**EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE YOUTH IN UMUGO TOWN CENTRE, TEREGO DISTRICT, UGANDA**

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Background of the Study**

Social media becomes one of the main sources for people to obtain information (Dourish, 2011). This media is divided into two types, namely print and non-print media. Print media obtain information through printed mails, newspapers, magazines and dailies. Whereas, none print media obtain information from radio, television, and social media like Twitter. Media remains a tool, which renders any help to people across the globe to influence their opinion, attitude, and knowledge (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Angus, Thelwall and Stuart (2008), social media furnishes individuals with information in any sector of life. Through media, there has been a lot of development and growth that occurred due to the availability of platforms that allows them to get linked to the entire universe and contribute to global development. As the use of media increases, many people including youth use it to find out about the historical development of society, concepts, religion (Angus, Thelwall and Stuart, 2008).

Recently in the United States of America, social media has become a means for people to connect with society and establish a relationship with others (Nicole & Boyd, 2017). As the name implies, social media carries a social undertone in which the users are allowed to interact with others in order to promote interpersonal relationships and give a certain effect on the social behaviors of individuals worldwide (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012). Social behavior is a part of human psychology against unacceptable behaviors. It centers on the attitude, perception, reaction, and disposition of an individual to others around him (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). There are positive and negative social behaviors. Positive social behavior is acceptable behavior due to positive and favorable attitudes and dispositions. Negative social behavior is the opposite of positive social due to negative and unfavorable attitudes and dispositions. Both positive and negative behaviors affect youth because the majority of users of social media in Dubai are the youth who learn bullying, blackmail, involvement in fraud, impersonation among other negative influences through WhatsApp, Facebook, and google classroom (Abdullah, Ellias & Jegak, 2009).

Rajeev & Jobilal (2015) in their study on effects of social media on behavior of the youth in South Africa expressed that youth do not usually use the good side of social media; they are tilted towards the downside. Moreover, Lowisz (2014) stated that instead of using social media for positive communication and the benefits of connectivity, youth use it to the contrary.

In East Africa and specifically in Kenya, Muritala & Theophilus (2014) researched social media usage, self-image, group behavior, and academic performance among senior secondary school students in Ilorin-West Local Government, Kwara State. Muinde (2015) also researched the social media and behavior of secondary school students in Kitui Central Sub-County, Kitui County, Eastern Kenya and concluded that social media use has a negative influence towards behavior of the youth in Kitui County, Kenya.

According to Uganda Bereua of Statistics (UBOS, 2020), in Uganda, the increase in the use of social media in recent years has enabled users to obtain vast amounts of information from different sources. Unprecedented technological developments are currently enabling social media influencers to build powerful interactivity with their followers. These interactions have, in one way or another, influenced young people's behaviors in Uganda.

In Umugo Town Centre, the number of social media users has increased rapidly in the last few years. Observable indicators show that 7 in every 10 youth spend more than 10 hours per day in social media (DEO- Terego District, 2022). However, how the increasing social media use affects behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre is yet to be established (DEO- Terego District, 2022). It is against this high or increasing use of social media that the researcher is motivated to assess the effects of social media use on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre, Terego District, Uganda.

**Statement of the Problem**

Incidentally, parents are quite busy fending for the family; they do not have enough time to sit and discuss with their children. Many questions that are meant for parents to answer are asked and answered online. Youth do not have the privilege of communicating and learning social behavior from parents, thus, youth mostly learn social behavior through chat on social media, such as Facebook and WhatsApp. As a result, in Umugo Town Centre, 7 in every 10 youth use social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, tweeter, email, and such platforms are suspected to have their downside especially when youth are not well monitored, it could affect their behavior (DEO- Terego District, 2022). It is against this high or increasing use of social media that the researcher is motivated to assess the effects of social media use on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre, Terego District, Uganda.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the effects of WhatsApp social media platform on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre?
2. What are the effects of Facebook social media platform on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre?
3. What are the effects of Tweeter social media platform on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre?
4. What is the relationship between social media use and behavior of the Youth in Umugo Town Centre?

