (2014) cited social media as a cause of cyberbullying where some users send intimidating or abusive languages on other students. A study conducted by Udris (2014) found that cyberbullying was associated with frequent visits to social media platforms like Facebook. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), these sites are normally not actively monitored by security agents thus making them a haven of explicit content and sharing of gross content.

Empirical Literature

A possible and useful source of information for learning about various disease conditions, patients' attitudes and behaviours, and treatments is considered to be WhatsApp, a form of social media. The regular use of the media opens up fresh opportunities for the analysis of various communication-related topics. WhatsApp can be utilized as a large data source to identify communication and behavioural patterns associated with problematic prescription medication use. A framework for collecting and analyzing social media information about drug misuse in a way that will reduce obstacles and limits related to subject deduction as well as information quality has been developed by Tareq (2019)..

The findings in this study reveal the need to develop techniques for text mining in social media including WhatsApp for drug abuse. For the purpose of researching drug abuse on social media, the study suggests a framework that produces high-quality datasets. The focus is on developing methods to improve topic discovery and recognition in social sites' domains characterized by a wide variety of terminologies. From a practical standpoint, automatic analysis of social network user postings by use of machine learning methods can assist to understand public issues and topics that are present in user recent online discussions.

Smith, Rogers, Strickland and Epstein (2021) analyzed Whatsapp messages from current, past and potential users to better understand their conceptions of the drug, the patterns and reasons for use, and the stated benefits and dangers. Additional quantitative studies were carried out utilizing thematic coding and Reddit postings. Between 2012 and 2020, 210 posts mentioning were included in the study. Ten of the detected eighteen thematic groups were in line with the anticipated themes. All text was coded by two independent raters, who came up with 1,382 different codes, of which 1,090 were concordant (78.9% interrater agreement).

According to the study, using tianeptine was usually accompanied with using other substances, including kratom, phenibut, and racetams Smith et. al (2021). Tianeptine was conceived of and used in many ways through WhatsApp, such as an antidepressant, opioid and "nootropic" (cognitive enhancer). Positive benefits were less frequently mentioned between 2014 and 2020, whereas withdrawal and negative consequences were more frequently mentioned. According to information obtained through WhatsApp, some reasons people use kratom include substitution or withdrawal mitigation for other drugs (particularly opioids), self-treatment for psychiatric problems and in quality of life improvement, performance or mood. There were clear descriptions of addiction, withdrawal, and tolerance. Intravenous usage was uncommon, severely prohibited, and associated with negative consequences.

Using a systematic literature review approach, Suarez-Lledo and Alvarez-Galvez (2019) identified 69 published studies as eligible, covered a broad range of health issues, and social sites including Whatsapp. Six major categories were used to group the topics: vaccinations (32%), pandemics (10%), drugs or smoking (22%), eating disorders (9%), medical treatments (7%) and non-communicable diseases (19%). The majority of studies were based on one of the five methodological approaches listed below: social network analysis (28%), content evaluation (26%), quality evaluation (24%), sentiment analysis (6%) and content/text analysis (16%). In research involving tobacco products and substances like opioids and marijuana, health misinformation was most widespread. In some cases, posts containing false information reached 87%. The human papilloma virus vaccination was the one that was most frequently misinformed about vaccines (43%). Compared to the aforementioned subjects, arguments in favour of eating disorders and diet-related health misinformation (36%) were more prevalent. Studies that were primarily concerned with diseases (i.e., non-communicable illnesses and pandemics) also found that there was a moderate level of misinformation (40%)—particularly with regard to cancer. And lastly, medical treatments (30%) were the subject of the least amount of health misinformation.

In Kenya, National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), has been active in targeting the leading beer and cigarette manufacturers advertisements. By doing so, the crusade against drugs by the national government was spear-headed. Former NACADA boss Joseph Kaguthi says that he is not against alcohol or anyone who consumes it but maintains that he will fight arbitrary efforts by alcohol and tobacco firms of unfairly exposing Kenyan youth to their products which in return destroys them. Smokers are portrayed as being either wealthy, great sportsmen or socially successful or important people. In developed and developing countries, Social pressure evidenced in Medias including WhatsApp poses a universal risk factor for substance abuse among adolescents (Barbara, 2015).

