Interactive Media as a socialization Agent: Influence of WhatsApp among Adolescents in Nairobi

Denish Ouko Otieno[1] and Alfred Akwala[2]

[1]Moi University, Kenya
[2]Technical University of Kenya
denootieno@yahoo.com, Akwala08@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study focused on interactive media as a socialization agent. The general study objective was to establish influence of WhatsApp mobile application on adolescents, while specific study objectives were; to establish the level of effectiveness of parents/guardians in monitoring adolescents WhatsApp use, assess motivations behind adolescents WhatsApp preference and establish how adolescents access WhatsApp mobile application. Qualitative research approach was used. Data was collected through; semi-structured interviews, participant observation, informal conversations, and focus group discussions. Convenient sampling was used to ease accessibility of target audience. Thematic analysis as qualitative data analysis strategy was used. Data was presented in form of narratives. It was established that parents do not monitor adolescents as they use WhatsApp application, reasons such as parents not being technological savvy, their negative attitude towards learning communication technologies and too much trust on adolescents contributed to lack of monitoring adolescents interactions on WhatsApp. WhatsApp influences were; addiction which resulted in irregular sleeping patterns among adolescents and interference on their studies. Erosion of family values and anti-social behaviour among adolescents were also noted as effect of WhatsApp addiction. The study established that, adolescents' preferences to use the application were; popularity of WhatsApp hence viewed as trendy and fashionable.

Keywords: *WhatsApp, Adolescents, Addiction, Smartphone, Interactive Media*

1. Introduction

Socialization is a process that involves individual learning to adjust in a manner that is approved by society. Socialization involves variety of outcomes such as; acquisition of rules, roles, standards and values across the social, emotional, cognitive and personal domains. Developments in digital media offer consumers more control, more choice and more opportunities for social interaction through control over what they watch, how they watch it and who they share the experience with. Digital technology has already changed the world and as more children go online, it is changing childhood. Children and adolescents under the age of 18 years account for an estimated one in three internet users around the world.

A growing body of evidence indicates that children are increasingly accessing the internet at younger age, and in some cases children under the age of 15 years are likely to use the internet as adults over the age of 25 years. As children grow, the capacity of digitalization to shape their life experiences grows with them, offering seemingly limitless opportunities to learn and socialize, to be counted and to be heard.

Although most children who are online view it as a positive experience, many parents argue and get worried that immersion in screens is making children depressed, creating internet dependency and even contributing to obesity.

Interactive media provide a rich and unprecedented environment for experiential communication campaigns geared to young people. These media such as smartphones and tablets is increasing among the adolescents rapidly. Nevertheless, research regarding the impact of interactive media on the youth's behaviour has lagged behind. Guidelines regarding interactive media use among adolescents have not yet been formulated. Interactive media is the integration of digital media including combinations of electronic text, graphics moving images and sound into a structured digital computerized environment that allows people to interact with the data for appropriate purposes.

1.1 Study background

There are several types of interactive media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter among others. WhatsApp is an instant messaging application for Smartphone. It helps users to create groups, send unlimited messages, share, pictures, videos, texts. WhatsApp is supported on iPhone, Android, Blackberry Windows Smartphone (Patel, 2014). The accessibility of internet provides vast opportunities for young people to learn research and interact with friends.

The Children's Act No.8 of 2001 of Kenya makes provision for parental responsibility, fostering, adoption, custody, maintenance, guardianship, care and protection of children. This provision extends to protecting children in the cyber space. Every child has a right to seek, receive and impart information. Children rights defenders therefore have a duty to ensure that children have access to information from national and international sources. The information should be available for the promotion of the child's physical and mental growth. The information should promote the child's social and moral well-being. However, the material and information that the child may be exposed to may be injurious to its social and moral well-being. In the recent past, websites and published materials have been developed targeted at the adult audience. Some of these materials are not appropriate for children. It is therefore the mandate of the parents, the government and other children rights defenders to ensure that children are shielded from such material that may be detrimental to their social and moral well-being. Parents have an obligation to the children's welfare, health and development. Parents also struggle with the limits of their children's privacy. Rights are usually interrelated. For instance, as much as a child has a right to privacy, it is also the duty of the parent to care for and prevent any form of abuse being meted on the child (Youth Alive Kenya, 2011, p. 6).

