THE ROLE OF X IN ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MAIN CAMPUS MUKONO

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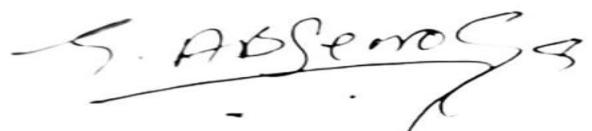A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

APPROVAL

A dissertation Presented to the School of Journalism, Media and Communication in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree in Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Communication

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02. Aug. 2024

Dedication

I dedicate this research project to my dear family and my friends. You are the reason I have come this far. To my amazing parents, Mr. Geofrey and Mrs. Mercy Akankwasa and Ms Maureen Kukunda. Your love and support will never go un noticed. Thank you for always having my back.

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ABSTRACT.

Effective communication is a cornerstone of academic success, and university students' ability to interact with one another is crucial for fostering a collaborative and productive learning environment. This study investigates the role of X in enhancing communication among university students, with a specific focus on the theoretical underpinnings of gratification theory. By employing a mixed-methods approach, this research explores how X influences students' communication patterns, satisfaction, and overall academic experience.

Gratification theory, which posits that individuals engage in communication to fulfill their social and psychological needs, serves as the theoretical framework for this study. The research design involves a survey of 200 university students, complemented by in-depth interviews with 20 participants. The findings suggest that X significantly enhances communication among university students by increasing their sense of community, reducing feelings of loneliness, and promoting a sense of belonging.

The results of this study have important implications for university administrators, educators, and policymakers seeking to create an environment that fosters effective communication and collaboration among students. The findings highlight the potential of X as a tool for promoting student engagement, improving academic outcomes, and enhancing the overall university experience. This research contributes to the existing body of literature on communication and technology, providing insights into the role of X in facilitating meaningful interactions among university students.

TABLE OF CONTENT.

LIST OF ACCRONYMS.

X- Twitter

Tweeps- People that use twitter.

i.e.-that is.

UCU. Uganda Christian university

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The topic of the study was the role of x in enhancing communication among university students: analysis of students at Uganda Christian university. The study was conducted to explore the use of twitter for communication and engagement amongst students at Uganda Christian University, main campus at Mukono, to identify the benefits and challenges and opportunities of using twitter as both a communication tool and information outlet that supports their studies and to explore strategies and better the effective use of twitter for communication and engagements among university students. It contributed knowledge in to field of digital media research, scholars will use this information to understand insights into how social media can be harnessed to improve communication among university students, promoting effective academic collaboration and engagement while addressing the challenges it introduces. The general objective of the study was to assess the role of social media in enhancing communication among university students. This chapter generally presents the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, justification and significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations and summary of the study.

1.1 background of the study

Over the years the world has gone digital and it has shaped the way people communicate or pass information amongst themselves. One of the ways or means

of communication that has shown the digital migration in this century is Twitter which is now known as X. It was launched in 2006 by some brilliant people such as Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone and Evans Williams. As time went on it grew in usage and became a powerful tool for news dissemination, allowing people to follow different people and accounts, organizations and public figures. *Mohammadi E, et al, Holmes KL (2018)*

In this 21st century the uses of the social media include twitter (X) has become widely adopted by the so many people and especially young generation which definitely include university student around the world. And they have more features and introduced a character limit of up to 280 characters which gave a huge chance of expressing themselves. *Stollak, Vandenberg, Burklund, & Weiss, 2011)*

Before the rise of social media, the sending and receiving of information, people could spend days just to receive a piece of news from different places of the world. And this has shown how people were disconnected with the outside of the world. For example, way back in the early times/ people in elite societies had two ways of communication and that was face to face communication or communication through directly seeing the person, the other form of communication was Communication at a distance or through temporary or remote writing, this involved directly seeing the person with whom you communicate but at a distance. Social media today has become the easiest means of communication to people far and close by, it is difficult today without social media promotion to have a sounding business or company. **India, 2019.**

This transformation in communication over the years serves as a proper understanding about how social media platforms like Twitter have changed the way students communicate, share information and engage more with each other and the world at large. Some of the communication methods before the internet included radio and television, letter writing, smoke signals, carrier pigeons as early as the first century BCE, electric telegraph systems around the 1800s, among others. **-Jones P. (2018).**

