



PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING AMONG YOUTH IN ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA IN EMBU DIOCESE OF EMBU WEST, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Youths whether in church or outside get so much involved in use of technology especially social media during lockdown of churches. Social media may affect their relationship with others especially chats from peers. Social media take on many forms including blogs, business/social networks, forums, photo/video sharing, social bookmarking, social gaming. This paper established the effects of social media on psychosocial wellbeing of youth in Anglican Church of Kenya Embu Diocese, particularly how it affected their interpersonal relationships and mental processes. It used a descriptive survey of youth in 5 ACK churches with 1200 youth. Random sampling technique was used to select 291 youth from the population. Purposive sampling was used to select 9 clergy, who represented the 5 ACK churches, making a total of 300. The study used 300 respondents which represented both youth and clergy. Data was collected using questionnaires for the youth and interview schedule for the clergy. The piloting to 10 youth was done to help remove the errors. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to test for reliability for youth's questionnaires. The reliability coefficient was $\alpha=0.8$ and was deemed appropriate since it was above the recommended 0.7. The Interview was conducted among the selected 90 Clergy. Descriptive statistics were used to present data. Qualitative data was obtained from open-ended thematic questions for clergy. Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Science version 21. Social media affected the social interactions of the youth in that as they chat their friends criticized them and bullied them hence lowering their self-esteem and the more they used it the more they got fatigue and exhaustion hence causing burnout but proper use of it enhanced interpersonal relationships. The findings will help enlighten the youth on how best to use social media, especially in church during the COVID-19 pandemic. They would encourage churches to enlighten youth through seminars on how to use social media responsibly to mitigate the pandemic. The study recommends introduction of programmes to train the youth on how the social media can be of help to them if well used to enhance social interactions and mental wellbeing.

Keywords: Psychosocial, Burn-out, Interpersonal relationships, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of social media networks has cut across all facets of society with its positive and negative impacts. Social media has transformed and impacted on communication, learning, research and education in general. Among the vast variety of online tools which are available for communication (Valkenburg, 2007). USA college students were asked about social media usage in their school and 20 out of 23 students believed social media caused anxiety or added stress to an individual's life Individuals believe the number of likes on WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram or Retweets on Twitter is used as a tool of verification for acceptance within their group of peers. This can affect an individual's self-esteem. An individual will post photos that are outside their character just to seek approval through likes from their peers. This may boost an individual's self-esteem (Linker, 2010).

Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become the most modern and attractive tools for connecting people throughout the world (Aghazamani, 2010). These have influenced the way people interact and value self. Davis *et al.*, (2012.). Through this platform, individuals and organizations create profiles, share and exchange information on various activities and interests. Social media platforms both on the web and mobile application include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Whatsapp, Instagram, blogs, sport pesa, viber among others Davis *et al.*, (2012),

According to Internet usage statistics for the world, there was 3,035,749,340 estimated Internet users with a penetration rate of 42.3% as at June, 2014 (Tiene, 2000). According to Lee and Leung, (2012) they found that, 1 in 3 Facebook users are spending less time on the network. The survey indicates that 34% of respondents found Facebook was now “boring” “not relevant” or “not useful” This is strong indication that digital overload is in fact happening already and more people in future will express this same sentiment. With additional players, entering the market with more niche platforms to curb the influx, what online users and digital natives should expect is a barrage of options. There are so many options already at our disposal (Lee, Leung, Qiu, & Chu, 2012).

In Kenya, The National Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK, 2015) indicated that mobile data subscribers in the country have increased exponentially with a penetration rate of 59.78%. As at the end of March, 2015, mobile data subscriber base had increased to 65%. This may have a greater influence on the psychosocial lifestyle of the people in society especially the youth (Michelle, 2010).

In Embu Diocese, most churches have embraced social media due to lockdowns out of corona virus pandemic and have found it to be a viable method of expanding their church community and outreach into the virtual and physical worlds. Most of the churches that are successful with social media use it for communicating with current members and reaching out to new ones. These churches use Facebook, Twitter and other popular social media platforms. Adopting technology as part of the church's programmes has become very popular in the A.C.K churches in Embu Diocese. They use social media as a tool for communicating with members to access sermons, listen to podcasts, connect with other church members or view photos from most recent church event, regardless of where they are or the time of day.

