Weaponisation of Social Media Communication in Influencing Cultural Decay on Youth of Today Case of Woodlands Park, Gweru, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at exploring the weaponisation of social media communication in influencing cultural decay on youth of today in Woodlands Park Gweru. Its objectives were to highlight the social media communication sites being used as a weapon to fight against positive cultural norms on the personal and professional life of the youth of today in Woodlands Park. The fulcrum of the study was to determine the assumption that the young generation's behavior has been negatively affected social media communication channels resulting in the decay of useful cultural practices, norms and values in Woodlands Park. The study was delimited in the Woodlands Park community only focusing on the younger generation aged 10 to 35 alone. This study was informed by three theories on social media namely modernisation theory, functionalism theory and conflict theory. The study adapted a qualitative approach informed by an interpretivism philosophy. The study focused on a sample size of 42 participants consisting of 7 senior citizens, 5 religious leadership and 30 youths to represent all the young generation in Woodlands Park. The study found out that social media has contributed significantly on acts of deviance behaviour among the majority of youth in Woodlands. The most affected being the females who are using social media for live videos streaming doing what they call "Mjolo'(sexual activities). The behaviour of the youth in woodland Park has gone beyond recovery thereby affecting the cultural norms and, values thereby defeating the Ubuntu philosophy. The study confirms that young men are much interested on using social media for dating and chatting with females exchanging some nude images and videos. The study recommends that the government needs to establish an effective system that regulate what is posted on social media. Parents are supposed to be empowered with skills to restrict their children from browsing unsafe sites while the religion fraternity has to take a lead in communicating good use of social media communication channels.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Social media communication channels are a crucial product of computer and internet technologies with a growing usage level day by day. Growing social media communication usage level enables new software developments and making investments in this area. From this aspect, therefore, social media communication has not only economic function but also make persons participate and communicate in social life through different platforms and channels.

The advancement in technology across the globe has transformed the manner in which people socialise and communicate. The advent of social media has heavily impacted on communication. This is supported by Muni and Gupta, (2020) who suggest that social media communication denotes the use of internet and mobile technologies to change communication and make it interactive. Social media communication is a form of communication that outshines the normal techniques of talking and takes communication to a new level. Social media communication has greatly transformed the mode of communication in societies, organizations, groups, and individuals communicate hence Woodlands Park is not an exceptional.

Social media communication as indicated by Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010) takes on many different forms including print and electronic media forms. Kaplan and Haenlein, (2010) dichotomised social media with the help of media research and they came up with six different types of social media which are: content communities such as Youtube, collaborative projects for example Wikipedia, blogs and microblogs such as Twitter, social networking sites which include Facebook, virtual game worlds for example World of Warcraft and virtual social worlds such as second Life.

Obar and Wildman, (2015) asserts that social media includes interactive internet-based applications that are interchangeably used as social software. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as "Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". Rendering to another definition as defined by Eley and Tilley, (2009), social media is "a broad term consisting of blogs, microblogs, forums, dialogues, images, sounds, videos, networks, social web profiles and other social networks". It is possible to consider social media as a complete umbrella term entailing of network-based applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, telegram, You Tube Twitter and many more for audio, photo and video sharing. These applications permit the young generation to create their own contents through social means and share these as texts, audio, video, image settings individually or in groups. Some are even advertising themselves as thigh venders through use of telegram, twitter and WhatsApp groups something which is totally culturally unacceptable within the community of Woodlands Park.

Social media is used as an extensive delineation of innumerable network tools and technologies that accentuate the social characteristics of the internet as the communication and cooperation instrument of the 21st century which resulted from the developments in internet technologies. Banks, (2007) argues that although social media, which are a rapidly improving, field, it is dated back to 1969 when CompuServe was used as an online service. In the same vein are Boyd and Ellison, (2007) who perceive that social media can be considered to have been started in 1997 in the modern sense in which the internet presented users with the ability to create own profiles and make friends with other people. At the end of the 1990's, people started exchanging messages, photos, and videos with each other through their own blogs Dao, (2015). Together with the increase in the usage degree that occurred as a result of the establishment of Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, SlideShare and Twitter in 2006, it was observed that social media settings, which served for various fields, were improved (Boyd and Ellisoni 2008; Grosseck and Hotescu, 2008). This might have contributed to an increase of users throughout the globe stretching to Africa, Zimbabwe and also to Gweru thereby impacting on Woodlands which could not be left in isolation.