The **rise** of social media internet-based tools has promoted collaboration and information sharing **(Junco, Helbergert**, &Loken,2011), and this has been used in the education setting, this has in return facilitated better student learning **(kabilan, Ahmad,& Abidin,2010)** Students engagement in this study represents the time and effort that students put in looking out for collaborations and education activities**(Kuh,2001**) this outcome in turn comes with advantages such as academic achievements and positive student learning outcomes for example critical thinking, individual development among others. (**Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006; Kuh 1993**)

 Twitter then introduces the use of Hashtags which was common to use throughout many nations, which allowed users to participate in a campaign, discover related content on specific topics. After that the concept of Retweeting came to become common because this enabled users to share tweets with the people they looked up to or followed. For example, the (2010 Australian elections) **Axel Bruns and Jean Burgess 2011.**

 The app then grew to have 'verified accounts" which were easily identified with the blue Tick mark that makes it known that this account actually belongs to you.

This added identification helps celebrities, famous organizations to make their brands more legible and avoids cases of impersonations or admirers. These verifies accounts are deemed worthy of platform-wide public interest and marked differently by the app itself. **Indranil Paul (2019)**

Twitter is also a platform for social awareness, activism, fighting racial discrimination, among others. For example, the Kaveera campaigns in Uganda through the Hashtags such as #TaasaObutonde, #Kaveera Campaign #BlackLivesMatter, #the Russia- Ukraine war among others. These have brought about attention and reduction of some deadly social issues. This has therefore made the twitter we all know and love today a place where people share their thoughts, engage with one another and stay up to date on breaking news and trends from people across the globe.

Some of the interesting things about X or twitter have been that the concept of retweets was formerly introduced by the consumers and because of that it became incorporated by twitter eventually as an official part or tool on the app. The hashtag symbol was only used by twitter to put together related information and tweets together. It is now used by various social media platforms to keep them hooked on trends and move specific agenda.

The most interesting fact about twitter has been how unnecessary the creators of the app thought it was, twitter as believes to make a bad first-time impression, questions like "why the world needs twitter,"" why do we necessarily need to send to our 50 followers what we had for breakfast" and these statements were thoughts about the app by the creators of the app. **Steven Johnson 2009.**

1.3 problem statement.

In the middle of all the ever-changing social media platforms. Social media facilitates communications and collaboration, it also presents issues related to distractions, privacy concerns and the potential for superficial interactions (Tess, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to explore how social

1.4 General objective

The general objective of the study was to explore the role of x in enhancing communication among university students with focus on students at Uganda Christian university, main campus and seeks to investigate how students make us of Twitter to improve communication amongst themselves and how it supports students' engagement and presence with school work.

1.5 Specific objectives of the study.

1   To explore the use of twitter for communication and engagement amongst students at Uganda Christian University, main campus at Mukono

2   To identify the benefits and challenges and opportunities of using twitter as both a communication tool and information outlet that supports their studies.

3   To explore strategies and better the effective use of twitter for communication and engagements among university students.

1.6 Research questions.

1. How do university students currently use Twitter for communication, engagement and entertainment?

2. What are the benefits, challenges and opportunities of using Twitter for a University student?

3. How can students successfully use Twitter to maximize and enhance communication and engagement in the student community?

1.7 Justification of the study.

There are rapid changes in the communication space in terms of people's digital connectivity across distance and time to which the media industry should adjust to. These have led to readership shift from traditional to digital access of information, making it easier for audience to receive and consume information in real life.

The justification of the study will be to understand how twitter can be used as a communication tool among university students. This will be by exploring the benefits and challenges of collaborating, content engagement to improve student engagement among others. This practice can intend help students to be more aware of how to navigate the app.

1.8 significance of the study.

The significance of the study will have several implications for various stakeholders including the media industry, further scholars and ministry of education and sports. The study will focus on the role of x in enhancing communication among university students contributes to a deeper understanding of social media's impact on communication patterns in academic environments.

To the media industry, particularly social media platforms like X can benefit from understanding how university students utilize this platform for communication and engagement. By studying the patterns and behaviors of university students at UCU, media companies can gain insights into the preferences of the younger

demographic, helping them to design more effective engagement strategies for educational and informational content.

To future scholars, the study will add to the growing body of research on the intersection between social media and education. Future scholars can use the findings to further explore the role of x in the academic environment.