In these ways, social media has changed the definition of 'local' while expanding opportunities for worship (Peter, 2014). The innovative ways the churches in Embu Diocese are communicating with their members via social networks include the members who are not able to join the church service and shut-in outreach where for years; churches have struggled with an effective way of staying in touch. Some churches are using Facebook and other forms of social media to stay in touch with these members and get to know the ongoing activities. Some are creating content and services geared especially toward this demographic to deliver across a social media. There is also the element of photo sharing via social networks - especially photo-centric platforms like Pinterest and Instagram - to be a great option for recognizing volunteers, as well as promoting upcoming concerts, events and special services like baptisms (William, 2013).

Churches in Embu Dioceses have found an effective method of staying in touch with its members who are out of town by streaming the service across the Internet. Members can choose from five service times and virtually participate in the worship service from wherever they are This form of communication denies the youth the opportunity to meet, interact and share time and exchange values and ideas and therefore kills their interpersonal relationships (Harriet, 2013). Sites like Facebook, WhatsApp and twitter have been highly created for special interest groups in an effort to reach a specific demographic - such as teens for a youth ministry. The group is connected to strategic church growth plan and is managed by ministers, youth ministers or senior church leadership. Churches that use social media are in a better position to reach out its' members, to expend resources, monitoring, the growth of membership (Sherrie, 2012).

There are debates on various platforms about media use and the impact that social media has on society and especially on the youth today. Churches have adopted the use of modern technology both in worship and communication to their members. The young people in these churches have taken this exercise a notch higher and are openly accessing social network sites even when they are in church for a service at times sending phonographic materials, criticizing others and chatting during the service. All these may destruct them from participating well in church activities and more so listening to the sermon or becoming part of the service. The ability of the youth to access social media without any form of restriction has led to alienation, laziness, addiction and time wastage. The prolonged use of social media affects the psychosocial lifestyle of the youth in terms of affecting their interpersonal relationships, self-esteem and burn out. The paper addressed the following specific objectives: To establish the perceived effects of social media on interpersonal relationships as a psychosocial well-being aspect among the youth in ACK Diocese of Embu. To determine the perceived effects of social media on burn out as a psychosocial well-being aspect among the youth in ACK Diocese of Embu.

The study applied descriptive survey design. Descriptive research studies are designed to collect precise data concerning the current status of phenomena and then be able to draw valid conclusion from the facts discovered (Salaria, 2012). The research design provided proper procedures for establishing the perceived effect of social media

on psychosocial wellbeing among youth in Anglican Church of Kenya Embu Diocese of Embu West Sub County. Target population in statistics is the specific population about which information is desired, (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2005). The population size of this study for the five selected churches was 1,200 youth in ACK Diocese of Embu. The churches are indicated in Table 1.

Kerlinger (2003) has defined a sample as a subset of a population where the actual study is conducted. To obtain the desired sample size, a table by Kathuri and Pals (1993) was adopted. The population size comprised of 1200 youth and 9 clergy totaling to 1209 respondents. According to Kathuri and Pals (1993) the sample size of 297 was adopted. Random sampling was used to select a representative sample of the respondents in a way that the existing sub-groups are more or less represented (Tiene, 2000). The youth from each church were grouped together and then samples were taken from each group this is shown in Table 1. The above named churches were selected and sampled for study because the Anglican churches are dominant in Embu West SubCounty.

Table 62. Sample size of churches selected at Embu West SubCounty

Name of Church	Youth population	Clergy	Sample size (25% of population)
ACK St. Paul’s Cathedral Church	800	3	200
ACK Kangaru Church	130	2	33
ACK Muthatari Church	120	1	30
ACK Kamiu Church	80	1	20
ACK St. Andrews	70	2	14
Total	1200	9	297

Data Analysis

Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview guide. The Questionnaires were used for the youth in the five selected churches, and the interview schedule was for the nine selected churches from the five selected churches. Cronbach’s Alpha (α) was used as a measure of internal reliability (Cronbach, 1971). Validity was ensured through supervisors and other sources of expert judgment. This is a process used to make sense of the data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 software was used to analyze the quantitative data. Both quantitative data and qualitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages were used to profile sample characteristics and major patterns emerging from the data.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics

The study sought the information on how youth used social media during church service and worship time; the results given are in Table 1. The findings in Table 2 shows that majority (36.0%) of the respondents use popular music show during church service/worship time, the results also presented that 18.7% access comedy shows while 17.3% visited other sites.

