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**Social Media as; an Agent for Behavioral Change among Young People: Case
of Facebook Usage among Mass Communication Students of Uganda Martyrs
University**

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Abstract

Purpose: The advent of internet based technology has resulted into borderless communication. This has led to free circulation of information in the world. Uganda being a free market of ideas attributed partly to internet based technology, the young people constantly participate in the creation, exchanging and sharing different content on social media platforms. Therefore, this paper intends to find out the different kinds of habits youths acquire from consuming social media content, identifies conditions through which youths acquire different habits from social media and examine the kinds of information youths share on social media and give reasons for sharing such information.

Methodology: A sample size of 50 students was selected from the department of Journalism and communication studies, Uganda Martyrs University. This was a case study research approach focusing on facebook usage and research methods for collecting primary data included; questionnaires, interviews and participant observation. I majorly used facebook content analysis and descriptive statistics while interpreting the data collected regarding the research questions.

Findings: According to the study findings, as the youths become heavy consumers of social media content, they become addicted and develop different habits like; self-isolation from relatives, eating habits, imitation habit, liking habit, and spreading rumour. The habit changes maybe either negative or positive depending on the nature of social media content consumed.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Facebook gives a wide range of experiences to its users; it allows young people, create and share any information of their choice in actual time.

Keywords: *Social Media Effects, Social Media, Behavioral Changes, Social Media Habits*

INTRODUCTION

Social media are Web 2.0 technologies that facilitate social interaction and collaboration, and foster a sense of community (Bingham & Conner, 2010). According to <http://en.wikipedia.org>, Social media is defined as interactive computer mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.

Therefore, Social media in this study refers to an interaction between or among people in which they create, exchange and share information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs through virtual platforms and networks; Facebook, you Tube, Messenger, What`s app, IMO, Instagram, Vimeo, Live leak, etc. Besides, behavioral change is another major concept dealt with in this study whereby according to <http://en.wikipedia.org>, behavioral change is defined as any modification of human behavior as influenced by time of exposure, attitude, culture and education levels of a person.

However, behavioral change in this study refers to the reactions, perception, actions, beliefs, ideas and attitudes people acquire after consuming social media content which influence their daily life style either positively or negatively

According to social media stats report in Uganda(August 2018- August 2019), 53.14% of Ugandans use Facebook, 27.92% use Pinterest,13.18% use twitter, 4.01% use You Tube, 0.96% use Instagram. It is evident that many young people with smart phones use facebook for mainly social relations and entertainment. Young people who are social media users spend much time consuming facebook content rather than using other social media platforms like; Pinterest, twitter, you tube etc social media stats report in Uganda(August 2018- August 2019). Besides, young people in Uganda who have smart phones participate in creation and sharing information about different topics on different social media platforms. The nature and purpose of information shared by young people on facebook is known to them in their social circles. However, as the young people continue consuming facebook content, they tend to acquire different habits like; gossiping, abusing friends, jeering, and practicing sexual deviation. Bandura (1986 and 1997).says a person is able to react flexibly to a dynamic environment and able to apply internal values and goals to any particular situation being exposed to.

“ social sites impact the lives of our youths in a society a great deal in terms of morals, behavior and even education-wise” James M (2017).

Being difficult to know the intentions of young people`s actions on facebook, this papers explores the different kinds of habits young people get after consuming facebook content. It also shows how the acquired behavior triggers the kinds of information young people upload on facebook and gives reasons for sharing such information.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This was done to guide this study as well as addressing the research gap. It is imperative to note that different scholars have published information relating to this study as discussed below under research objectives.

Kinds of Habits Young People Get from Consuming Facebook Content

According to G. Gerbner & Gross (1976), Media have the power to cultivate habits into the people. The heavy viewer of media content is eventually affected by mean world syndrome. G. Gerbner & Gross. (1976). this implies that the heavy viewer of media content tends to consider the entire world to be just like the videos viewed on media. Similarly, Henry S. (2018). Says that after a long period of viewing media content, the viewers` psychological emotions get altered and thus think the entire world is similar to the media content viewed. Davis. (1976). Media have power to reach out and directly influence the minds of average people. Therefore, it is evident that social media has the magic power which can influence viewers` psychological emotions and eventually force them to take an action knowingly or unknowingly. This implies that facebook consumption can possibly cultivate habit into facebook users. In an agreement, Marcuse (1941), says, once people`s minds are corrupted by media, all sorts of bad long term consequences result not only bring ruin to individual lives but also creating social problems on a vast scale.