To the ministry of education, the findings will provide valuable insights on how x can be used as a tool for improving communication and engagement with students. They can develop more interactive responsive communication strategies that utilizes x to share important academic updates and other essential information.

1.9 scope of the study.

This study scope will solely be fully dependent on university students and university administration on how they use twitter for spreading and receiving information. It will focus also on the advantages and disadvantages of using twitter.

1.10 Geography

This study will be solely based in Uganda Christian University, Mukono, Kampala. Mukono town is a municipality of in Mukono district in the central region of Uganda. The district headquarters are in Mukono municipality along jinja road. This place has a population size of approximately 67,290people and is said to be one of the largest places in Uganda.

1.11 Time scope.

This research study will use twitter histories through analyzing some the following factors for example, examining relevant and less relevant topics, different hours or patterns of relevant activities among others.

1.12 Limitation of the study.

The study basically focused on twitter formerly known as x a social media platform. The limitation came from university students being skeptical about the study. Other limitation was inadequate funds to facilitate the study. The study set out to use documents review as a second method of data collection tool. However, due to ethical consideration.

1.13 summary of the chapter.

This chapter presented the background of the study, problem statement, general and specific research objectives, research questions justification and significance of the study, scope of the study and limitations that came about the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1 Introduction

This part of the research discusses the uses and gratification theory (UGT) on which the study was based. It also provides some reviewed literature related to the topic of the study which is the role of x in enhancing communication among university students, its benefits, challenges and opportunities.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The uses and gratification theory (UGT) was employed in this study to provide a foundation for understanding how students at UCU use X to fulfill their communication needs. The UGT focuses on why individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy various needs such as information, personal relationships and social integration.

The UGT was first coined by Elihu Katz in 1956 as an extension of earlier media effects theories. Unlike traditional perspectives that viewed audiences as passive consumers of media content, the UGT positions individuals as active agents who select media based on their specific needs and desires (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). The theory has its roots in earlier research on media effects conducted in the 1940s and 1950s particularly studies examining why people consume certain types of media.

The origin of the UGT is tied to the transitions from behaviorist approaches to more cognitive and user-centric perspectives on media consumption. Early research in this field was driven by an interest in understanding the reasons why individuals chose particular types of media (radio, television) and how used these media to fulfill their needs for entertainment, social interactions or formation (McQuail, 1987). Katz along with Jay G, Blumler and Michael Gurevitch developed the UGT as a way of explaining these processes focusing on the gratifications people seek from media rather than effects media have on them.

In the context of this research study, UGT is relevant in understanding how UCU students use X to meet their communication needs. The theory also provides a framework for analyzing the motivation behind student's choices of communication tools and how these tools gratify their needs for academic collaboration, social

interaction and personal engagement. For instance, students might use a platform like WhatsApp or Facebook groups to satisfy their need for instant communication and social connectivity. Others might turn to more specialized academic platforms like Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams to fulfill their need for structured, productive collaboration on academic projects. This aligns with the core tenets of UGT where users are seen as goal-directed in their use media actively choosing platforms that best meet their communication needs (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Moreover, UGT helps to explain the diversity in communication preferences among students at UCU. Different students may gravitate towards different tools based on their specific gratifications whether it be staying informed, maintaining relationships or managing academic workloads. This understanding is crucial for analyzing how x enhances communication and how it can be optimized to address the various needs of students within the university setting.

2.3 Empirical literature review

2.3.1 To explore the use of twitter for communication and engagement amongst students within Africa and beyond.

The integration of social media platforms like x has gained traction in higher education as a tool for enhancing communication and engagement. Numerous studies have explored twitter's (x) role in academic environments, examining its effectiveness in fostering student interaction, engagement with content and communication between peers and instructor. The following literature review provides empirical evidence from studies conducted in diverse educational settings, highlighting the specific research contexts.

Kituyi and Namujuzi, (2018) a study conducted at Makerere University. They investigated how social media platforms including x facilitated academic communication. Their research highlighted that x was an essential platform for sharing academic resources, initiating discussion about lecture content and organizing study groups. According to the findings, Students revealed that the platform allowed them to communicate more efficiently. The research highlighted that the limited internet infrastructure in some parts of Uganda posed challenges to effective x use (Kituyi & Namujuzi, 2018)

A study by Mugera and Ndibalema, (2019) in Tanzania at the university of Dar es salaam explored the role of x in facilitating peer communication among students. The findings suggested that x enhanced peer collaboration and knowledge sharing which was especially beneficial for group assignments and exams preparation. The study concluded that despites the potential benefits, x usage was still limited by internet access and cost of data in Tanzanian (Mugera & Ndibalema, 2019).