Hansen, Shneiderman and Smith (2011) cited that the development and variety in social media flagged the way for new interaction choices among users and this can presumed to be achieved through hundreds of social media settings such as sharing texts, photos and videos. Social media is used through mobile devices and it is interaction, user and society-based and that it is user-friendly making it an effective tool for communication and influencing the erosion of culture in societies. Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2011) state that social media ropes in formal and informal learning and allows learners to arrange their own personal learning settings. Identifying users' habits has an important function on determining economic, social and cultural effects of social media. From this perspective, this research aims to determine social media usage habits of 21st century youth due to rapid changes in communication and find its influence to changes in culture erosion within the society.

Social Media in Zimbabwe

Social media, and in particular the messaging application Whatsapp, has become highly pervasive in Zimbabwe. This has led various authors to interrogate what people really do on these platforms for example Malleus and Muchena (2015) examine student cell phone use on one Zimbabwean university campus, using questionnaire data from 179 volunteers, answering the research question "What are students on campus doing with their cell phones to meet their needs? This has exposed positives of social media where students were said to be benefiting from WhatsApp groups by sharing learning material and doing learning related discussions. It also emerged that there were also negatives associated with use of social media where students were abusing WhatsApp groups sharing pornographic materials and also doing group video calls naked.

Family time and normal interpersonal communication has been transformed as people prefer chatting with friends in the virtual chatting sites. As stated by Giddens (2009), there is a fear by sociologists that the spread of the Internet technology will lead to increased social isolation and atomisation as people spend much less time with family and friends. Use of social media has been also used for different reasons. This has been witnessed by incidents which took place in Zimbabwe for example on the 14th of January 2019, citizens around Zimbabwe took to the streets to protest against a 150 percent fuel price hike. The nationwide action was called for by Evan Mawarire, a Baptist pastor who leads #ThisFlag activist movement and Peter Mutasa, the head of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). #ThisFlag, a citizen-led movement founded in 2016 through a series of YouTube videos by Mawarire, staged the first mass work stay-away in nearly a decade to protest the economic decline and increasing repression (Marima, 2019). Also, this shows the influence and impact of social media in the Zimbabwean context.

According to Beebe and Masterson (2003), human communication comprises what people say, how they say it and to whom they say it. This means that what people say depends on the environment in which they are. Thus, people are bound to change the way they communicate in relation with the environment at any given time. As a result of the high patronage on WhatsApp, there have been several pitfalls for various people through usage of the social network site. Whilst other Zimbabweans use it to communicate with their friends and relatives in various places, other Zimbabweans have used it to circulate hoaxes. According to Chidza at al, (2016), several people have been pronounced dead along them popular sungura musician Alick Macheso while in October 2015 another false message claimed that a bus from Maranatha Primary School had been involved in an accident when the school did not have a bus as described in the message. Again, in the third of December 2015 parents with children who learn at Mutare Boys High School were sent into panic mode when someone circulated a message claiming that a bus carrying their kids from school had been involved in an accident and fifty-nine students had lost their lives. However, nothing of that sought had happened. For two consecutive years (2014 and 2015), winners of the Miss Zimbabwe beauty pageant have been dethroned after their nude pictures have been 'leaked' on Whatsapp. Chiridza, et al, (2016) informed that marriages have been broken as a result of one partner or both who have been cheating have been caught either after their pictures and or videos in compromising positions or in the nude have leaked though they did not give statistics on pertaining to that. It is in this light that this study seeks to establish what youths in Woodlands are really doing on whatsapp so that an empirically informed picture of the situation in Woodlands Park can be mirrored and report on the actual happenings rather than depending on various media discourses which generalises the information.