According to Ogidefa (2008), the media (including WhatsApp), the influence of family life, the high rate of drug abuse, the easy firearms access, and the lack of severe juvenile offenders punishment for are the main contributing factors to youth misbehavior in America. He goes on to say that if this surge in violent crimes is to be reversed, it is necessary to look into and analyze the reasons of teenage violence in order to identify any that might be impacted by the change.

Theoretical Framework

Problem Behaviour Theory was used in guiding this study. The theory was developed by Jessor and Jessor (1987) as a social-psychological framework to predict and explain problem

behaviour. The theory is composed of three main systems, each of which contains explanatory factors that either encourage or inhibit the engagement in problem behaviour. According to this theory, the three main systems of psychosocial factors are the behaviour system, the personality system and the perceived environment system .

The ideas that make up the personality system include a patterned and associated collection of socio-cognitive values that are comparatively long-lasting, as well as personal expectations, beliefs, attitudes, and orientations towards oneself and society that are a reflection of social learning and developmental experience. Problem behaviours and typical behaviours are the two key components that make up the behaviour system. According to the theory of problem behaviour, engagement in one kind of problem behaviour enhances the possibility that one will also engage in others because of their connections to youths' social ecologies (Jessor & Jessor, 1987).

The study's main emphasis, the perceived environment system, consists of social controls, models, and support. The influence of these factors depends on how directly or conceptually related problem conduct is to them. According to the theory, there are several factors that contribute to problem behaviour propensity in the perceived environment system, including low parental approval of problem behaviour, high peer approval of problem behaviour, high peer models for problem behaviour, lack of parental or guardian control, low peer controls, a lack of parent and peer expectations that are compatible, and low parental (relative to peer) influence (Jessor & Jessor, 1987).

A secondary school student's view of their parents' nurturing will determine whether or not they were inclined to engage in troublesome behaviours. Students who believe that their parents have little to no control over their life are likely to have strong peer influences, which increases the risk that they may participate in problematic behaviour. Low parental support and restrictions may be indicated by poor or low levels of perceived parental nurturing. Low levels of perceived parental nurturing may indicate a higher likelihood of engaging in problem behaviours because parental controls and support are essential during the adolescent stage of development, in which secondary school students fall (Jessor & Jessor, 1987).

METHODOLOGY

The researcher shall use a quantitative research approaches. The study's target population is all those students enrolled at the Technical University of Kenya which is 16,000 as given by the academic registrar. Stratified random sampling was used for this study. Yamane provides a simple sample size formula to help determine the sample size required (Sanjoy, 2018). This formula is outlined below:

$$n=N/(1 + N(e)^2)$$

The required sample for this study was estimated at 391 respondents at a confidence interval of 95% and with a sampling error of 5%. Questionnaires were used as instruments of gathering the data for students and interview guide for two officers from the office of the Dean of Students. Data was entered and tabulated using SPSS version 26. Central tendency and the variability measures were included in a summary of descriptive statistics. Contrarily, inferential analysis is used to draw conclusions from the sample data's outcomes. This was derived from the findings of hypothesis testing and population value estimates using sample data.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Questionnaire Response Rate

The study had a sample size of 391 students distributed across the various faculties at Technical University of Kenya. However, the study managed to achieve a response of 303 making a rate of 77.5%. The achievement was reached through procedural and ethical considerations.

Influence of use of WhatsApp on social Behavior

The questionnaire item on this theme was designed in a nested table and the statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree.

Table 1: Influence of use of WhatsApp on social behaviors

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Fair	Strongly agree	Total
Sexual images are widely shared across WhatsApp	F	192	4	81	26	303
	%	63.4	1.3	26.7	8.6	100
College girls have been increasingly posting nude photos in a bid to get on Whatsapp	F	104	19	143	37	303
	%	34.3	6.3	47.2	12.2	100
Sexual immorality is highly promoted through Whatsapp in a way of achieving social acceptance	F	140	15	111	37	303
	%	46.2	5	36.6	12.2	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of the students (63.4%) strongly disagreed that sexual images are widely shared across WhatsApp. The table shows that 26.7% were neutral about the statement while only a few (8.6%) of the students strongly agreed with the statement. While the findings showed varied opinions and views from the students, the few who strongly agreed that there were cases of sexual images being shared in WhatsApp was consistent with what Martínez, Vanesa and Jone (2014) emphasized how youngsters' use of social media has facilitated communication. This has had a significant impact on the amount of "sexting" they engage in, which encourages immoral sexual behaviors.