According to James M (2017), the youths and teenagers are the leading and most fanatics of these social platforms to the point that they even social net work while in class or church. It is to this light that researchers have found these social sites impact the lives of our youths in a society a great deal in terms of morals, behavior and even education wise. However, Canon (1927) says people feel emotions and experience psychological reactions such as sweating, trembling and muscle tension simultaneously. Similarly, Henry S. (2018) says, students (young people) while consuming facebook content of their interest, their minds get altered and thus their psychological emotions become visible through physiological emotions. In fact at this point, they may smile, laugh, cry or jeer depending on the nature of facebook content being consumed. In fact, when psychological emotions of love get altered due to facebook consumption, media consumers may start admiring products viewed on facebook adverts. This habit of admiring a product may later force media consumers to take an action of buying such products viewed on facebook through snob effect (buying goods because you have seen them appealing or attractive). In an agreement, Henry S. (2018).says that students develop the habit of buying many products like cosmetics after seeing their adverts on a visual medium; adverts clearly show how to use these products and their associated positive effects. At this point, viewers develop love for the products. This desire is later changed into an action when they decide to buy the products viewed in the visual advert.



Figure 1: Social Media platform Frequently Used

Source: Social Media Stats in Uganda (August 2018-August 2019)

According to social media stats in Uganda(August 2018- August 2019), 53.14% use Facebook, 27.92% use Pinterest,13.18% use twitter, 4.01% use You Tube, 0.96% use Instagram .It is evident 53% of Ugandans mainly use Facebook to both acquire and disseminate information in their virtual communities. Therefore, when youths become heavy consumers of social media platforms, they may get exposed to bad online social groups who may lure them into wrong acts like lesbianism and homosexuality. After exposure of such Facebook content, they try to imitate actions seen on the virtual site. Through this, young people start practicing sexual deviation acts like homosexuality, lesbianism, masturbation and even incest.

“Social media exposes young teens say below eighteen years to online predators who get to woo them into sexual acts such as lesbianism and other general sexual misconducts. It also exposes these teens to pornographic content being spread in some social groups online. This in turn leads to early pregnancies amongst young girls and the morals of these teens are also tampered with as they now get access to immoral literature and videos” James M (2017).

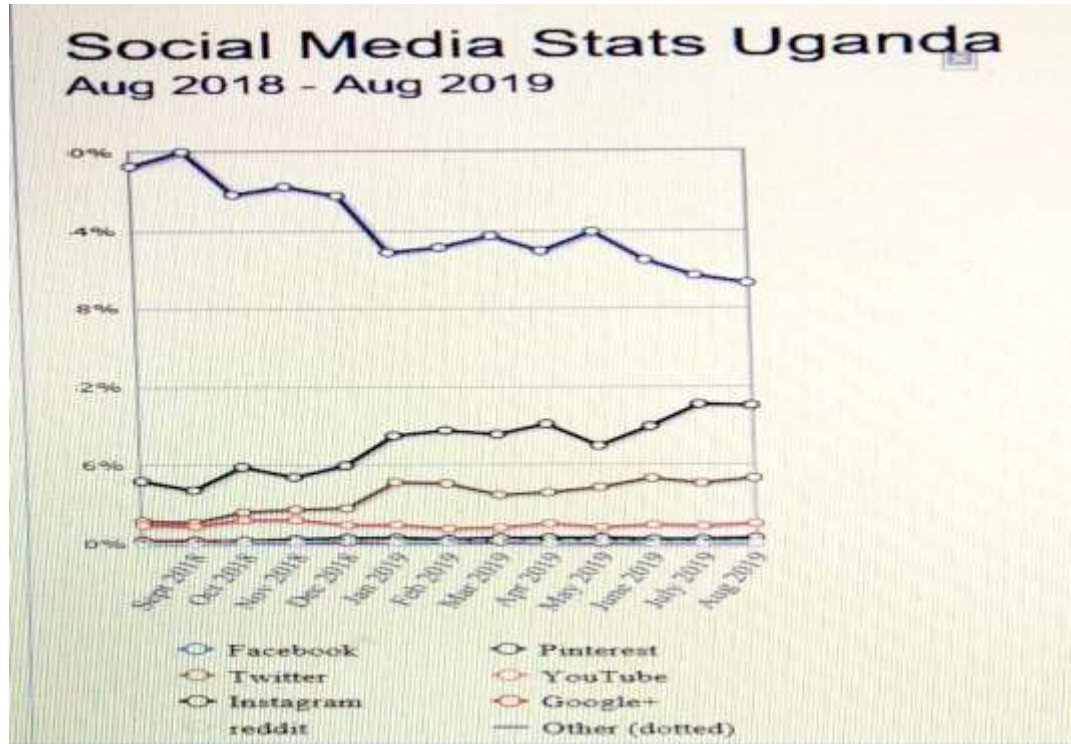


Figure 2 Source: Social Media Stats in Uganda (August 2018-August 2019)