Despite all the above occurrences, Marima, (2019) is of the view that social media programming developed specifically for youth is particularly important in Zimbabwe as more than two-thirds of the country's 14.65 million population is under the age of 35 and this means the youth are a key pillar in building democracy and peace in the future (Marima, 2019). This therefore entails that the youth as the future leaders needs to be oriented on better ways to use social media in such a way that promotes their culture norms, values and ethos within their communities thereby promoting sustainable development.

In the city of Gweru, social media has been used in various ways by the residents. The Newsday Zimbabwe, (07 May 2022) published that the disgruntled Gweru residents have turned to social media to express their service delivery concerns after councillors failed to hold regular feedback meetings. This shows how social media is being used to bring a positive outcome within the city of Gweru. The Gweru council has been also attacked through social media sending hoax messages. According to the Herald of 3 November 2017, Gweru council dismissed media hoax where social media reported that one of its ambulances where used to ferry apaque beer to a local beer outlet. A picture of an ambulance loaded with apaque beer commonly known as super went viral on social media with the ambulance being said to belong to Gweru City Council. This therefore points to the negatives associated with social media and how it can tarnish the image of an organisation or individuals. This study therefore aims in carrying an in-depth enquiry onto the impact of social media on the youth in Woodlands and explore how it can influence on culture.

Social media has been also used in other circumstances to spread information with images of dead bodies something which can be referred to as unrespecting the dead body. This was seen by the incidence of shootings which were done in Gweru were two gold mine workers, (names withheld) were shot dead by their Chinese

Mine employer at Reden Mine on the 21st of June 2020 (ZELA, June 23, 2020). Video, audios and picture images of the shooting incident and the bodies of the deceased were widely circulated on social media bring uncertainty and panic within the City of Gweru and also in Woodlands Park. This clearly illustrates some of the dangers of media and how it led to cultural decay.

In February 2023, You-tube published a video titled Lorraine Guyo Gweru Mbinga's Lula Lula Sinhi and Musvo Viral Pictures Leakedby Queen Tetelicios, pictures of the one purpoted to be a Gweru Mbinga has his picture circulated on facebook, whatsapp groups and many more other channels of social media. These pictures were also exchanged by the youth in Woodlands with some female youth also emulating to have an affair with the so-called Gweru Mbinga. This has contributed to social behaviour decay in Woodlands Park and influenced a lot of youth to be on the same label.

Zim-eye of 25 September 2019 also published a leaked signed Gweru Polytechnic Hostel Meal Plan which went viral through several social media platforms such as whatsapp, facebook telegram and many more. This publication or the spread of the signed document impacted negatively on Gweru Polytechnic College as it unmasked what the student were taking as their meal throughout their stay at the college where they would eat beans, cabbage and chunks on super and dinner.

Recently, H.Metro of 13 September 2023 under its heading "Gweru Bombshell", reported that there was a row over how an employee was sacked at a leading retail outlet in Gweru has opened up to an adulterous affair with her supervisor in which she got the job after she had submitted to his sexual demands. A leaked audio of her explosive conversation with her boss appears that a number of other female employees were also caught up in the sex-for-favours scandal. Hence social media is not doing justice within the city of Gweru and consequently Woodlands Park.

Security and Data Protection Bill of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a member of the international community and it is a known fact that cybercrime knows no border. Therefore, the government felt the need to introduce the Cyber Security and Data Protection Bill. By introducing this act, Zimbabwe is contributing at an international level to fight cybercrimes. Also, considering the fact that cybercrime is borderless, it was important for the government to take the best practices to fight cybercrime both from the regional and international players. It is from this background that the Security and Data Protection Act was enacted.

According to The Independent newspaper of (May 19, 2022), Zimbabwe has officially been in the process of legislating a concrete data protection bill since 2020. In May 2020, the Bill was formally gazetted with public hearings starting in July 2020. At this point, the Bill was still called the Cyber security and Data Protection Bill. After almost 18 months of deliberations, debates, and modifications to the original Bill, Zimbabwe formally enacted the Data Protection Act (DPA) on December 3, 2021 (The Independent newspaper of May 19, 2022). While the new law deals with aspects of cyber-security and cybercrime, the Act's primary focus is on data privacy and ensuring data protection for all data collected by data handlers within the country as well as outside the country if the means used for processing is located in Zimbabwe.