**General Objective of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to assess the effects of social media use on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre, Terego District, Uganda.

**Specific Objectives of the Study**

1. To describe the effects of WhatsApp social media platform on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre.
2. To establish the effects of Facebook social media platform on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre.
3. To determine the effects of Tweeter social media platform on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre.
4. To establish the relationship between social media use and behavior of the Youth in Umugo Town Centre.

**Scope of the Study**

**Geographical Scope:** This study will be carried out in Umugo Town Centre, Terego District, Uganda. Omugo is a Town Centre located in Terego district in Uganda's Northern Region. It is located approximately 360 kilometres (220 mi) northwest of Uganda's capital Kampala. The area hosts an estimated 168,000 refugees, mostly from South Sudan, in the Imvepi Refugee Settlement and the western zones of the Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement in the district. The study area borders the districts of [Yumbe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yumbe_District" \o "Yumbe District) to the north, [Madi-Okollo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madi-Okollo) to the east, [Arua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arua_District" \o "Arua District) to the south, and [Maracha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maracha_District" \o "Maracha District) to the west.

**Content Scope:** The general objective of this study is to assess the effects of social media use on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre, Terego District, Uganda. The independent variable is effects of social media which covers effects of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Tweeter use while the dependent variable is behavior of the youth.

**Time Scope**: The study will cover a period of 5 months which is from January 2023 to May 2023.

**Methodological Scope**: This study will consider descriptive and correlational research designs guided by both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches. Data will be collected randomly using a questionnaire.

**Significance of the Study**

**To the Youth**: The study results will ensure that youth affected by social media use get necessary guidance and counselling services to develop positive behaviour through positive use of social media platforms.

**To the Policy Makers**: The information of the study may help the policy makers such as the government to come up with better plan, policies and laws which will project the youth from the effects of social media use.

**To Other Researchers, Students and Scholars**: The information of the study may enrich the existing literature bank. Therefore, researchers and scholars may benefit by using the information as literature review or quote the study as a source in their future studies.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study will be guided by the Technological Determinism Theory by Mcluhan (1962) which explains that; individuals learn and feel and think the way we do because of the messages they receive through the current technology that is available. The radio which was the example used required people to listen and develop a sense of hearing. Television engages both hearing and visual senses. We then transfer those developed senses into our everyday lives and we want to use them again. The medium is then our message. Social media brought about by emerging technology requires people to listen and engaged often. People then interpret the messages sent to them from social media in their everyday life. The theory explains that when new systems of technology are developed, the culture or society is immediately changed to reflect the senses needed to use the new technology. The theory predicts that with every new system of media technology, society will change and adapt to that technology. It explains that there is a simple cause and effect analysis between the introduction of new technology and the changes in society's way of thinking, feeling, acting, or believing. In line with this theory, behavior of the youth today could have been shaped by the social media they consume each day. However, this can only be said after carrying out this empirical study to investigate effects of social media use on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre, Terego District, Uganda.

**Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 of the study indicates the study variables. The study variables include effects of social media use on the behavior of the youth in Umugo Town Centre, Terego District, Uganda. The independent variable is effects of social media which covers effects of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Tweeter use while the dependent variable is behavior of the youth.

**Independent Variables Dependent Variable**

**Effects of;**

* WhatsApp Social Media
* Facebook Social Media
* Tweeter Social Media

**Behavior of the Youth**

* Positive
* Negative

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework, Source: Researcher

**Operational Definition of Terms**

**WhatsApp Social Media:** In this study, it refers to a phone installed social media platform where the youth can share messages, pictures and other information.

**Facebook Social Media:** In this study, it refers to a computer or phone installed software where the youth share messages and communicate to each other.