From the above social media usage report in Uganda (August 2018-August 2019), it is evident that many Ugandans use social media platforms for different reasons despite the introduction of social media access tax called OTT. Most social media users in Uganda have smart phones which they use to access social media platforms.

Most social media users use their mobile phones to access social media just as (Nowak, 2008) talks about the iPhone and how it is used because of its new innovative features, such as the touch screen and wireless Internet access, and it encompasses different applications that include Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. People use it mostly to connect with others on social media sites in a convenient, accessible manner; they can interact on the Internet without being face-to-face.

Kinds of Information Youths Share on Social Media Platforms

Henry S. (2018) says that the invention of internet based technologies has led to the birth of borderless communication. The world has become free market of ideas; people today use internet to contribute to the existing body of information through publishing their research project. O` Hanlon (2007) suggests that the implementation of social media technologies, especially social networking, is what students are using every day and it is this social setting that breeds students` intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to use technologies for sharing information. Similarly, Michelle

M.Y. (2014). Says that the youths like to be connected with one another; students like to communicate with one another using the facebook postings.

According to James M. (2017).The positive impact of facebook on the young people today includes making them updated on the events happening around the globe and also enables them network and stay connected with their fellow youths and friends without physical meeting. Similarly, Boyd & Ellison (2007) say that technological developments world over have made the internet an innovative way for individuals and families to communicate and share information of any kind. S. Kaddu & G. Mukasa. (2016).suggest that the use of social media is a new way of communication with friends and family and also influences individual`s communication habits. Social media applications also offer new and innovative way to communicate with other individuals in a quicker manner.

However, according to Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert (2008).these social media sites let those who use them create personal profile while connecting with other users of the sites; users can upload photographs, post what they are doing at any given time and send personal or public messages to whoever they choose. Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert (2008). Further say that in this “information age,” social media sites seem to be growing in popularity rapidly especially among the young adults.

“Social media applications have become increasingly popular components of our everyday lives in today’s globalizing society. Social media provides a context where people across the world can communicate, exchange messages, share knowledge, and interact with each other regardless of the distance that separates them” (Sawyer, 2011). “Students’ use of Facebook is to build on their network with friends and to maintain existing relationships” Selwyn (2009).

Michelle M.Y. (2014). Students like to use the social networking applications of Facebook to make friends and to network with friends and to have a good relationship and rapport with their peers too. Through the connectivity, network and communication via Facebook, they can get to learn about information and knowledge informally at their own time.

Conditions through which Youths Acquire Different Habits from Social Media

According to Henry, S. (2018); Media have the power to extend viewers` senses; sight, hearing and touch through news programmes. In fact, viewers get to know the current information within and outside their country. This implies that social media helps people to escape from the burden of ignorance.

“Audio- visual medium is for entertainment; it lightens the burden of the heart. It also lightens the mental loads of people” (Rajagopal, 2001):126.

Theoretical Framework

Studying behavioral change among young people attributed to social media and studying kinds of information shared by young people on facebook in this case was guided by cultivation theory as clearly discussed below

George Gerbner (1976) in his cultivation theory states that media mainly cultivate habits to heavy media users. This theory states that media have the power to cultivate behavior into media content

consumers. Therefore, this theory was used to study the new habits young people get as a result of consuming media content on Facebook. The study findings conform to cultivation theory in such a way that students self declared that they have acquired different habits like; eating habits, dress code, liking habit, self- isolation from friends after facebook content consumption. “These days I have changed my eating habits and dress code as a result of consuming facebook content about nutrition and dress code” said K.I in an interview

Statement of the Problem

Social media being interactive, synchronous and asynchronous means of communication attracts many young people to use social media platforms for info edutainment and creating social relation purposes. Many youths who have smart phones in Uganda heavily use social media which gives them a wide range of experiences. Besides, many scholars like; Sawyer, Rebecca. (2011), S. Kaddu and G. Mukasa (2016), and James Mageto (2017) have written about social media effects on youths and families in Uganda. However, none of them focused on how Facebook can become an agent for influencing behavioral change in the social life style among young people. When the young people over use facebook, they sometimes tend to acquire new behavior which is visible to others through their physiological actions. These acquired habits like; jeering, gossiping, self-isolation, eating habit, self-expression, liking and becoming empathetic tend to influence the social life of the young people during the post facebook consumption period. Therefore, this study explains both the psychological and physiological behavior young people continue expressing in their daily lives after consuming facebook content.