Table 2. Media sites accessed during church service and worship time

	Frequency(f)	Percent (%)
WhatsApp	108	36.0
Face book	56	18.7
Twitter	53	17.7
YouTube	31	10.3
Other specify(movies, shows ,games)	52	17.3
Total	300	100.0

The findings indicated that 10.3% of the respondents did not access media sites in church. The results indicated that most of the respondents are greatly affected by media thus less concentration during church service and worship time. The concentration of the youth depend on how well the environment allows them to be keen and the activities going on around them and if they are interesting to their attention. In addition, the clergy agree that most of the youth do not concentrate with the activities going on during the church service, thus showing most do chat as the service goes on, which also affected their concentration during church service (Sherrie, 2012). Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they visited different media sites; they gave their response as shown in Table 3.

Results in Table 3 indicated that majority of the respondents use Whats App and face book daily at a high rate of 56.3% and 67.0% respectively. The results further indicated that Video and Skype were used occasionally while a

number of 62.0% never used Instagram at all. Therefore, the results indicated that most of the youth use WhatsApp and Facebook, where most of their friends have liked them and it is easy to chat through those pages. The findings are in agreement with Kennedy (2013) who noted that these youth possess a state of mind, a temper of the will quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over network usage, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease. They are in the stage of constructing the self-concept. In addition, the clergy agreed that youth in the ACK Churches are greatly influenced by the use of social media which included, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.

Table 3. Frequency of visiting different media

Media Sites	Daily%	Weekly %	Occasionally%	Never%
WhatsApp	56.3	11.0	12.0	20.7
Facebook	67.0	14.7	6.0	12.3
Instagram	22.3	8.0	7.7	62.0
Skype	4.0	15.3	18.7	62.0
Video	38.0	16.0	24.7	21.3
Average	37.52	39.46	13.82	23.26

Access to Social Media Network Sites While in Church and at Home

Social media is a popular trend today, especially among youth. The usage of social media has increased such that it has affected communication and relations between the youth and the community. The study sought to find out how the youth have accessed to social networks sites and its relationship to church participation and while at home. The researcher also sought the opinion on how youth access social media while in church and also at home as shown in Table 4. Information in Table 4 indicates that 59.7% of the respondents disagreed that they access Social Networks in church while 36.3% agreed they do access social media in church. 41% agreed their parents had problems with them accessing social media while 52% disagreed. Respondents agreed 52.7% most youth spend much time accessing network sites while in church but 34.0% disagreed. 68.3% agreed that the youth have devices that enable them access SNS while in or out of church while 14.0% disagreed. Respondents', 41.7%, disagreed that their church uses SNS to reach out to its existing and potential members while 46.6% agreed.

Table 4. Access to social media while in church

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
I access SNS in church	15.0	21.3	4.0	49.0	10.7
My parents have no problem with me accessing SNS in church	18.7	22.3	7.0	47.7	4.3
Most of the youth in our church spend much time accessing network sites while in church	12.7	40.0	13.3	34.0	0.0
That the youth have devices that enable them access SNS while in or out of church	33.3	35.0	17.7	7.3	6.7
Our church uses SNS to reach out to its existing and potential members	13.3	33.3	11.7	41.7	0.0
Overall Mean	18.6	30.38	10.74	35.94	4.34

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

This is in agreement with Boyd and Elisson (2007) who found that when a teenager joins a site like Facebook they create a personal profile which displays information such as name, relationship status, occupation, photos, videos, religion, ethnicity, and personal interests. The use of social network sites depends on how many friends like you so as to open the same page with, thus most of ACK youth use social network sites where they chat with friends.