Children and young people as well as adults increasingly live out important parts of their lives with the assistance of new technologies brought about by interactive media and internet technologies and as a result the nature of risks they take have become inextricably entangled with wider aspects of their behavior. It is now no longer possible to draw neat lines between so called "internet issues" and "real world problems" (International Telecommunication Union, 2009).

Kenyan parents are increasingly getting wowed by their children ability to master with ease the working of electronic gadgets, and it is nowadays hard for youngsters to imagine that their parents

touched a computer or used a Smartphone very late in their lives. The latest government economic survey says it is getting easier for Kenyans to access the internet, pointing to tricky times ahead for youngsters who often take their naivety online (Daily Nation, October, 9th, 2016).

The availability of internet at homes, schools and in library has increased children use of mobile phones to access internet and other interactive applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp. Parents have been placed on the front line of protecting children from abuse on the internet. It has been observed that most of the children who are addicted to the internet have absentee parents. The parents leave home early to go to work and come home late at night and never have sufficient time to be with their children. Children use their free time to play computer games and browse on the internet. They are bombarded with huge loads of information that they are unable to manage, hence unable to identify asses and manage the potential risks (Youth Alive, Kenya, 2011).

1.2 Problem statement

The youth are best consumers of internet and technology, unfortunately parents are not able to move at the same pace in technology with their children hence may not be able to understand the things their children are doing over the internet and guide them accordingly (Youth Alive,Kenya,2011, p.3). Smartphone's are fuelling a bedroom culture with online access for many children becoming more personal, more private and less supervised (UNICEF, 2017).

One in every three internet users worldwide is a child and too little is done to protect them from the perils of the digital world and to increase their access to safe online content (UNICEF, 2017). Chege, (2018) posits that in Kenya local experts are already worried about the pervasiveness of mobile phone addiction among children and adolescents especially in urban youth. Parents are complaining that their children are becoming anti-social because of their mobile phones; they fight to make them eat, do homework, shower or even sleep (Daily Nation, January, 30th, 2018). This study envisages bringing to light the challenges parents face in keeping up with the ever changing communication technologies; with focus on WhatsApp mobile application.

1.3 Objectives

The study's general objective was to establish influence of WhatsApp mobile application on adolescents. The specific objectives were:

(i) Establish effectiveness of parents/guardians roles in monitoring adolescents WhatsApp use

(ii) Determine motivations behind adolescents WhatsApp preference

(iii) Establish how adolescents access WhatsApp mobile application

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

Creswell (2014) posits that one component of reviewing the literature is to determine what theories might be used to explore the questions in a scholarly study.

Rapid change in technology has led to development of several interactive media applications such as WhatsApp which has tools that support instant messaging and chats. Instant messaging (IM) tools allow people to connect to others online directly and have conversation through texts or video call. People can add the names of individuals they know in their contact list and see if they are online. The conversations or charts can be held with one person (bilaterally) or with a group of people (multilaterally). The interactive media applications also allow peer-to-peer file exchange, where individuals can download or upload files from their storage disc. The exchange of charts, videos can sometimes contain child abuse material (ITU, 2009).

As media technology develops and as mass media continue to dominate our daily lives, media influence (interactive media included), continue to play an active role in changing our opinions, attitudes and behaviours (Kevin, 2003). This therefore means that online interaction platforms are likely to act as agencies of socialization especially among adolescents if not closely monitored by parents. However, for parents/guardians to be able to properly gate-keep on interactive media socialization, their understanding on the use of these applications becomes imperative so as to bridge the gap of technological divide between adolescents and parents/guardians.

2.1 Theoretical framework

Researchers increasingly use a theoretical perspective in qualitative research which provides an overall orienting lens for the study of questions of gender, class and race. Creswell (2014) posits that one component of reviewing the literature is to determine what theories might be used to explore the questions in a scholarly study.

