

The influence of Social Media On Adolescent Behaviour in Selected Day Secondary Schools in the Informal Settlements of Mathare North Ward, Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract:

Social media are websites and computer programs that allow individuals interact and share information on the internet through a computer or mobile phone. This study explored the influence of social media on adolescent behaviour in selected day secondary schools in Mathare North ward, Nairobi, Kenya. The study had 216 participants of males and females adolescents. The study used purposive sampling method. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Data was analyzed using SPSS and findings presented in summary tables. Findings showed that 50.6% of the participants had low access to social media platforms, 29.8% of the participants had moderate access to social media platforms, while 20.0% of the participants had high access to social media platforms. On aggressive behavior, findings showed that 51.0% of the respondents had moderate aggressive behavior, 28.3% of the respondents had low aggressive behavior, while 20.8% of the respondents had high aggressive behavior. The study established that that social media platforms influence adolescent behavior.

Key Word: Social, Media, platforms, adolescent, behaviour, influence

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I. Introduction

It is of great importance to point out that social media has spread very fast and widely, attracting the current generation (Youth). The use of such social platforms provides an avenue for social interactions, allowing people to express their ideas, thoughts, and information in a worldwide arena, This study explored the effects of social media on adolescent behaviour in selected day secondary schools in Mathare North Ward, Nairobi County, Kenya.

II. Material And Methods

Quantitative research methodology was used in the research to provide a deeper understanding of the research issues. According to Haines (2011), "quantitative research collects and analyses statistical data to describe, explain forecast, or control occurrences of concern. The study utilized the quantitative methods to dive deeply into the study environment to comprehend the nature of parameters and how respondents in their context see them."

Location

The research took place in Mathare North Ward in three secondary schools; Mogra Star Academy, Ruaraka High School, and Mathare North Day Secondary School. Mathare North Ward is part of Nairobi County's Ruaraka Constituency. Mathare North Ward has an estimated population of 85,000 people, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2020). Mathare North Ward is approximately 8.3 kilometres from Nairobi's Central Business District (CBD). Small-scale enterprises are the primary economic activity in the region. Unemployment, violence, drug addiction (particularly among young), illiteracy, adolescent pregnancies, and school dropout are some of the significant issues in the town.

The location is a motivating factor because it falls under informal settlements within Nairobi. The schooling and school environment for the day students is unique compared with schools in the formal settlement. As a result, the choice of location was a primary motivator for this study.

Target population

This is the specific group of individuals relevant to a study. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a population is a collection of humans or things with similar features. They are the totality of situations that meet particular criteria, which specify the elements included or omitted from the target group. Adolescent students in day secondary schools have access to electronic devices and social media interactions while away from school. The target population for this study was 270 students who were sampled purposively to include the adolescent students aged between 13 and 21 who have access to social media in the selected day secondary schools in Mathare North Ward in Nairobi County, Kenya. The principals from selected day secondary schools were provided with informed consent to collect data from the adolescent students.

Sampling Techniques

The sample size of the respondents was determined using non-probability sampling methods, particularly purposive sampling. Purposive sampling guaranteed that the desired sample was attained as accurately as possible. When a researcher requires information from a specified source, non-probability sampling is used. Purposive sampling, as a non-probability approach, according to Best and Kahn (2006), assists the researcher in building a sample that is sufficiently tailored to the specific demands; in this case, the sample chosen was specific to adolescents students between the age of 13 and 21 who have access to social media.

A sample is a lesser representation of an entire target population used to draw conclusions about the whole population. According to Israel (1992), various methods of specifying a sample size can accurately represent objects in a large population. This category by claiming that researchers focus on preserving equal sample sizes across the sampled groups while establishing subgroups. The actual population of the study was 270 adolescent students from the selected day secondary schools in Mathare North Ward; the sample size was a total of 216 students, which is 80% of the actual population.

Description	Population	Sample	Sampling method
Mogra Star Academy Sec school	98	76	Purposive
Ruaraka High School	119	92	Purposive
Mathare North Day Sec School	53	48	Purposive
Total	270	216	

Source; Author

Research Instruments

Questionnaires were used as research instruments in this study. According to Kothari (2012), a questionnaire is a mechanism for eliciting, documenting, and collecting information. The questionnaires contained simple questions that helped the researcher acquire the needed data.

III. Results

	Ages bracket of Participant	
	Frequency	Percentage
13-15 years	46	21.3
16-18 years	162	75.0
19-21 years	8	3.7
Total	216	100

The findings show that 75.0% of students are within the ages bracket 16-18, while 21.3% of students are within the ages bracket 13-15.

A) Influence of Social Media Platforms on Adolescents' Behavior

The fourth objective of this study was to establish the influence of social media platforms on adolescent behavior of students in selected day secondary schools in Mathare North Ward, Nairobi County. Therefore, social media platforms influence adolescent behavior.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

Influence of social media platforms on adolescents' behaviour

The study established the influence of social media platforms on adolescent (aggressive, addictive and self-harm behavior) of students in selected day secondary schools in Mathare North Ward, Nairobi County. Therefore, social media platforms influence adolescent behavior. The findings are also supported by Shana (2012) assertions that social media platforms have significant impact on the behaviours of the students. The research not only reveals how social media impacts the behaviors of adolescent students in Mathare North, but also helps in informing some of the behaviors that they can adopt from social media use. The dependent variables investigated by the research included addictive use of social media, aggression, self/others harm and poor or good academic performance. The findings reveal that the usage of social media platforms significantly results in manifestation of behavioural change among the adolescent students in Mathare North. The findings of the research indicate that social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube have an impact on the behaviours of the students with YouTube and WhatsApp having the most significant effects on adolescents' behaviours among the adolescent students.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it was found that the most commonly used social media platforms among students in the selected schools in Mathare North Ward was YouTube followed by WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram respectively. The study found that YouTube, WhatsApp Facebook and Instagram platforms had significant influence on aggressive, addictive and self-harm behaviours portrayed by the adolescent students in Mathare North. In essence, social media platforms exposed students to violent content, sexual content and content that promote criminal activity results in the student's adopting and exhibiting deviant behaviours and violent acts such as conflicts, fighting, sexual immorality and prostitution as well as involvement in violence and criminal activities.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The adolescent students in Mathare North, Nairobi County are a product of the social fabric that they grow up in hence it is critical for the whole Kenyan society to initiate positive behaviours both in real life and those portrayed in social media so as to positively impact the behaviours of the Kenyan youth. The study recommends both parents and relatives to be responsible in controlling the content that the adolescent students are exposed to in social media. Parents should constantly check on their children in order to make sure that their children are acting appropriately online. The parents, guardians and relatives can limit the hours that the adolescent students can access social media. Besides, the parents and relatives can utilize social media content filtering strategies available to take control of the content that the adolescent students are exposed

The respective schools can embrace regular sensitization to all students on the negative impacts of social media which can be very detrimental to students mental health well being and lead to poor academic performance, this can be mobilized by guidance and counselling departments. Public awareness on the detrimental effects that social media can make on adolescent students ought to be promoted in Mathare North region.

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