Perceived Effect of Social Media on Interpersonal Relationships

The second objective sought to determine the perceived effects of social media on interpersonal relationship among the youth and they gave the information as stated in Table 5. The information in Table 5 indicates that 70% of the youth respondents agreed that they have an opportunity to interact with one another through the SNS but 19.4% disagreed, while 59.3% agreed that some messages shared may bully and criticizing other youth hence breaking their relationship with peers, 37.0% were undecided. 78.7% of the respondents agreed the youth have personal and group profiles on the Social Network sites that they visit while 11% only disagreed. 19.6% agreed that the youth spending more time accessing social media during worship time also pays attention to the service but 24.3% of the respondents disagreed. 55.3% agreed. The interactions lead to improved interpersonal relationships and psychosocial well-being but 20% only disagreed. The respondents agreed that the youth sometimes access information through the SNS which may not please them and 24.3% were undecided. A total of 76.4%, strongly agreed that when discouraged, the youth feel withdrawn and isolated, while 20.4% disagreed while 69.7% agreed that by isolating

themselves, these youths may end up engaging in delinquent behavior but 23.7% of the respondents were undecided. The findings indicated that social media affected the youth interpersonal relationship among themselves, in that as they interact with one another creating page, they make more friends, hence empowering their relationships.

The findings are in the agreement with Williams (2011) who found that social networks have the potential to widen a person's social networks and provide access to valuable resources, information, and social support in addition the clergy agreed that social media enhance youth interpersonal relationship, the more they chat the more they boost their relationship with others by building strong friendship for socializing and chatting. However, people that use social media to fulfill perceived social needs, but are typically disappointed. Lonely individuals are drawn to the Internet for emotional support. The findings also were in agreement with Asilo (2010) that young people develop two possible types of interpersonal relations that is stronger interpersonal relationship with their friends, teachers, and parents. They are always updated with the status of their close friends, teachers, or even their parents that are in the friends list of the social networking sites. It is easier for them to know when will be the birthdays of their friends and so they get in touch with them, even if they are apart with less time and effort.

Table 5. Youth perceived effect of social media on interpersonal relationship

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
Youth have an opportunity to interact with one another through the SNS	45.0	25.7	10.0	12.7	6.7
Some messages shared may bully and criticizing other youth hence breaking their relationship with peers	26.3	33.0	37.0	3.7	0.0
The youth have personal and group profiles on the social network sites that they visit	36.0	42.7	10.3	11.0	0.0
Youth spending more time accessing social media during worship time also pays attention to the service	16.3	43.3	16.0	18.3	6.0
Interactions lead to improved interpersonal relationships and psychosocial well-being	34.0	21.3	24.7	12.0	8.0
Youth sometimes access information through the SNS which may not please them	36.0	26.7	24.3	13.0	0.0
When discouraged, the youth feel withdrawn and isolated from the others	24.7	51.7	3.3	10.7	9.7
By isolating themselves, these youth may end up engaging in delinquent behavior	16.0	53.7	23.7	6.7	0.0
Average	29.28	37.26	18.66	11.01	3.8

SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree.

Asilo (2010) also adds that, students, tend to develop weaker interpersonal relationships with their friends, teachers, and parents. This is due to too much dependency of students to the internet and computer as a medium of communication with their friends, teachers, and parents. Sometimes, students can only tell what they want to other people whenever they are chatting, or when they post comments on the wall of a person's account or profile. If they do this over and over again, this develops into a habit and become used to it until the time comes that they only depend on the internet and computer on telling what they want. A person can not express his/her emotions well and that results to an unhealthy relationship with other people.

Excerpt 1: Information from the clergy on perceived effects of social media on interpersonal relationship.

Researcher: Are there effects of social media usage on youth, interpersonal relationships? Does it affect them positively or negatively?

Respondent 1: Yes. Usage of social media affects the youth's interpersonal relationship in that, as they interact with others, opening pages with their peers, they get to make many friends through, Face book, WhatsApp, this make them to create a wide range of interacting with more people hence enhancing their interpersonal relationship among their peers. When their interpersonal relationship is boosted they get to participate more in church hence, attracting other youth to join the church. This affects their level of interaction positively.

Respondent 2: Social media affect youth's interpersonal relationship, in that youth like interacting with others and making new friends now and then, hence, making them feel good, appreciated and loved, this builds their interpersonal relationship among other peers.