Objectives of the Study

To explore different kinds of habits youths acquire from consuming social media content.

To identify conditions through which youths acquire different habits from social media.

To examine the kinds of information youths share on social media and give reasons for sharing such information.

METHODOLOGY

This was a netnographic study which basically consisted of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected to capture the students` actions, and content posted on their facebook group account so as to clearly understand the new behavior young people get from facebook. In order to get primary data for the study, the researcher used research methods like; interviews, participant observation and questionnaire. Questionnaire was distributed to a representative sample size of 50 students from the department of Journalism and communication studies which has total population of 57 students. With participant observation, the researcher being a lecturer at the same department was able to join a facebook group for mass communication students from where he managed to clearly observe the students` actions and information uploaded on their facebook group account. Secondary data was collected in order to get and address the research gap in the existing literature regarding the study. This data shaped the researcher`s discussion and

understanding of the study. The research methods used for collecting the secondary data were; library research and internet.

Sampling

The department of journalism and communication studies had a total population of 57 students who could provide a representative sample size of 50 students as the study required. The sample size was calculated using the online sample size calculator which generates the sample size automatically immediately after filling in the total population of 57 students and the 5% confidence interval or margin of errors as clearly seen below.



Figure 3: Online Sample Size Calculator Used for this Study

Therefore, in order to get the required data for the study, Random sampling and cluster sampling were used to get the sample size which included 25 females and 25 males with 95% confidence level. With cluster sampling, the researcher divided a representative sample into two equal clusters basing on their gender and the grouped students were supplied with questionnaires. This was done to determine the gender that is more influenced by social media usage (mainly Facebook) than the other in terms changing behavior after getting exposed to Facebook content. Random sampling was used because all students at the department had equal chances to participate in the study. Students of mass communication department were selected because they are considered to be media literate persons and can control themselves from being influenced by media content since they can try to understand the intentions of media content developer.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Kinds of Habits Young People Get from Consuming Facebook Content

The findings of this study indicate that, while the youths use social media, they tend to acquire different habits like; self-isolation, eating habit, self-love, jeering, liking habit, and dress code which may either be bad or good in the virtual society depending on the viewers` interpretation. The study found out that Facebook consumption makes youths develop the habit of isolating themselves from their relatives. This is because social media tend to expose young people to a variety of new experiences through videos, texts, and audios. This new experience young people get on facebook occupies most of their leisure time and thus become addicted to social media at the expense of other forms of media; electronic media, print media and traditional media. According to the study, some students self-declared that, they don`t want to be disturbed when chatting with their friends on Facebook ; at home , young people can choose to ignore their parents and even fail to do their housework. “When I am chatting with my facebook friends, I pay deaf ear to anyone calling me including my parents” said K.I in an interview. Similarly, another key informant through an interview said, “I like chatting with facebook friends; in fact, facebook content consumes most of my day and night time”. It is evident according to the study findings that young people acquire the habit of disrespecting elders by not following their parents` instructions due to over consumption of Facebook content. Young people may lockup themselves in their rooms and spend the entire day consuming Facebook content to the extent of even missing their meals.

The study further found out that young people who over consume Facebook content tend to develop a habit of lacking concentration when doing other important activities. For example, through participant observation in class work lessons, some students were seen spending most of their class hours chatting with their friends on Facebook and this partly affected their academic performance. Students used to pay much attention to chatting with friends on social media without respecting the teacher in class. For example, one day, I tried to question a female student for face booking in my class lesson; her response was to get up and matched outside the classroom. This showed the degree at which facebook content may influence young people`s behavior to the extent of becoming disrespectful in the society.