Adeyemi et ai, (2020) conducted a study at the University of Lagos Nigeria to assess the social media platforms particularly x on students' engagement with course content. The finding indicated that students who used x to follow academic discussions and hashtags related to their course material were more engaged with content. X allowed for quick dissemination of information such as news articles and academic papers which enhanced students understanding of course topic (Adeyemi et ai, 2020).

Mutebe and Raisamo, 2014 conducted a study at the university of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Their research explored how x increased teacher accessibility and improved communication with students. The study involved 180 and 20 faculty

members who used x as supplementary tool for communication outside of traditional classroom settings. The findings indicated that x allowed students to reach out to their instructors for quick clarifications and follow-up questions after lectures. Instructors reported that they were able to provide timely feedback and guidance through the platform which contributed to a more engaged and interactive learning environment (Mtebe & Raisamo, 2014).

X has been found to be a valuable tool for facilitating communication among university students particularly in academic settings. Junco, Heibergert and Loken (2011) investigated the use of x to enhance communication in a classroom setting. Their study showed that students who used x were more likely to engage in discussion both inside and outside the classroom, which led to higher levels of academic engagement. X allows students to communicate quickly with peers and instructors, breaking the traditional barriers associated with face-face communication (Junco et ai, 2011).

Luo and Gao, (2012) conducted research on the use of x as means of peers -to- peers communication among undergraduate students enrolled in the media studies course in university in the United States. Their findings suggested that x facilitates informal communication, where students can easily share information, ideas and resources with one another. This peer engagement fosters a sense of community among students which is critical for academic and social development within university student's settings. The researchers concluded that x promoted a collaborative and informal learning environment where students felt comfortable communicating and exchanging ideas outside of structured classroom settings (Lou & Gao, 2012).

X has also been showed to enhance students' engagement with course content. A study by Kassens Noor (2012), conducted at Michigan state University, examined how integrating x into university course can promote active learning and students' engagement. The researcher revealed that students who participated in x discussions related to course material demonstrated higher engagement levels compared to those who did not use x. this engagement was not limited to the classroom but extended to real-time interactions during lectures and after class hours (Kassens Noor, 2012)

Tiernan, (2014) carried out research at Dublin Institute of Technology in Ireland on enhancing engagement through X involving students enrolled in marketing course. The study examined how integration of x in the course promoted students' collaboration and engagement. The finding reveals that students ere more likely to participate in collaborative learning activities such as group projects and discussions, when x served as a communication tool. The researcher concluded that x serves as a platform where students could exchange ideas, discuss course topic and provide feedback to one another in real-time thus fostering a more collaborative learning environment (Tiernan, 2014)

2.3.2 To identify the benefits and challenges and opportunities of using twitter as both a communication tool and information outlet that supports their studies.

2.3.2.1 Benefits of x on learning community

the research study is mostly centered around the benefits, challenges and opportunities of x to the elite and university students. X is an online social network that's accessible to anyone with an internet cable device used to share all types of

information, political educational, current research among others. The increased involvement of twitter in higher education will make this social media app robe more useful and become more personalized in teaching and being learned from using current research in medical education. **Sarah Judith Forgie, (2013)**

According Veletsianos (2012) found out that Twitter is used by university students to `receive and share immediate and frequent course work information, to ask and give feedback to their instructors and share information outside context. It's a form of receiving knowledge from instructors, fellow students and communicate and connect with professionals in the area of study.

Lin (2013), indicated that x in universities has been incorporated as a tool of data collection for both students and elite through social media networking. This is through providing space for tweeps to have profiles and make hyperlinks with users with similar interest or content.   This experience makes it easy for students to share in on their resources with one another. Gikas and Grant, (2013)

Social media platforms are sites where people create public or semi- public profiles for public interaction and sharing of content. These activities provide internet users with a chance to express themselves on their handles and update their status. This also helps young people to boost their self-esteem and be of influence in other people's lives. **(Asmara Irfan, 2018)**

 Though Social media platforms are more popular in the entertainment and in popular business, there are many benefits of using these platforms have helped people especially the young people in education. Young people use social media sites more than old people as proved by most studies, this is because the young

people will use the internet for many things for example passing time, academic purposes among others. **(Asmara Irfan,2018)**