Respondent 3: Of course, it does. Youth like chatting, making fun and adventuring new things equally they like being creative and innovative, they can only do this through interacting with their peers, opening pages for friends through Facebook where they get to know who likes them and who enjoys their comments, hence, their interpersonal relationships are affected positively.

Effects of Social Media on Burn Out

The third objective was on effects of social media on burn out among the youth. The researcher sought to find out whether social media had effects on burn out among the youth (Table 6).

Table 6. Responses of youth on the perceived effects of social media on burn out

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
When am bored, I can access social media to chat and connect with friends who may encourage me.	30.3	40.0	7.3	22.3	0.0
Whenever I find something good through social media I usually spends time sharing with pastor and fellow youth.	20.3	14.3	34.0	28.3	3.0
The more I access social media the more I get enlightened about issues and updates from my friends	13.3	35.0	17.0	24.7	10.0
There are times I have felt bullied as a result of interaction with friends with social network sites	13.3	40.3	16.0	27.0	3.3
Whenever I feel disappointed, discouraged and inferior, I usually respond/react by sending revengeful texts	26.3	13.7	34.7	17.3	8.0
Whenever I spend a lot of time accessing social media, I usually feel exhausted, bored and switch off completely.	11.3	38.0	25.7	14.0	11.0
Average	19.1	30.21	19.95	22.26	5.88

SA=strongly agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=strongly disagree.

The findings in Table 6 state that most respondents 70.3% agreed that when they are bored, they can access social media to chat and connect with friends who may get them encouraged, but 22.3% disagreed. 34.6% agreed that whenever they find something good through social media they usually spend time sharing with pastor and fellow youth where 34% of them were undecided. 48.3% of the respondents agreed that the more they access social media the more they get enlightened about issues and updates from my friends but 34.7% disagreed. 43.6% agreed that there are times they have felt bullied as a result of interaction with friends with social network sites while 30.3% disagreed. 40% of the respondents agreed that whenever they feel disappointed, discouraged and inferior, they usually respond or react by sending revengeful texts while 25.3% of them disagreed. 49.3% of the respondents agreed that whenever they spend a lot of time accessing social media, they usually feel exhausted, bored and switch off completely, 25.7% were undecided while 25% disagreed. Youth ACK Diocese of Embu agreed prolonged use of social media caused burn out.

In addition, the clergy in ACK Diocese of Embu agreed that excessive use of social media causes exhaustion and boredom hence causing burnout among the youth due to prolonged chatting. These results are in agreement with Onyango's (2015) findings on burnout in prolonged usage of social media. Burnout is defined as a physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress. As a social media professional, it is easy to get so engrossed in engagement that it begins to interfere with personal activities considered the amount of time people plugged into their social network sites. He noted that before one gets out of bed, he or she probably knows already what's in their Inbox, who has liked their latest Facebook update, and sent a few tweets in between stretches. This leads to addiction and the desire to continually do the same. This addiction may lead to exhaustion hence causing burn-out if not properly managed.

Excerpt 2 presents the information given by the clergy on perceived effects of social media on burn out.

Researcher: What is your view on the effect of social media on burn out among the youth?

Respondent 1: Social media has as the effect on burn out in that as much as the youth keep using it they get more tempted to respond to what their friends are commenting about their photos, their messages, hence taking much time on social networks. This makes them feel exhausted, bored and they get burnout due to prolonged use of it.

Respondent 2: Young people can chat the whole day and night, whereby at times they have no limits or boundaries on the type of messages to use with their friends, at time they get bullied, not liked by their friends

and so they spend time trying to create a good environment hence getting exhausted and using these network sites for a long time causing burn out.

CONCLUSION

The research was aimed at finding out the Perceived effects of social media on psychosocial wellbeing among the youth in ACK Embu Diocese, Embu West Sub County. Conclusions were based on the findings of the study in reference to the specific objectives. Social media has the ability to create a person's social network hence enhancing interpersonal relationships. Burnout leads to people visiting social media sites so as to curb boredom or just as a way of relaxing. However, this could lead into an addiction, which when not well managed may lead to exhaustion and finally depression.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: Churches to introduce more activities like sports, drama and music festival to help youth enhance their interpersonal relationship with their peers. Churches to have a timetable on specific activities for specific time to curb the causes of prolonged use of social media which may cause burn out.

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