Littlejohn and Foss (2009), posits that Uses Gratifications and Dependency theories arise from a line of work that focuses on the interdependent relationships among media systems, the larger social system and media audiences. Together, the two theories predict that audiences rely on media to gratify specific needs and in the process develop dependencies on the media. The more an individual depends on a specific medium to fulfill needs, the more that media will become important to that person. This can in turn lead to different patterns of media exposure and use. Ultimately, this can lead to cognitive, affective and behavior effects of media use. Urban adolescents rely more on WhatsApp so as to keep in touch with their friends during holiday seasons, get in touch with the outside world and get to know what is trending, this is motivated by the fact no one wants to be left out with information among their peers and they always want to be the first to break news on what is going on. The use of WhatsApp also makes them to fit into their peer groups, hence sense of identity. WhatsApp is therefore seen to gratify more the social needs of adolescents thereby creating dependency for the interactive media application. This is argument in support of a recent report in the Daily Nation Newspaper, January, 30th, 2018 where parents were complaining that their children are becoming anti-social because of their mobile phones; they fight to make them eat, do homework, shower or even sleep.

This process of reliance on media can be examined from either a macro- or a micro-level approach. A micro-level approach looks specifically at the role of media in the lives of an individual, examining how people use and depend on media to meet specific goals or needs. From a micro-perspective, a

person will become more dependent on the specific media that will satisfy a variety of needs over those that satisfy just a few needs. These increased dependencies, in turn, lead to an increased influence of the media in our lives (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). For example at a micro-level, an urban adolescent knows that he can get news from television or radio at home, however this channels of information only gratify part of his/her needs. But the mobile phone through interactive platforms such as WhatsApp will gratify certain specific needs such as sharing information through video, texts with her peers, thereby gratifying his/her sense of belonging among the peers. In turn there will be an increased dependency on WhatsApp use more than watching television or listening to radio, therefore making WhatsApp to be influential more than any other media.

At macro-level approach to dependency involves examining the interdependence between audiences, the media system, and the larger social system. According to the theory, the media system, social institutions, and the audiences exist in a state of mutual interdependence. Each has goals they must accomplish and resources to offer the other. For example, the media system relies on the larger social system for structure and legitimacy and on audiences so they can create advertising revenue. In turn, the media offer information dissemination for the larger social system and entertainment and information for the mass audience. This highlights the power and the effects the media can have on our daily lives (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009).

3. Research methodology

Narrative as a technique in qualitative approach was used to generate data. Riessman, 2008 posit that narrative research is a design of inquiry from humanities in which the researcher studies lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives.

3.1 Target population

The study targeted adolescents between the ages of 10 to 17 years in Nairobi and their parents/guardians. The target population were from four middle income estates in Nairobi which are; South B, South C, New Ngara and Imara Daima.

3.2 Sampling technique and sampling size

Convenient sampling was used. Convenient sampling eased accessibility of the target audience since adolescents in every household visited was interviewed. A sample of 25 participants from each four estates was obtained resulting to total number of participants at 100. The sampling took a period of 10 days where each day 10 households were interviewed.

Table 1. Sample Size

Nairobi Estates		
Estates	**No. of Participants**	**Obtained Sample**
South B	25	23
South C	25	15
Imara Daima	25	23

New Ngara	25	24
Total	**100**	**85**

3.3 Sample frame

Tables 2, 3, 4 & 5 show the various sampling frameworks used in each sampled area of study.

Table 2. Summary of the sampling frame used for South B Estate

South B Estate (Expected participants; n= 25)		
Adolescents	**No. of Participants**	**No. of Parents Participation**
Boys	10	5
Girls	8	
Total	**18**	**N = 23**

Table 3. Summary of Sampling Frame used for South C Estate

South C Estate (Expected participants; n= 25)		
Adolescents	**No. of Participants**	**No. of Parents Participation**
Boys	7	3
Girls	5	
Total	**12**	**N = 15**

Table 4. Summary of Sampling Frame Used for Imara Daima Estate

Imara Daima Estate (Expected participants; n = 25)		
Adolescents	**No. of Participants**	**No. of Parents Participation**
Boys	8	4
Girls	11	
Total	**19**	**N = 23**

Table 5. Summary of Sampling Frame Used for New Ngara Estate

New Ngara Estate (Expected participants; n= 25)		
Adolescents	**No. of Participants**	**No. of Parents Participation**
Boys	9	5
Girls	10	
Total	**19**	**N = 24**

3.4 Data collection tools and techniques

Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews to collect views of parents/guardians and establish their efficacy in monitoring adolescents when using different interactive media applications more so WhatsApp. An audio recorder was used to capture all verbal explanations. During the interview open, check/reflect, follow-up, probe and questioning method was used. Informal conversations were employed so as to engage adolescents in their natural settings as far as possible.