Social media networking has increased university ranking in higher education, this is through the increasing student responses on their social media platform which as has made marketing of online education and sharing of data possible thus helping students to better their decision making. Social media will be effective when students can get all the information, they need in a click rather than having to go back to the traditional methods of gathering information. **(Asmara Irfan, 2018)**

Studying using social media provided a direct look of how university life is like and makes sure that students are guided every step of the way. Studying online also known as e-learning this shows diversity and this helps to maintain brand image for the institution or the university thus increasing on the ranking and positive use of social media. **(Asmara Irfan, 2018)**

2.3.2.2 Challenges of x on students

Social media has influenced the lives of people differently in not all good ways, the number of young people that join social media on a daily basis have increases by 400million as of 2021. **(Kemp,2021).** Additionally, the number of social media users increases by more than 1 million every day. People lately are so dependent on social media that the young people these days including university students, who prefer using social media to communicate, using eLearning or online learning to communicate rather than engaging in physical classes with their peers. **(Kemp,2021)**

Attention of students tends to be swayed away from their education by the internet through social media platforms such as twitter, **Ahmed (2019).**

Additionally, students of not well supervised will use social media for non-academic purposes and this surely be unfriendly to the outcome of their academic performance because of the misuse of this freedom. **Agholor et al. (2020)**

2.3 To explore strategies to better the effective use of twitter for communication and engagements among university students.

X has become an essential tool for communication and engagement among university students. As higher education continues to evolve in a digitally driven society, the need to explore effective communication and engagement strategies among university students has become increasingly relevant.

Tess, (2013) argument that social media can extend the learning environment allowing students to collaborate and discuss academic content in a more informal setting. By leveraging x for academic purposes, students can enrich their learning experience, fulfilling both cognitive and social integrative needs outlined by Katz and Blumler (2013).

research by Greenhow and Lewin (2016), found that students who strategically use social media for educational purpose experience greater academic and social benefits. UGT explains that students can enhance their gratification by tailoring their media use to meet their specific goals. By curating a focused x feed, students can fulfill their cognitive needs more efficiently. Ensuring that they are exposed to relevant and useful content.

CHARPTER THREE.

METHODOLOGY.

3.0 Introduction.

This part outlines the research design, sampling, data collection method, study location, population and population size and research tools. It also presents process for analyzing and interpreting the data

3.2 The research design

According to Creswell & Plano, 2007), research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing interpreting and reporting data in research studies. Leedy & Ormrod (2013), stated that case study research refers to a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores bounded system or multiple a bounded systems of cases over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information.

3.3 Research approach

This study employed qualitative research methodology. For the qualitative component of study, sampling questions were used to most importantly the people of most influence in the university, the quantitative approach, a random sampling is used to make sure that different views that are even from students of other universities are considered.

3.4 Study site

This study is to be based in Mukono which is located within the east of the central business district of Kampala. The study was conducted in one tertiary institution and that is Uganda Christian University.

3.5 Population.

According to Shukla 2020, population refers to a set or group od=f all the units on which the findings of the research are to be applied. The population of this study was Uganda Christian university. This population was selected as a fair representation of the populations where the study findings was generalized to apply all the university students in UCU. University students vary from different courses and years.

3.6 Target population

The study population including the university students from different courses and years and the university administration (lecturers). These categories of interviewees were targeted because they are consumers of information from twitter (x). 30 interviews were involved in the study 20 students (10 from school of journalism and 10 from school of law) and 10 lectures from the two department respectively

3.7 Sample size.

The study sample size included the 20 students and 10 lecturers, adding up to 30 respondents.

According to Taherdoost, sample size is defined as a significant feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make interferences about a population. In order to generalize from a random sample and avoid sampling errors or biases, a random sample is needed to be of adequate size. The participants were selected based on their experiences of using x to enhance communication

3.8 Sampling procedure.

The study employed a purposive sampling procedure to select the respondents, selecting them based on the knowledge and experiences on using x. Tongco 2007, says that purposive sampling refers to a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledge and experience.

3.9 Research method of data collection.

In-depth interview guide was used in this study to collect data on the role of x on enhancing communication among university students but with focus on UCU. this method was selected due to the nature of qualitative method of data collection. that am using here is the mixed method.