**Tweeter Social Media:** In this study, it refers to a social media installed software used by the youth to send messages, communicate in terms of messages, pictures or other captions.

**Behavior of the Youth:** In this study, it refers to the character developed by the youth after using social media platforms.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Introduction**

This chapter contains literature review on social media use and behavior of the Youth. Source of the literature is journals, articles and reports. The literature is chronologically arranged according to the study objectives with the aim of reviewing what other researchers and scholars say about the study subject as well as what they don’t address in their studies as gaps guiding this current study.

**Effects of Social Media Platform**

Technology has always been fascinating the humans and they have always found various techniques

that make it more useful to lead an easy lifestyle. The various innovations and advancements in

technological field have paved way for faster and better way of living. Whatsapp is one such

advancement that has drastically altered the way youngsters communicate with each other. This

paper examines the effect of Whatsapp usage on youngster’s relationships among themselves and

their friends and family. The dependency on Whatsapphas led to a number of social, physical and

psychological problems among youngsters. The addiction has altered the behavior and influenced

their relationships. This paper has tried to focus all such aspects and youngsters social behavior too

which has now created fake sense of belongingness, nearness and intimacy with their friends and

relatives

**WhatsApp usage and behavior of the Youth**

According to Yeboah & Ewur (2014), technology has always been fascinating the humans and they have always found various techniques that make it more useful to lead an easy lifestyle. The various innovations and advancements in technological field have paved way for faster and better way of living. Whatsapp is one such advancement that has drastically altered the way youngsters communicate with each other. A paper by Prabha and Abhishek (2018) examines the effect of Whatsapp usage on youngster’s relationships among themselves and their friends and family. The dependency on Whatsapp has led to a number of social, physical and psychological problems among youngsters. The addiction has altered the behavior and influenced their relationships. This paper has tried to focus all such aspects and youngsters social behavior too which has now created fake sense of belongingness, nearness and intimacy with their friends and relatives.

Studies by Berker, Hartmann, Punie, & Ward, 2016) have demonstrated that WhatsApp is the most famous instant messaging service utilized by youth today. Youngsters who give more significance to friendship, social lives and family connections make use of WhatsApp in a substantial scale. The prominence of WhatsApp among youth has brought an immense benefit among specialist co-ops since it allows them power at utilizing web information in a customized manner. The motivation behind why WhatsApp is so prevalent among youth is that, it enables them to send boundless messages to their loved ones with no cost other than their web information system data plan for that they as of now utilizes as a part of their advanced mobile phones. The application is extremely convenient to use subsequent to downloading. It demonstrates to you all’s contacts that use WhatsApp in your phone and furthermore welcomes them who are yet to download and utilize. At that point they can begin informing, sharing audio records, video documents, refreshing status, and so forth.

A study entitled “The impact of WhatsApp messenger usage on students ‘performance in tertiary institutions in Ghana” by Johnson Yeboah and George Dominic Ewur (2020) published in the journal of Education & Practice in the year 2014, has concentrated on the negative aspects of WhatsApp. Their study proved that the usage of WhatsApp has impacted negatively on the performance of students in Ghana. Some of the findings of the study were the following. WhatsApp usage has led to lack of concentration during lectures, consumes much of students study time, distracts students from completing their assignments, destroys students spellings and grammatical construction of sentences.

Another study by Church, & Oliveira (2013) entitled “Smart phone application usage amongst students at a South African University”, done in the year 2012, assesses the usage of smartphone applications specifically social networking applications amongst the users in South African University. The study proved that students remain online for 16 hours a day and spends an average of 5 hours per day on their smart phones interacting with others through social networking applications.