Many young people according to research findings use social media platforms for different reasons; information, entertainment, and education. This shows that people choose a particular media to use depending on what satisfaction they get from that media. For example, some students self-declared that, they often log into facebook for entertainment purpose while other students said; they use facebook for education purpose. “I often get the latest entertainment news from facebook” said K.I in an interview. Similarly, another key informant said in an interview, “I get educative information around the world from facebook”. This implies that young people like viewing different forms of media content on Facebook basing on the gratification they expect to get from consuming that particular facebook content. Liking friends` different media content on Facebook is another habit acquired by young people according to research findings. Using questionnaires,

the study found out that when young people upload their pictures on their Facebook accounts, they constantly check their pictures to see how many likes their pictures have received. The study further found out that young people like friends` pictures not because they are nice looking but because they expect their pictures to be liked by friends in return. However, this liking habit may later change into a social life skill of being able to recognize and appreciate the efforts of other people in their immediate communities. Besides, the study found out that students` consumption of Facebook content is selective; some students said, they view pictures, others like content in audio-visual format. This implies that young people consume different media content on Facebook; thus young people like Facebook content of any format that makes them feel satisfied.

The study findings also indicate that young people react differently towards the same information found on facebook platform. For example, some young people may choose to like and share the facebook content as opposed to others who may choose to ignore facebook content despite viewing such content.

Through interviews, the study found out that, one female student sometimes ignores Facebook posts, 3 male students sometimes ignore Facebook posts, 14 female students always like social media posts, only 10 male students always like Facebook posts, 11 female students sometimes like Facebook posts and 11 male students sometimes like social media posts. The study found out that young people like photos of their Facebook friends just to make them happy and thus accumulate more likes, but not depending on the aesthetic beauty of the photos. "I like my friends` pictures on Facebook to please them and perhaps encourage them to continue posting their life status" said K.I in an interview.

According to the study findings, students self-declared that they like spending much time chatting with friends on Facebook. In this case, students (young people) become heavy consumers of social media content. Students like posts on Facebook due to the satisfaction they expect to get from such Facebook posts. However, while young people consume and like Facebook posts, they become fanatics with these Facebook posts and sometimes start emulating the behavior exposed to them through Facebook posts. "Once people`s minds are corrupted by media, all sorts of bad long term consequences result not only bring ruin to individual lives but also creating social problems on a vast scale" (Marcuse, 1941). Similarly, the study found out that students who heavily use Facebook have developed the habit of liking all photos/ pictures of their friends regardless of being nice looking or not. In the long run, this habit of liking every post on Facebook may be transferred in their daily lives and thus learn to appreciate the works of other people in their mediate communities.

However, people feel emotions and experience psychological reactions such as sweating, trembling and muscle tension simultaneously, Cannon (1927). Similarly, according to the study findings, students (young people) while consuming Facebook content of their interest, their minds get altered and thus their psychological emotions become visible through physiological emotions. In fact, at this point, they may smile, laugh, cry, or jeer depending on nature of Facebook content being consumed.

The study further found out that young people get the habit of admiring and buying goods advertised on Facebook platform. This implies that students who buy advertised products on Facebook always check and like such products which bring satisfaction to them. In an interview, another key informant said “sometimes, I buy products after viewing them on facebook platform.”

However, according to G. Gerbner & Gross, (1976) media have the power to cultivate habits in the people. This was confirmed by the study findings whereby some students said that after viewing Facebook videos about people`s life style in Europe, they developed a feeling that all people in European countries live a better life as compared to them. This implies that young people are over use facebook content are eventually affected by the mean world syndrome (thinking that the entire world is the same)

The study further found out that, some students have changed their eating habits. This is attributed to the consumption of Facebook content related to human health and food values constantly. In fact, some students self-declared that, they no longer eat heavy food like; smashed banana for dinner, instead, they prefer eating snacks with a cup of tea for dinner. However, when students were asked reasons for eating snacks for dinner, they said heavy food is not useful in their bodies at night. It should be understood that, students got information regarding eating habits from facebook content which was about food values and human health. Therefore, it is evident that social media has the magic power which can influence viewer`s psychological emotions and eventually force him or her to take an action knowingly or unknowingly. This implies that facebook consumption can possibly cultivate or reinforce the existing habit among facebook users. Besides, the study findings indicate that, facebook usage mainly influence habits of heavy consumers of facebook content. Therefore, the more hours one spends on consuming facebook content, the more his or her behavior is influenced and starts believing in the social media content thus emulating the habit viewed on facebook.