3.10 Data analysis

In this study the use of mixed methods was employed to analyze and gather data. Qualitative research was used through interviews, focus group meetings and properly analyzed with the thematic analysis. Furthermore, Quantitative research was carried out to understand my research topic for example through surveys, questionnaires among others.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The research considerations will be that ill obtain consent from people before using any information that's not initially accessible to me. This will help people to trust be more and be confidential and trust in my studies. This can be achieved through making accessible my final results to people to see what I've collected or put together.

I will make sure to emphasize anonymity of participants data, though making sure they are fully aware and have given their consent and most importantly to make it evident that I put first protecting their identities though out the process of carrying out my research.

3.12 Research limitation.

Limitations for example inaccessibility of a specific population in the university. This will be solved by making sure that my research involvement should entail

famous or influential students in the university i.e. the students in the guild government, the guild president, among ithers. This is because the people have access to a specific number of students.

Time frame. The time to collect data from students is limited hence affecting the sample size and how far my analysis can go. I will employ proper planning and collecting data efficiently through surveys, social media mining, interviews or focus groups conducted online this will intern reach a larger number of people, analyze trends, allow efficient data analysis among others.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study from the interviews conducted with 30 respondents, comprising 20 university students (10 males and 10 females), and 10 lecturers (5 from the school of journalism media and communication and 5 school of law). The participants provided insights into the research questions posed. RQ1 how do university students current use x for communication, engagement and entertainment? RQ2. What are the main benefits, challenges and

opportunities of use x for a university student? RQ3 how can students successfully use x to maximize and enhance communication and engagement in this student community?

4.1 demographic breakdown of respondents

Students.

Total 20 (10 males and 10 females)

Field of study: 10 (5 from school of journalism and communication and 5 from school of law)

Lecturers

Total 10 (5 from journalism and communication and 5 school of law)

Experience: 5 lecturers with 5 years and 5 with 3 years of teaching experience.

4.2 how do university students currently use x for communication, engagement and entertainment?

4.2.1 x for communication.

Students indicated that x serves as a platform for quick and concise communication. Several students for journalism and law school (14 out of the 20) reported using x to connect with peers and lecturers, particularly when discussing academic topics, sharing resources and engaging in academic discourse. 12 out of the 20 students especially those in journalism highlighted x as a professional tool to network with industry experts. One journalism student remarked, for example, respondent 1 and 2 from the law school and journalism stated:

…… "x formerly known as twitter is my go-to platform for finding recent legal debates and interacting with professionals in the field." Respondent one

………. "x allows me to connect with media professionals, share my work and stay updated on industry trends"

Moreover, the students from journalism media and communication class noted that x's effectiveness in staying informed about university events, workshops and news, with 16 out of 20 students frequently using x for real-time updates. A female journalism student added, ………… "I often follow university accounts and professional bodies to stay informed on current events and educational opportunities."

4.2.2 Twitter for engagement.

The interview was conducted on university students based on the research question, the role of x in enhancing students' engagement. The findings demonstrated that 15 out of the 20 students reported using x to engage with their university's student community. Students frequently use hashtags to participate in discussions, sharing opinions on campus issues and coordinate social events. One of the respondents from the law department explained,

……, x helps me interact with the wider student's body and its especially useful for student-led campaigns and events."

Furthermore, both students from journalism and law school (18 out of the 20) stated that x plays a significant role in supporting social causes and activism. 7 out of 10 lecturers recognized that students are leveraging x to engage in academic discussions beyond in classroom.

"……….X has been pivotal in organizing movements and raising awareness on social justice issues." ……respondent from law school

…………"Students are increasingly using x to expand their academic conversations, bringing discussions to a global stage." Journalism lecturer stated.

4.2.3 twitter for entertainment.

Majority of the students also emphasized the significant role of x in providing entertainment. 17 out of 20 students mentioned x's role in entertainment such as following memes, viral trends and celebrity news. Some of the students also reported using x to keep up with the latest pop culture news such as film releasees, sports updates and music.

"……. When I need a break from studies, x is where I unwind through funny content and trends posted on x for audience to consume on daily basis." Journalism student expressed.