MISA Zimbabwe (2023) reiterates that the act was designed to provide better data protection, which in turn, will gain the confidence of the internet users to use internet communication technology. The Cyber Security and Data Protection Bill aims to punish the people who misuse and abuse the internet, social media and communication network. In addition to that, it aims to support the financial digital system of Zimbabwe for better protection and efficiency. It was a long-awaited protection bill to fight cyber-crimes in the country. In addition to that, it was also necessary to protect both the personal and commercial data of internet users.

The Data Protection Act is a welcome move in the country and also in Woodlands which was long overdue as it can go a long way in bringing sanity with the community of Woodlands Park. The current digital age demands such acts and bills in the country to provide a safe online space to its citizens. Hopefully, such acts and bills will reduce the cybercrimes in the country and encourage the people to use the different spaces of the online world in a safe manner without the intent of harming anyone.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Modernisation Theory

The study benefited from the modernisation theory as it helped the researchers to understand the origins of mass media and the birth of the social media. This enabled the researchers to have an understanding of the changes that have taken place in Woodlands Park due to influence of social media. This theory shows clearly the drivers of mass media and social media and the background embedded in the premise of enlightenment and primitive philosophy which can relate and interpret the impact of social media on youth living in Woodlands Park. The modernisation theory demonstrates how communication through mass media and social media has influenced the cultural erosion in the Woodlands Park of Gweru city. The theory clearly explains how culture exchange from stage of primitive to enlighten stage has defined the present and the future of the youth in Woodlands Park.

Functionalism theory in media

Functionalism focuses on how media and technology contribute to the smooth functioning of society (Cheong, et al, 2012). This theory helped the researchers to look into a number of benefits that social media is contributing to the youth in Woodlands Park community such as entertainment. The functionality theory recognises that social media not only function in entertainment but it also serves to socialize the communities, helping with the passing on of norms, values, and beliefs to the next generation. In fact, the functionalism perceives that social media helps in socializing and re-socializing the communities throughout whole lives of people. Functionalism have the idea that social media in all its forms can teach communities on what is good and desirable, how one should speak, how one should behave, and how one should react to events. The theory is of the believe that social media provide communities with cultural touchstones hence this theory helped the researchers in understanding much in the happenings in Woodlands Park through use of social media making it a useful theory in the study.

Conflict theory on social media technology

Conflict theorists views social structure as inherently unequal, based on power differentials related to issues like class, gender, race, and age. For a conflict theorist, Behrent, (2009) asserts that culture is seen as reinforcing issues of privilege for certain groups based upon race, sex, class, and so on. In the same vein is Awan and Raza, (2016) who allude that senior citizens struggle to protect their rights, their health care, and their independence from a younger generation of lawmakers. The two points out that inequality exist within a culture's value system. Therefore, a society's cultural norms benefit some people but hurt others. Some norms, formal and informal, are practiced at the expense of others. This perspective helped the researchers to look into the perspectives of the youth in Woodlands in regard to culture's value system. The youth in Woodlands do not agree to some of the cultural norms within Woodlands Park community citing the generational gap which exist among the old age and the youth.

At the core of conflict theory is the effect of economic production and materialism; for example, dependence on technology and education by the Woodlands Park youth versus a lack of technological skills and knowhow by the old generation to put technology into use. Conflict theorists believe that a society's system of material production has an effect on the rest of culture (Domhoff, 2007). People who have less power also have less ability to adapt to or enact cultural change. This view is of the notion that the Youth in Woodlands has less power to influence of the culture change in Woodlands. Their attempt to infiltrate into the cultural believes, ethos and values has triggered more conflict with the old generation who perceives the behaviour of youth as deviance behaviour hence it is totally unacceptable within the Woodlands Park.

 A conflict perspective another major focus is the differential access to social media and technology embodied

in the digital divide (Gitlin, 1978). The Conflict theorists helped the researchers to look at who controls the media, and how media promotes the norms of the youth in Woodlands Park, Gweru. This has helped the researchers in analysing the data which was generated through interview and observations.