Table 1 also showed that almost half of the students (47%) rated neutral on the statement that college girls are posting more and more nude photos in an effort to get on Whatsapp. There was another 34.3% of the students who strongly disagreed with the statement while 12.2% of the students strongly agreed that there were such postings on nude photos on WhatsApp. This was noted in the works of Michele and Kimberly (2007), who suggested that negative social behaviors among users can easily be led by social media users to, especially with the posted naked images online, adopting bad slang from others online, leading to riots or disorder.

In related interview findings, it was evident in the study that the use of WhatsApp was the leading tool for communication in the university. One interview posted;

Today, WhatsApp has become a tool of communication. Students add us even in their groups and they easily interact through the App. Many students, if not all, have WhatsApp communication that keeps them alert and informed on any new happening around the university. The tool has become important in enabling dissemination of information. However, there are groups you join and feel ashamed as a staff and just leave. They post nasty and "dirty"

photos which you may not tolerate as a staff member [KII 001, middle-aged male dean of students' staff].

In a related investigation, the students were asked to comment on how use of WhatsApp influences social behavior among themselves. There were a few views including taking too much time of the students, used in spreading rumors, depression and unnecessary social pressure. This may in association with the findings on the use of social media. Michele and Kimberley (2007) posited that there has been connections of cyberbullying to serious negative outcomes for both organizations and individuals, including depression, anxiety, drug use, eating and sleep disorders, and reduced performance in school. Smith, Rogers, Strickland and Epstein (2021) posited that through WhatsApp, as an antidepressant, "nootropic" (cognitive enhancer) and opioid tianeptine has been conceptualized and used in various ways. Positive effects were mentioned less frequently, while withdrawal and negative effects were mentioned more frequently between 2014 and 2020.

The study findings also correlate the Problem Behaviour theory postulation that concepts that make up the personality system include a systematic and related collection of generally enduring socio-cognitive values, as well as personal attitudes, expectations, orientations and beliefs towards oneself and society that are a reflection of social learning and developmental experience. Thus, the personality developed among students at TUK created social values where they invested their interests and shared through learning on Whatsapp.

Investigations on the association between usage of WhatsApp and social behavior among students at TUK in a different approach, the study conducted a correlation analysis. The results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between Use of WhatsApp and Social Behavior

		Social Behavior	Use of WhatsApp
Social Behaviour	Pearson correlation		
	Coefficient	1	0.654
	Sig.	0.000	0.0125
	N	303	303
Use of WhatsApp	Pearson correlation		
	Coefficient	0.654	1
	Sig.	0.0125	0.000
	N	303	303

Table 2 shows a correlation coefficient between Use of WhatsApp and social behavior among students, $r= 0.654$. This implied a reduced positive correlation between the use of WhatsApp and social behavior. The correlation was a significance level $=.0125$. This implied that there was a statistically significant correlation between the use of WhatsApp and social behavior among students in TUK.

Conclusion

The study found that only a few of the students strongly agreed that there were cases of sexual images being shared in WhatsApp. Some of the students strongly agreed that there were such postings on nude photos on WhatsApp. The study showed that today, WhatsApp has become a tool of communication but there are groups that one joins and feels ashamed as a staff and just leave. The study showed that there were a few views including taking too much time of the students, used in spreading rumors, depression and unnecessary social pressure. The study showed that there was a statistically correlation between the use of WhatsApp and social behavior among students in TUK.

Recommendations

The study recommended that the university management to establish mechanisms of limiting the internet access to students especially in campus Wi-Fi access points. This can be designed in such all porn and related sites are not accessible under the University internet. The study calls for the development of strict regulations in the use and abuse of online and internet use and specially addressing the social behavior setbacks. The university management to adopt the proposed interventions measures that will limit the effect of social media use of on learners' social behavior.

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