Focus Group Discussions were also conducted with adolescents in the four middle class estates. Presence in the discussions were adolescents who were attending day secondary and primary schools, boarding secondary and primary schools. The mixed up helped to give interesting varied opinions why adolescents engage in interactive media platforms more WhatsApp.

3.5 Data analysis and presentation

Thematic analysis as qualitative data analysis strategy was used, hence an inductive approach where themes emerged from data. During data analysis, the following stages were followed: transcribing data, re-familiarising with the data, first phase coding, second phase coding, third phase coding and product report. Data was presented inform of narratives.

4. Results

The general information of the respondents was adolescents between the ages of 10 to 17 years. They were also asked about their gender, if they had Smartphone's and WhatsApp installed. It comprised of adolescents in primary and secondary day schools as well as those in primary and secondary boarding schools. Parents/Guardians who were involved in the study include; those who have college education, no college education, employed, self employed, their age were 30 years and above. During semi-structured interviews, parents were asked if they have home internet and if they use Smartphone's. Discussions from the study have been presented in relation to the research objectives as outlined below.

4.1 Effectiveness of parents/guardians roles in monitoring adolescents WhatsApp use

Semi-structured interviews with parents/guardians were to establish how they monitor daughters/sons use WhatsApp as they interact with friends. Among parents it was established that they don't monitor how their sons or daughters use WhatsApp, lack of technological know-how of how they can monitor WhatsApp use emerged. While parents themselves use WhatsApp and as shown in the study, 82 percent of those who participated in the study own a Smartphone and use WhatsApp, however, few were aware that through WhatsApp Web Client they can connect their son/daughter WhatsApp account to their personal computers, phones, ipads and laptops so as to monitor how adolescents use the application to chart with friends. This method though not technically sophisticated can help in monitoring of the application use without creating a lot of tension between the child and the parent. Fear of continuous tension between parents and adolescents is another bottle neck in monitoring adolescent WhatsApp use. The word monitoring and control of WhatsApp use was ambiguous to most parents, while monitoring involved being able to see charts, groups happening on the platform; control means deciding when the son /daughter should be in possession of the phone. Parents therefore only controlled when their children are in possession of the phone through means such as putting a curfew on when to use the phone.

Some parents also were found to worry much about phone calls and short message (sms), than WhatsApp charts, they pointed out that they go through their sons/daughters call logs and short

message folders to check their communication with their friends. This was more so in homes where there is no internet which according to the findings 35 percent of study households didn't have internet. In the homes where there is internet most parents were found to control children phone possession. Parents also noted that if they want to monitor their son/daughter phone; then they physically go through WhatsApp charts.

It was established that parents do not seek their children consent when they want to check their messages, call logs and WhatsApp charts. This causes tension between parents and children as most parents noted that their sons and daughters are never comfortable whenever they take their phones. However this was among adolescents of ages 16 and 17 years.

Among employed parents, other reason for not monitoring their sons/daughters WhatsApp use was because of lack of time. Parents among this category also noted that they trust their sons and daughters will be responsible in the use of the applications hence no need to keep monitoring them. They further posited that they also communicate with their sons and daughters through WhatsApp while at work hence they need not to worry so much about the application. Employed parents believe that WhatsApp is the communication trend among current generation and since all their sons/daughters friends are on the online space, then the son/daughter should be left to make use of the technology. While self employed parents noted that they physically take the phone from daughters to go through it. This method of monitoring was found not to be effective as most teenagers noted during focus group discussion that they immediately delete any communication on their WhatsApp that they believe will make them to be reprimanded by parents.

Despite most parents having college diploma qualification at 41 percent, undergraduate at 35 percent and postgraduate at 18 percent, they still don't have enough exposure in regards to interactive media tools (WhatsApp) that can enable them monitor their children in the online space. Some parents were interested in only knowing the basic aspects of WhatsApp and had no interest in knowing its monitoring tools. There is also assumption that learning communication technology tools is too difficult and demanding and should be left to teenagers who are willing to learn. In fact in some instances, parents admit that it is their son/daughter who introduced them to the WhatsApp and they are the ones who know how it works.