"……. It's not just about the serious news; I also use x sometimes for updates on my favorite TV shows and musician and all these are be gotten from x nowadays." Law student said

4.3 what are the main benefits, challenges and opportunities of using x for university students

4.3.1 benefits of using x

Majority of the respondents emphasized the significant benefits that comes about using x as 18 out of 20 students and 10 of the lecturers acknowledge the role of x in fostering networking opportunities. Students reported that x allows them to connect with industry professional, join relevant conversations and build their

personal brands. Moreover, x's ability to provide immediate access to news and updates was highlighted by 19 out of the 20 students. 9 out of the lecturers also commented that students who actively engage on x are more involved in academic discussions thereby enriching their educational experience.

"…….X has opened up doors for internships and collaborations that wouldn't have accessed otherwise, I rely on x for real-time information on current affairs, particularly in the legal world." Journalism students mentioned

"……students who utilize x for academic purposes often bring fresh perspectives into the classroom."

4.3.2 challenges of using x of using x as both communication tool and information outlets that supports their studies

During the interviews conducted on university students, majority of them contributed to that despite the benefits that students gained from using x in enhancing communication, it has brought negative effects to students. 15 out of the 20 students cited the challenges of dealing with overwhelming amounts of information on x. some students also indicated that x could be a distraction making it difficult to balance academic work with social media usage.

> "………. At times, it's hard to filter relevant content from noise on my feed and I find myself spending more time than intended on x, which sometimes affects my study schedule."

Furthermore, both students and lecturers (20 out of the 30) expressed concerns over misinformation and prevalence of echo chambers on x. a journalism lecturer warned.

"………. students need to develop critical media literacy to navigate the spread of misinformation and disinformation effectively."

4.4 how can students successfully use x to maximize and enhance communication and engagement in the student community?

The analysis identified key strategies for maximizing x's potential within the student community. Majority of the participants which includes 13 students and 7 lecturers emphasized the importance of following and interacting with individuals and organizations relevant to students' academic and career goals. Furthermore, both students and lecturers recommended utilizing hashtags effectively to join and promote discussions within the student community. Moreover, 9 out of the 10 lecturers mentioned the possibility of using x to organize students' collaborations on research projects and assignments.

"………. Students should curate their x feed to reflect their academic interests and professional aspirations."

"………. Using campus-related hashtags helps students participate in discussions on university matters and events."

"………X provides a platform for students to collaborate across different campuses and even internationally."

14 out of the 20 students found out that curating a focused x feed that includes academic journals, experts and news outlets enhances their academic understanding. Some of the participants emphasized the need for students to engage with their professors and academic mentors on x citing the platforms ability to extend classroom discussions into the digital space. One of the respondents stated,

"………. I use x to curate a list of academic and professional resources that helps me in my students and x can be an extension of the classroom where discussions can be continued beyond lectures."

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS OF THE KEY FINDINGS

5.0 introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings presented in chapter four and draws connections to the literature review and the theoretical framework, especially the uses and gratifications theory. The discussion will be organized around the three research questions, exploring how the findings relate to previous studies and theoretical concepts.

5.1 discussions of the key findings

The findings from chapter four show that university students utilize x for various forms of communication including academic discourse, professional networking and real-time updates on events. This aligns with previous literature review that suggests x is an effective platform for facilitating immediate and concise communication in educational setting (Junco, Elavsky & Heiberger, 2013).

The uses and gratification theory provides a lens to understand this behavior, as students actively choose x to satisfy specific needs. The theory posits that individuals use media to fulfill particular desires such as the need for social interaction, information seeking and personal identify development (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). In the context of communication, students are gratified by x's ability to provide fast and direct communication with peers, lecturers and industry professional.

5.2 to identify the benefits, challenges and opportunities of using x of using x as both communication tool and information outlets that supports their studies

5.2.1 benefits

The benefits of using x identified in chapter four such as networking opportunities, real-time information access and enhanced academic engagement are well supported in the literature reviews presented in chapter two. Junco et ai, (2011) found that x improves students' engagement and fosters professional connections particularly in the fields such as journalism were staying current with industry trends is essential.

Through the lens of UGT, these benefits can be understood as the gratification of students cognitive, affective and social integrative needs. For example, journalism students use x to stay updated on industry news, fulfilling their cognitive needs for information. Meanwhile the ability to network with professional satisfies social integrative needs, helping students build social capital (Ellison, Steinfeld & Lampe, 2007).