The research findings also show that females use interactive social media sites mainly Facebook more than males in Uganda Martyrs University. 27 female students self declared that they like using Facebook site and 23 male students use Facebook site. It is therefore evident that females stand higher chances of being influenced by Facebook content. This is attributed to the fact that majority of the females spend much time consuming Facebook content as their major source of entertainment. “I spend much time on facebook because it is my major source of entertainment news” said K.I in an interview. In an agreement, another key informant said, “I like reading gossip news about different celebrities in the world`s entertainment industry”. Using participant observation, the study found out that the students` behavioral change attributed to facebook usage varies from one person to another and heavily depends on the hours one spends on facebook. The study further found out that, students` actions on facebook collaret with the time spent on facebook as seen the table below.

Table 1: Duration on Facebook Vs Form of Facebook Content Liked

Gender	Duration on Facebook				Form of social media content		
	everyday	none	once a wk	three days	photos	text form	videos
female	22	1	1	3	6	9	15
male	17		1	2	11	4	5
Grand Total	39	1	2	5	17	13	20

The research findings in the table above show that 39 students self-declared themselves as everyday consumers of Facebook content. 1 student does not spend any time on Facebook. 2 students consume Facebook content once a week, 5 students use Facebook thrice a week. Besides, the research findings further show that 17 students like viewing photos of friends on Facebook, 13 like reading Facebook content in text form, 20 students like viewing videos on social media platforms. However, according to the study findings, female students use Facebook more than male students; 22 female students consume Facebook content every day and 17 male students consume Facebook content every day. Female students consume Facebook content more than males because they heavily depend on social media as their main source of entertainment for releasing their stress unlike male students who have other alternative ways of releasing stress.

Duration on Facebook Vs social media content consumed by young people

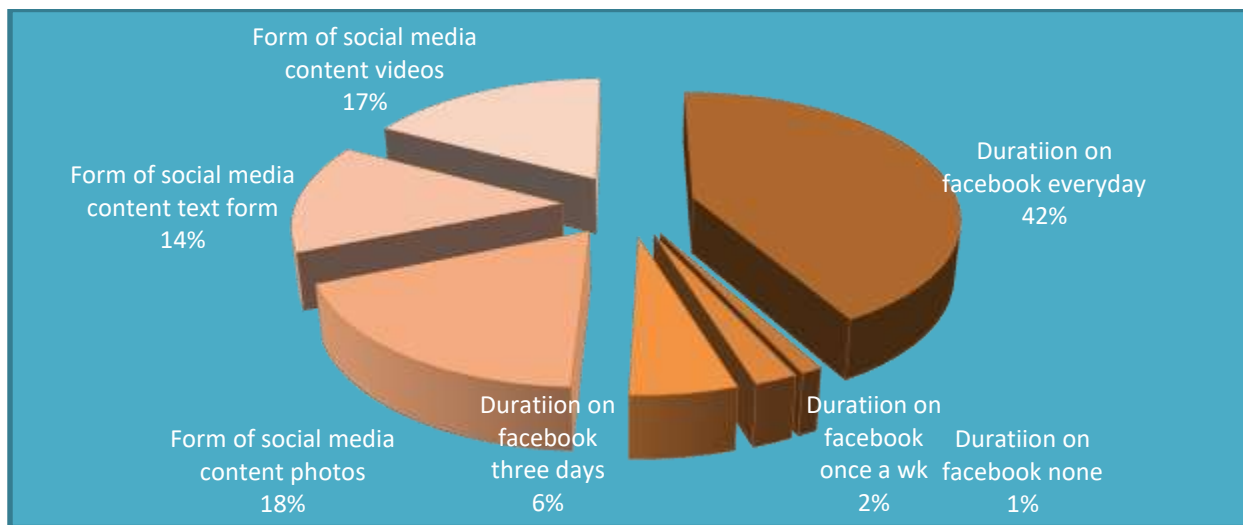


Figure 4: Duration on Facebook Vs Social Media Content Consumed by Young People

It is evident from the above pie chart that, the research findings show that 42 per cent of students use Facebook everyday, 6 per cent use Facebook thrice a week, 2 per cent consume Facebook content once a week, 1 per cent don't consume Facebook content at all. The findings further indicate that media consumption is selective and dependent on what satisfaction media consumers want to achieve from a particular medium. Similarly, students' consumption of Facebook content is selective; 18 per cent of students like photos on Facebook, 14 per cent like Facebook content in text form and 17 per cent of students enjoy watching or viewing videos on Facebook. This implies that students spend much time consuming Facebook content in their free time for various reasons. Therefore, in the process, students get exposed to different kinds of information. Besides, Students learn various social skills which may influence their behavior in their daily lives