METHODOLOGY

The study adapted a qualitative methodology because of its richness in in-depth and detailed data on the impact of social media on the Youth in Woodlands Park. The qualitative method mainly focused on the descriptive data which enabled the understanding of what was going on the ground. Qualitative researches focused much on understand residents of Woodlands Park's interpretations about their perceptions on the influence of social media on culture hence rich data was gathered.

Textual analysis was very critical tool in this study as it enabled the researcher to analyse the texts meanings, representations, and discourses present on impact of social media on youth in woodlands Park. It helped to expose how the youth emulate those celebrates who they meet on social media and end up inheriting those behaviours in real life situations in Woodlands Park. The way the youth youths interact and talk would show what they were up to. The facial expressions and attitudes were easily sending some messages about the type of a person one is. Body movements in female youth were sending messages which were clearly labeled. These texts were analysed in this study as they were able to tell a story about the youth and residence of Woodlands Park. Some texts were very clear on telling what happened or happening. The texts displayed some characteristics features of a particular thing and it allowed presentation of information in more than one side of the phenomena under study.

The researchers were non-participant observers and they paid special visits within Woodlands Park taking notes on the happenings in an endeavour to observe on how social media has impacted on the youth as suggest by Creswell, (2012). The researchers got less access than the participant role, and gatekeepers and youth in Woodlands Park were more comfortable with it.

This study focused on a sample size of 42 residents of Woodlands which consists of 7 senior citizens, 5 religious leadership and 30 youths. The 7 senior citizens were selected using snowballing sampling technique, 5 religious leaders were selected purposively while the 30 youth were selected conveniently. Thus the 30 Woodlands Youth who took part in interviews were those who were readily available to the researcher.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

During interviews, it was revealed that social media has contributed significantly on acts of deviance behaviour within the majority of youth in Woodlands. The most affected being the female who are using social media for live videos streaming doing what they call "Mjolo'(sexual activities). One of the respondents a female youth has this to say,

> *"I use telegram, whatsapp and twitter mostly during the night around 1000hrs until dawn depending with the demand for that day to live video streaming. I have clients all over the world whom I do Mjolo with on line. That's my source of income since I have to take care of my daughter who lives with my mother in Domboshawa"*

The social media according to the above sentiments have been seen as a breakthrough for some youth who then spent most of their time engaging in activities such as online *mjolo* (sexual activities) which are not accepted within the Woodlands Park community. Mjolo (sexual activities) is a slang word which refers to an act way of one being involved in sexual scandals or activities in a way which is not socially accepted such as having extra marital affair or being involved in intimacy activities with the one who is not married to you. These activities are not socially accepted in the Woodlands Park community. This was evidenced with one of the key informant who is a religious leader when he said:

> *"It is a shame that when God gave human kind wisdom and power to make the earth to be what they want it to be, some will be busy converting those same blessings into curses upon their lives. It is utterly abomination to do sexual activities online. That the works of the devil and these are signs that end times are near"*

Despite the above sentiments by the man of the cloths, the youth in Woodlands have shown that that social media the best platforms that can guarantee their happiness.

> *I see no reason why I can stop using social media especially my whatsapp the Instagram. I post my pictures on social media and I leave my number underneath so that anyone who would have loved me can get in touch. …. social media is a good platform for hook ups and that how I survive. There are no man, no jobs so leave us alone as we struggle to make ends meet….";*

Exclaimed one of the female youths. Observations made during the interviews showed that the female youth was not worried on what the community would say about her. He dressing alone could send a message to the community that she is searching and any many with money can approach her at any given time. She seemed not to care about the consequences that may come as a result of her doings. The way she was holding her black label quote would tell it all about her.