5.2.2 Challenges of using x as both communication tool and information outlets that supports their studies

However, students also face challenges when using x including information overload, time management issues and the spread of misinformation. These challenges align with the previous studies that highlighted the potential negative effects of social media use (Lee & Suh, 2016). For example, students struggling to manage their time and filter relevant content from the vast amount of information on x echoes similar findings by Ahmed and Qazi (2011), who pointed out the risks of social media distractions in educational contexts.

UGT explains that while x may fulfill the need for information and connection, it also introduces problems such as cognitive overload where students become overwhelmed by abundance of content. This is consistent with Katz el ai, (1973) argument that while media use can gratify certain needs, it can also produce unintended consequences such as stress and disengagement.

The prevalence of misinformation and echo chambers on x further complicates its uses as an academic tool. This issue, identified by both students and lecturers supports the previous research that highlights the dangers of unverified information on social media (Bessi et ai, 2015).

5.3 To explore strategies to better the effective use of x for communication and engagement among university students.

The findings suggest that students can maximize their use of x by curating their content, engaging in hashtag campaigns and using the platform for collaborative academic projects. This aligns with research by Greenhow and Lewin (2016), who found that students who strategically use social media for educational purpose experience greater academic and social benefits. UGT explains that students can enhance their gratification by tailoring their media use to meet their specific goals. By curating a focused x feed, students can fulfill their cognitive needs more efficiently. Ensuring that they are exposed to relevant and useful content.

The lecturers also emphasized the potential of x as a tool for academic collaboration and engagement beyond the classroom. This is consistent with Tess, (2013) argument that social media can extend the learning environment allowing students to collaborate and discuss academic content in a more informal setting. By leveraging x for academic purposes, students can enrich their learning experience, fulfilling both cognitive and social integrative needs outlined by Katz and Blumler (2013)

5.4 conclusion

The discussion reveals that university students use x for variety of purposes including communication, engagement and entertainment all of which are deeply intertwined with the principles of the uses and gratifications theory. While x offers numerous benefits such as enhanced academic engagement and professional networking opportunities, it also presents challenges related to information overload and the spread of misinformation.

By curating content, participating in meaningful discussions and leveraging x for academic collaboration, students can maximize the platforms potential for communication and engagement within the student community. Ultimately, x plays a significant role in fulfilling cognitive, social and personal needs of university students, reinforcing its importance as both an academic and social tool.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATION AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

6.0 introduction

This chapter presents practical recommendations for students and educators to optimize their use on x in university students' settings. Additionally, it identifies potential areas for future research to expand

6.1 Recommendation for students

The study presents that students should actively curate their twitter feeds to include relevant academic and industry information. This can help reduce information overload and ensure that students stay updated on key trends and developments in their fields of study.

Furthermore, the research recommends that students should use clear objectives for x use to maximize destructions and time management issues through defining specific objectives for their use of x, whether it be for academic engagement, networking or entertainment. Setting goals can help students stay focused on using the platform productively.

6.2 Recommendation for Educators

The research recommends that educators should encourage the academic use of x by integrating it into their coursework, such as using it for class discussions, or organizing debates on relevant topics. This can help foster student engagement and extend learning beyond the classroom.

In addition, educators should incorporate lessons on media literacy and digital citizenship into their curricula. This will help students navigate social media responsibly and critically assess information and use platforms like twitter, for constructive academic purposes.

6.4 Areas for further studies

This study has provided valuable insights into how university students should use twitter, there are several areas of future research that could further enhance understanding social media s role in education.

Longitudinal studies on social media use. Future research could conduct longitudinal studies to track how students use of twitter evolves over time and how it impacts their academic performance, professional development and social well-being throughout their university careers.

Exploring the impact of twitter on mental health. Given the findings related challenges like information overload and distraction, further research could explore the impact of twitter use on students' s mental health. This could include examining the relationship between social media use, academic pressure and mental wellbeing.

Comparative studies across disciplines. Future studies could compare the use of twitter across different academic disciplines to determine if their significant variations in how students in different fields utilize the platform for communication, engagement and learning.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: interview Guide

Topic the role of x in enhancing communication among university students: a case of Uganda Christian University

1. Can you tell me about yourself?

   ……

   ……

   ……

2. How do university students currently use Twitter for communication, engagement and entertainment?..

   ....

   ....

3. What are the benefits, challenges and opportunities of using Twitter for a University student?..

   ....

   ....

4. How can students successfully use Twitter to maximize and enhance communication and engagement in the student community?...

   ....

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