Kinds of Information Youths Share on Social Media Platforms

The young people post contents on a wide range of social issues in different forms; photos, videos, text form, audio files and audio-visual content form. Young people freely share any information they feel like in the actual/real time of the incident. Therefore, with the advent of internet based technologies, young people get chance to participate in the creation and sharing of information to borderless communities across virtual communities and networks. "I often upload videos on my facebook accounts" said K.I in an interview. Similarly, another key informant said, "in most cases I post photos on my facebook account". It is evident according to the study findings that young people use online technologies to freely share content of their choices to different virtual communities via different social media platforms like facebook.

The study further found out that, students in Uganda Martyrs University mainly post information about their life status, political issues, celebrities, foods, dress codes and music. This information is shared through their online virtual communities, and Facebook account walls using their smart phones.

The young people post their photos on Facebook to let their online virtual friends all over the world know their current status and best moments in life. However, some young people mainly Africans in diaspora post their good pictures to hibernate from the truth or reality; they want to show others (relatives) that they are apparently living in the better life. Besides, some young people post information on Facebook in form of commenting on their friends' pictures or any other social media content in any form.





Figure 5: Examples of Students` Contents on Facebook Group Account

Source: Facebook

Facebook provides a free platform for young people to express their right to any kinds of information. They often upload podcasts to keep their Facebook friends abreast of relevant information. The research findings further indicate that young people post information about their love relationships to prove to their friends that they are committed to someone. “I often share my pictures on Facebook to see the number of likes I receive” said K.I in an interview. This implies that when someone`s picture receives more likes, he or she becomes confident about his/ her beauty. In fact, the more one`s post receives more likes, the more that person posts or uploads content on social media platforms.



Source: Facebook

Figure 6: Youths Post their Picture that Depicts Happiest Moment in Life

The above photo shows that youths post their pictures on Facebook to express their happiest moments in their life. Just by viewing the above pictures, anyone can understand immediately that someone is making a marriage proposal and this is what exactly they want to show to other Facebook users. However, the study found out that some young people upload their real photos just to see how other social media users think about them through their comments on such photos.

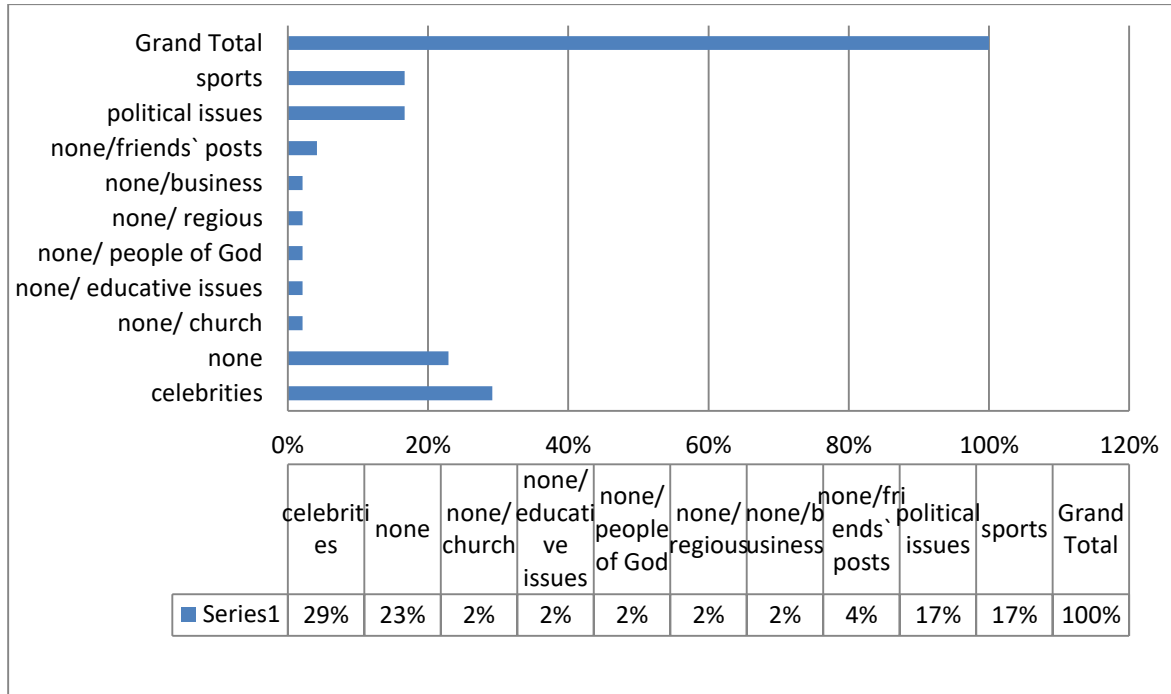


Figure 7: Facebook Content Liked and Commented on by Students of Uganda Martyrs University