One of the elderly man, a senior citizen observed by the research looking disgusted with the appearance of some female youth as they walk towards the bar with their smart phones in their hands. The researcher conveniently selected one of them for interview and she said:

> *"…look, thanks to mjolo whatsapp groups, I posted my pictures with a caption of my number and now here we are with my friends. I got a client who requested that I bring my 2 friends with me since they are 3. My sister, you can give me your number and I will immediately add you into the group kkkkkkkk (giggles shamelessly)"*

This indicates that social media has transformed the social norms, ethos and values within the Woodlands Park community. Some acts such as thigh vending which used to be done on darkness are now practiced daylight. It also emerged that the youth no longer worry about the nude picture circulating on social media as they are taking that as an opportunity to market them and lure clients.

An interview with male youth exposed how male youth spent their time on social media doing. The interview confirmed that young men are much interested on using social media for dating and charting with females exchanging some nude images and videos.

> *"Gules haaa zvibbe totozvida zvekudaro wena hazviperi muma groups ewhatsapp nemu telegram iwe ndiwe unotopera bag chete (sister in-law, we love girls serious, they plenty of them in whatsapp and telegram groups, as long you have cash you can have them)"*

It was so clear from the sentiments above that even the young man are also using social media to fulfil their sexual desires despite that they do not know each other. The behaviour of the youth in woodland Park has gone beyond recovery thereby affecting the cultural and, values and Ubuntu philosophy.

The researchers took sometime moving around the Woodlands Park mainly in places where there are some gatherings or activities such as churches and shops. The researchers would observe the way the youth communicate, their type of dressings, the language they were using such as none verbal communication so as to gather more data on the impact of social media on youth. The researchers observed that some young both female and male with a larger number being female could be seen concentrating on their smart phones even walking on the road. It was observed that there is no longer family time or physical socialization as everyone seems to be concentrating on her or his smart phone chatting.

The socially media has greatly transformed the social life of the youth in Woodlands. Even in churches, smart phones have been proclaimed to be hindrance towards preaching of the word of God. From the observations done on churches by the researchers, it was noticed that the youth concentrates more on their phones while the service is underway. It was so disturbing as the pastors kept on rebuking the youth who would be using their phones. One of the pastors has to shout that;

> *"Switch off your phones when you enter the door. The devil has his own way to deter you from hearing the word of God. Refuse to be used by the devil!"*

To what extent do you think that the social media is doing more harm than good to the socio-cultural of the Woodlands Park community?

Through interviews it was observed that the impact of social media on cultural practice is that cultural practice has lost meaning in the Woodlands Park community in the sense that the youth have adopted the western way of dressing, eating, art and drama and behaviour. One of the youth, a female during the interview reiterated that,

> " ...zvaive zvekare zviya zvinhu zvachinja wee…(…things have changed it is no longer as before..)"

This was a clear indication that the youth are no longer interested in cultural believes and norms of the past thereby threating the existence of the cultural believes in the Woodlands Park in Gweru. In the same vein is responded respondent 3 a female who points out that;

> "My sister, you have to make decisions about your life otherwise if you are to let these old folks and these pastors to tell you what to do and not to you won't progress in life, ini ndini handidi anondiudza zvekuita with my life… (I am who who I am and I don't want anyone to tell me what to do and not")

Social media has also derailed people from cultural practice. One of the key informant an elderly woman from senior citizen lamented that;

> "Iwo mawhatsapp nemafoni iwaya ndiwo atipedzera vana muno, …hunhu hwedu hwaparara havachina kana ganda kumeso vapwere iva..: (the use of smart phones have taken our children away from us…our culture/Ubuntu has been destroyed, these children no longer have a sense of humour ….)"

The above assertion shows how the elderly are disturbed by the deviance behaviour of the youth due to influence of social media.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The study has established that WhatsApp, telegram facebook and instagram are the typical social media platforms accessed by the majority of the youth in Woodlands Park. WhatsApp has been highly rated by the participants of this study, followed by Facebook telegram and Instagram. Youtube been lowly rated by the youth in Woodlands Park. The above findings on whatsapp is in tandem with study by Mugari and Cheng (2020) who reported that Whatsapp is predominantly being used in Zimbabwe, thereby corroborating the findings of this study. Furthermore, Tarisai and Manhibi (2017) attributed the advent flow of cheap cell phones from China as the enabling factor for the people of Zimbabwe to access Whatsapp.