**Facebook usage and behavior of the Youth**

Youth is a very important resource of any society. It is necessary that the youth of the society is productive and using its time wisely which helps the society in shorter terms and in the longer terms as well. The main purpose of this study by is to find the impact of individual differences of gender on the timing, frequency, purpose of usage of Facebook among Sindh University students (Alhazmi, Abdulsalam, and Azizah, 2013). In a study Saima and Pathan (2017), aim to analyze how frequently our youth especially university students use Facebook, why they use Facebook, what times they use Facebook and the extent to which they will be willing to pay. This all shows their preferences for using their resources of time and money efficiently. In this study, they collected primary data through questionnaire. For the analysis of the data, this study uses descriptive statistics (counts and frequencies) and nonparametric independent sample test and non-parametric One-way ANOVA for ranks. From the study, it was conclude that youth especially the university students are very actively involved in the usage of Facebook. Even the purposes for which they are using Facebook is not very productive; most of their time they are making friendships, chatting, commenting and posting various things on the media. Educational institutions and government should take some effective measures for the betterment of the conditions of youth.

Facebook which was introduced in 2006 for the general public has drawn a large number of users especially youth. Recent research studies confirm that 80 to 90 percent of the youth are actively involved with a particular social media site (Akubugwo & Burke, 2013). Facebook is a very important aspect in youth social life and can be useful for their academic pursuits (Abdulahi et al., 2014; Jha et al., 2016). Several studies (Abdulahi et al., 2014; Jha et al., 2016) portrayed social media interaction could have positive and negative impacts on youth short and long terms behavioral changes. Some studies elaborated that Facebook enables flexibility in learning, inspire new ideas, and increase interpersonal relationships. Also, Facebook use is reported to have negative influences like addiction, wasting time, misuse, dependence, information overload, and isolation from physical society (Jha et al., 2016).

Another study done by Akubugwo& Burke (2013) revealed that many youth use social media especially Facebook and they spend an increasing amount of quality time on these networks. Also, disclosed that spending more time daily on social media can lead to or inspire improper behavior which may lead to riot, gossips, terrorism, disorder behavior, and immoral acts. Abdulahi et al. (2014) also studied the negative effect of Facebook on Malaysian youth and stated that as youth spend more time on Facebook may deteriorate academic performance and can have health threats, privacy, and security issues.

**Tweeter usage and behavior of the Youth**

Social media can contribute to wellbeing by increasing online socialization among youth and providing them with a freedom in terms of communicating and socializing (Naeemi et al., 2014). Social media allows youth to establish friendship and support thus giving them avenues to experience many of the positive elements in life (Wu, 2014). The article by Faizal (2021) aims to investigate how Twitter usage promote well-being among college students. It is based from an in-depth interview with eight undergraduate students using the PERMA well-being model namely Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. The results show that the element of the PERMA model that relates to positive emotions, engagement and relationship were described most often. The findings of this study showed that Twitter do give respondents the emotional support and companionship. Respondents do engage in self-disclosure on Twitter where individuals share personal feeling, thoughts, along with inner thoughts and emotional states. This study found that on Twitter, young people maintain weak-tie based relationships giving opportunities for users to create and maintain larger networks of relationships from which they could benefited from.

This study by Blessed, Peter and Oludare (2020) was conducted to examine the influence of Twitter on cognitive development of Nigerian youths. Conceptual and empirical literatures were reviewed and the study was anchored on Social cognitive theory. The study adopted online survey research method (Google form) and used online Nigerian youths as respondents. A sample for the study was drawn using Morgan formula to draw a representative sample size of 384 from a population of 64,000,000 youths being the population of Nigerian youth. Availability sampling technique was adopted to administer questionnaire to respondents. Two research questions and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the proper investigation of the study. The quantitative data gathered from questionnaire were analyzed with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) using tables and charts to further explained the result of the findings. Findings revealed that tweeters found Twitter very engaging and useful which resulted into its everyday usage; increasing their knowledge which aided their cognitive development. The researchers concluded that there is significant positive relationship between influence of Twitter and cognitive development of youths and therefore recommended that institutions of higher learning in Nigeria should use Twitter as educational and learning tool.

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