The research findings in the graph above show that 29 percent of students always comment on information about celebrities. 23percent of students don't like to comment on any information on Facebook. 2 percent like commenting on information about religious services. 2 percent like educative information. 4 percent like commenting on friends` posts. 17 percent comment on political issues and 17 percent of students like commenting on sports. It is evident that students` consumption of Facebook content is selective. However, students learn so many things through paying selective attention to different social media contents. This enables students to acquire different knowledge from different content on various social media platforms mainly Facebook.

Conditions through which Youths Acquire Different Habits from Social Media

The study found out that some young people want to associate themselves with people in overseas continents. Besides, young people constantly desire to emulate the life style of people in overseas continents whose pictures are uploaded on Facebook. Therefore, it is this desire for young people to behave like whites or their icons viewed on Facebook that forces them emulate foreign habits thus young people acquire new habits.

Besides, the study also found out that, when students are stressful, they resort to viewing content of different social media platforms and thus release their stress. This implies that facebook consumption sometimes acts as a relief agent to some stressful young people. It makes them forget their worries or suffering encountered during day time at their places of work. “Whenever I get

stressed, I log into facebook to watch some online interesting content about different celebrities” said K.I in an interview. In the same vein, the research findings further indicate that some young people change their facebook status after getting new hardships in their relationships to indirectly inform the concerned facebook friends about what took place in their lives. They do this to get virtual or cyber sympathy from their facebook friends. “I remember posting information saying; some people deserve red cards to get them out of our lives. This was after my boyfriend cheated on me” said KI in an interview. This implies that some young people post some information depicting sorrow situations to create awareness as well as seeking sympathy from their virtual friends. Similarly another Key informant said in an interview “when my father died, I posted his picture on facebook to inform facebook friends that he is dead. After that, I received a lot of messages encouraging me to be strong”. Similarly, the research found out that some students watch videos on social media platforms to reduce the stress accumulated in their social life relationships. “I think youths upload their nice pictures on facebook because they want to hibernate from the reality of their real life style” said K.I in an interview. This implies that social media has the power to massage the psychological pain young people acquire due to disappointments from their social relations. The visual contents on Facebook act as a machine dispensing private space offering a refuge from the distractions of family and neighborhood.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Over consuming facebook content has a great impact on the young people`s behavior whose media literacy levels are low. It is true some young people are too weak to resist the powerful social media content for they can`t distinguish fake online news from truthful content on social media platforms. When young people consume social media content of their choice, their attitudes, perception and beliefs towards certain issues in the world change; it is this that later influences the ways young people behave in the society.

However, the world should be a free market of ideas and there should be a free circulation of information. Therefore, social media has the power to extend human sense organs for seeing, hearing and feeling. It is this reason that Facebook users easily know the news all over the world. Facebook gives a wide range of experiences to its users; it allows young people, create and share any information of their choice in actual time. Facebook provides a free platform for young people to express their right to access any kinds of information. They often upload podcasts to keep their social media friends abreast of relevant information. The research findings further indicate that young people post information about their love relationships to prove to their friends that they are committed to someone. In fact Facebook has the magic power to reduce the stress young people get from their social relations; it makes them shortly forget the worst conditions experienced in their love relationships.

Besides, there is need to promote media literacy among young people who are constant users of facebook. This will help them identify online fake information from truthful information. Further still, young people should find other alternative sources of information and entertainment rather than over depending on social media platforms like facebook. This will help them resist the

powerful social media messages thus young people`s behavior will not be very much influenced by social media content viewed.

However, there are several aspects in which this study was limited; these limitations suggest a direction for future research. First, due to time and financial constraints, I only handled department of Journalism and Communication studies in Uganda Martyrs University. Handling a bigger group from each department or school would be beneficial in creating a bigger understanding of our study.

Future studies could also be conducted to focus on why use of social media is on the rise in Uganda and why social media has created such a popular phenomenon in communication compared to other communication channels. Besides, researchers may also do research on the impact of social media on citizen journalism.

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