"My son who is 15 years installed the application in my Smartphone, and took me through how it works, in fact when I experience a problem with the application, he is the one who sort it out and I don't know how", One parent said. In such scenario the son has the monopoly of using the application and since the parent view the teenager as a super user; he will not try to monitor how a super user interact with others.

4.2 Motivations behind adolescents WhatsApp preference

During Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and Informal Conversations adolescents gave varied reasons as to why they prefer WhatsApp application more than other interactive social media platforms. One reason was on the popularity of the application among their friends; hence it is easy to locate their friends provided they have their phone numbers. Another reason was that the application has got

interesting interactive media tools such as video calls that allow them to interact with friends, the application also provide room for creating many groups hence they stay in contact with many friends as possible. Also so long as you have enough memory space in your phone the application does not limit the number of videos, pictures and texts on can share.

Among adolescents from households with home internet, which form 65 percent of the study, adolescents prefer WhatsApp because of free WiFi at home hence they don't need to spend on the bundles. Adolescents also viewed the interactive media application as *"trendy and fashionable"* hence the need to use it. This further gives them a sense of belonging.

The virtue that most parents are not technological savvy to be able to instantaneously monitor their charts is also another motivation for adolescents. Some adolescents noted during informal discussion that he can easily interact with his girlfriend who has strict parents and after the chart they delete the messages hence parents cannot find anything on the phone. In fact many teenagers are aware of the function of WhatsApp Web Client than parents. Also owning a Smartphone which is the platform for WhatsApp is a motivational factor.

Also in households where there are older siblings, adolescents' are motivated to download the application because their older siblings communicate with friends through the application.

Other motivation for adolescents WhatsApp preference is that they are able to speak freely and share moments that matter.

4.3 Ways adolescents use to access Whatsapp application

According to WhatsApp Terms of Service, (2016), a person is eligible to use the application only if they are 13 years and above. However according to the study findings during informal conversation and focused group discussion; adolescents as young as 10 years are using the interactive media application. When asked how they managed to access the application majority said they used their father, mother, brother, and sister or aunty mobile line to register in the application. This was further facilitated by the fact that most people own two to three mobile phone numbers and are actively using only one or two. The dormant number may be in use by an adolescent as a WhatsApp number.

5. Summary of Findings, and Conclusions

From the findings, 80 percent of adolescents participated in the study, while 20 percent of parents took part in the study. In regards to adolescents the study established that most respondents were aged between 14 to 16 years forming 85 percent of the study participants. This further indicate that most adolescents WhatsApp concentration use lies within the age group. Most of the respondents were adolescents in boarding secondary schools which were at 44 percent. The findings also indicate that 88 percent of adolescents in the study had Smartphone's and WhatsApp application installed. Therefore WhatsApp use is also high among students in secondary boarding schools during the holiday period. This can be attributed to the fact that they have been away from home and the high urge to connect with estate friends, keep in touch with classmates during holiday, participate in WhatsApp church youth

groups. Unlike their counterparts in day secondary schools who often meet their friends hence low urge to keep in touch.

Study findings also indicate that 65 percent women participated in the study. This shows that it was easy to locate women at home more than men hence women form strong pillars in the socialization process. The men who participated at 35 percent were mostly found during weekends, more on Sundays. Most parents in middle class estates were established to have college diploma qualification and above. 41 percent of parents had diploma qualification,35 percent had undergraduate .Also most parents were employed which was at 59 percent. Also a reason why adolescents WhatsApp use monitoring is low among employed parents because of lack of time to be at home with the child. Households with home internet in the study were at 65 percent. This shows that internet penetration within Kenyan urban areas is on the increase more so in middle class estates. It also shows that most adolescents from households with internet exhibit high online presence more so WhatsApp use. When parents were asked about who has the custody of WiFi, they said that the adolescents know the passwords and can log on the internet anytime. Some parents also said that it keeps them indoors more so the girls, however what they overlook were that still the girls maintain active interaction with male and female friends online through WhatsApp and the influence of face to face interaction had been blurred with WhatsApp as an interactive media application.

Also most parents in the study owned Smartphone, this was at 82 percent. Every parent who owned a Smartphone was using WhatsApp to communicate with friends and check on affairs at home while in the office.