In the same vein, Karombo (2017) pointed out that Whatsapp has become the most popular internet application in Zimbabwe, accounting for 44% of mobile internet usage in the country, confirming this study's findings. Also, in further concurrence with the findings of this study, Kazeem (2020) alluded that Whatsapp has become one of the top social media platforms of choice in Africa, suggesting that social media platform access is regionally influenced (Busari, 2019). Perhaps the social zones have a significant impact on social media platform choices. This view was confirmed by Tengia et al. (2018) in Tanzania, who revealed that Whatsapp is one of the most favourite social media platforms utilised by 53% of the participants.

The study revealed that the female youths account for the majority who use social media. These findings are in line with scholars such as O'Reilly, (2020) and Allen, et al (2014) are of the same views that girls prefer to invest more time on social media than boys.

However, the results of this study seem to contradict the findings by other researchers (Umar and Idris, 2018; Anderson and Jiang, 2018). They reported Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter as highly favoured by

youths to establish their online presence. Implicitly, the difference could be attributed to the socio-economic status of the study participants (Nyongesa et al., 2016). In other words, the issue of affordance determines the particular platform to be used (Moreno and Uhls, 2019). Therefore, affordance can be a mechanism for understanding social media across platforms. Zimbabwe is a developing country that is still working to improve its internet connectivity, which restricts participants' access to many social media platforms. In addition, considering that the majority of the youth in Woodlands are not formally employed, it could be the reason why they cannot afford to use other social platforms such as Youtube

It has been demonstrated that the participants in this study chose different social media sites for various reasons. Cipolletta et al. (2020) point out that the low direct costs, private and hidden communication provided by social networks has helped make social media platforms a common online destination for adolescents, thereby upholding the findings of this study.

Furthermore, Reid and Weigle (2014) claim that teenagers can connect with others who share their specific hobbies or interests. This study confirms Busari's (2019) findings that social media platforms facilitate various social activities such as live video streaming, collaborative authoring, messaging friends, engaging in online chatting, and sharing images. The findings of this study collaborate the findings by Franchina et al. (2018), Mulisa and Getahun (2018), and Kim (2017) that social media platforms provide users with a consistent stream of social and informational needs.

Social media has been found to be fueling deviance behaviour in woodlands. This resonates with conclusions done by Rani and Padmalosani, (2019) that social media can promote deviance behaviour and acts which are not socially accepted. In addition is Nesi, (2020) who points out that social media promotes deceptive posts, messaging, photographs that give rise to conflicts in between them and such posts are deteriorating the affiliations and relations between nations.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the finding above, the study concludes that the majority of youth uses smart phones for accessing social media. The study settles that social media has contributed significantly on acts of deviance behaviour within the majority of youth in Woodlands. The study concludes that the female mainly use social media for live videos streaming doing what they call "Mjolo' (sexual activities). The interview confirmed that young men are much interested on using social media for dating and charting with females exchanging some nude images and videos. It is concluded that the behaviour of the youth in woodland Park has gone beyond recovery it is affecting the cultural and, values and Ubuntu philosophy. The study conclusively that there is no longer family time or physical socialization as everyone would be concentrating on her or his smart phone chatting. It cannot be debated that socially media has greatly transformed the social life in Woodlands. Even in churches, smart phones are a hindrance towards preaching of the word of God. The study revealed that the female youths account for the majority who use social media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Basing on the conclusions found, the following recommendations are made:

1. The study suggest that social media users should understand the intent of using social media and remain informed about the use of informational sites, as well as the data protection issues at stake with the use of applications. Teenagers must use their time productively on social media to improve social connectivity rather than squandering their valuable time on informal chats and posts in WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. To ensure the future of children, teachers and parents should look for what they are truly doing
2. There should also be more awareness and campaign on the dangers of social media such as cat fishing.
3. The youth in Woodlands Park should be encouraged to use the social networks for promotion of social consciousness and compassion. They should use these platforms for job recruitment such as Linkden and Facebook application

4. The researcher advised that the government needs to establish an effective system that will regulate what is posted on social media. The government should restrict content that should be shared.

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