5.1 Influence of WhatsApp on Adolescents

The study sought to establish the influence of WhatsApp mobile application on adolescents in Nairobi. The study concentrated on four middle class estates in Nairobi, that is South B, South C, Imara Daima,and New Ngara Estate. The study established that parents complained that the young adolescents were mostly glued on their Smartphones charting, sharing videos, pictures, emojis with their friends, an act which make them to lose concentration in their studies. Parents from households with WiFi noted a concern that their daughters and sons can stay the whole day in the house just on WhatsApp, hence they don't mingle with their peers on face to face as they used to. It even makes them to forget doing some house chores at home. A mother complaint bitterly that her daughter has grown lazy since she started WhatsApp interaction with friends. She has to remind her of everything she needs to do, an act which is causing tension between her and the daughter. The addiction in regards to WhatsApp use is worrying where other adolescents carry the phones even to churches making them not to concentrate on sermons. To respond to this, churches have banned use of phones and access of interactive media application such as WhatsApp among adolescents during sermons.

Parents say that their sons/daughters no longer open up to them and keep too much to themselves. Parents further complain on type of communications that happen on WhatsApp platforms. A lot of vulgar talk and obscene pictures exchange occurs on the WhatsApp groups without parents ever

noticing. During a semi structured interview, a parent said that she doesn't know how to protect her young daughter to the outside world because of kind of influence that happen on WhatsApp groups.

WhastApp application has also opened-up avenues for adolescents to meet and chart with strangers who can lure them to inappropriate acts. In other word some culture of disorder among adolescents is natured from WhatsApp influence.

The study also established that WhatApp addiction has led to unhealthy sleeping patterns among adolescents. Children chart with their friends until later into the night when parents are a sleep. This is further confirmed during an informal conversation with an adolescent who said that most of his friends are online at night when people are asleep hence the best time to chart since during the day there are a lot of activities going on and the fear of being scolded at by the parents. This means that most adolescents WhatsApp group are active at night. WhatsApp addiction was so much that during informal conversations most adolescents especially those from households with home internet admitted that a day cannot pass without charting on WhatsApp.

Because of WhatsApp influence among adolescents, the study established that most parents prefer their sons/daughters to start using the application at 18 years when they are responsible enough and are now at legal age of adult. However, the terms and service of WhatsApp, 2016 that allows 13 years and above to use WhatsApp poses a great challenge.

5.2 Establish effectiveness of parents/guardians roles in monitoring adolescents WhatsApp Use

The study established the efficacy of parents in monitoring WhatsApp use by adolescents. It was found out that parents do not monitor how their adolescents use WhatsApp. Part of this is attributed to not being technological savvy so as to keep up with trends of interactive technology applications such as WhatsApp. In the study no parent admitted to have tried the use of WhatsApp Web Based Client to sync their daughter/sons WhatsApp with their Personal Computer, laptop or ipad so as to be able to monitor how their daughter use WhatsApp. Even the fact that most homes in middle class estates there is presence of a laptop, an ipad or desktop computer and presence of unlimited internet. In fact some parents said they do not know what WhatsApp Web Based Client is and could not even locate it when they opened their WhatsApp. In fact some adolescents, more so those at 16 and 17 years of age said that they are the ones who installed WhatsApp to their parents phones and showed them how to use the application and whenever the application doesn't work, parents call them to help them out. In such scenario a parent will not be able to monitor how a child uses the application.

Another reason pegged to parents not being able to monitor their adolescents WhatsApp use was attitude towards technology. While most parents in the study had college diploma and undergraduate qualification at 41 percent and 35 percent respectively, there was negative attitude towards learning in detail interactive media applications such as WhatsApp, hence once a person has known basic functions then he/she is not bothered with knowing the rest. Also the notion that learning how an application works is a technical thing that only a person who has done engineering or Information Technology can understands the monitoring tools is a big challenge in monitoring adolescent WhatsApp use.

The term control WhatsApp use and monitor WhatsApp use was ambiguous among respondents. Parents mostly controlled adolescent's phone use through confiscating and keeping the phones away from the children then giving them back later. This does not play monitoring role because they still do not the kind of conversations the child is immense in when they have their phone back. Adolescents have also adopted a pattern towards use of WhatsApp whereby during the period that a parent has confiscated the phone then they can borrowed from a friend and still being able to chart.

Parents who said to be monitoring their son or daughter WhatsApp use were using the method of physically going through the charts. This was not found to be effective since adolescents are aware of this and could immediately delete a text, obscene graphic or video after watching so that the parent cannot find. It therefore leaves the use of technology as the best methodology to offer instantaneous WhatsApp monitoring among adolescents.

5.3 Motivations behind adolescents WhatsApp preference

The study established that WhatsApp was a popular interactive application among adolescents. The fact that most of their friends are using the application to communicate makes it "*trendy, fashionable and the in thing*", this therefore was a motivation factor for its preference. Also WhatsApp makes it easy for them to locate their friends. Once they are in possession of a friend's mobile number, there can easily locate him or her and start interacting. Another reason was that the application has got interesting interactive media tools such as video calls, emojis, and ability to record voice, videos, pictures and share. The application also provides room for creating many groups hence they stay in contact with many friends as possible; this further gave them a sense of belonging among their peers. Also so long as you have enough memory space in your phone the application does not limit the number of videos, pictures and texts one can share.

Presence of home internet in many households was also a motivating factor for WhatsApp preference hence no daily bundle cost is incurred while using WhatsApp. During the study 65 percent of households were found to have home internet. Adolescents from these households had high interactions on WhatsApp than those from household without internet.

The study also established that the virtue that most parents are not technological savvy to be able to instantaneously monitor their charts is also another motivation for adolescents. Adolescents also view WhatsApp as a platform where they are able to speak freely and share their concerns. This motivates them towards opening up without fear hence preference for the application.

5.4 Ways adolescents use to access WhatsApp application

The study established during informal conversation and focused group discussion that adolescents as young as 10 years are using the interactive media application, even though WhatsApp Terms of Service, (2016) states that only a person who is 13 years and above is permitted to use the application. When asked how they managed to access the application majority said they used their parents, sisters, brothers or aunty mobile line to register in the application. This was further facilitated by the fact that most people own two to three mobile phone numbers and are actively using only one or two. The dormant number may be in use by an adolescent as a WhatsApp number.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that WhatsApp as an interactive media application causes addiction among adolescents if there is no proper monitoring and control on how adolescents engage with the application. Some of the notable effects among adolescents in Nairobi's South B, South C, Imara Daima and New Ngara estates include; disruption from studies which leads to lack of concentration, thereby poor performance in school, irregular sleeping patterns among adolescents; it was established that adolescents actively chart during the night when they are in their bedrooms and away from the *'hawk'* eyes of parents hence sleep very late in the night. Another effect of WhatsApp was tagged on erosion of values among adolescents; sharing of inappropriate videos, texts and pictures among friends and WhatsApp groups, plus being exposed to talk to strangers on the platform was noted by parents to erode good values which they have installed in them.

In regards to parent's efficacy in monitoring how adolescents are interacting on WhatsApp platform, it was established that parents are unable to effectively monitor adolescents WhatsApp use because of reasons such as; not being able to keep up with the ever changing communication technologies, more so the interactive media applications such as WhatsApp. This means that parents are not technological savvy which is pegged to their negative attitude towards learning WhatsApp application tools in detail, also the notion that the application belong to young people and they see no need in getting actively involved. Among the employed parents too much trust on their adolescents that they are able to make right decisions and lack of time to spend with adolescents led to lack of active/no monitoring of adolescents WhtasApp use.

Factors such use WhatsApp being popular communication tool among adolescents in urban areas, made the interactive media application to be viewed as trend hence its preference and motivation towards its use among most adolescents. It was also established that adolescents have banked on lack of technological know-how among parents hence they are convinced that their parents cannot monitor the remotely but can only physically check their charts, a methodology which they bypass by immediately deleting any inappropriate chart that they believe might be viewed inappropriate by parents. Among middle class, the penetration of home internet also fueled the use of WhatsApp as a communication tool among adolescents.

While there is evidence of negative effects among adolescents, parents also viewed the application as a positive thing if its use can be monitored well. Adolescents can reading and share learning materials through the application especially the e-books every child gets an equal access to learning materials, it can be used to encourage teacher-adolescent interaction during holiday periods, such interactions can include sharing of class assignments.

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