

**WHATSAPP USE IN NEWSROOMS; A CASE STUDY OF THE *DAILY*  
*NATION* NEWSPAPER**

**BY**

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**2021**

## DECLARATION

### DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE:

This research proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a master's degree in any other university.

Signature  .....

Date...24 November 2021....

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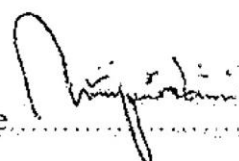
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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the Almighty God who enabled me to carry on with my studies by granting me good health and financial breakthrough throughout my study. I also dedicate it to my parents Mr Joshua Nyamai Ing'aa and Mrs Agnes Nyamai. Thank you for your moral support and giving me an opportunity to further my studies. You are my pillars.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

**NMG** – Nation Media Group

**DN** – Daily Nation

**BD** – Business Daily

**TF** – Taifa Leo

**TEA** – The East African

**NN** – Nairobi News

**FM** – Frequency modulation

**TV** – Television.

## **OPERATIONAL TERMS**

**Social media** – *Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Snap Chat, Instagram, and Telegram*

**New media** – includes social media

**Story** – News article

**News** – Information reported by media houses to audiences

**Multimedia** – reporting for print, Web, radio and TV

**Digital news** – Articles published on the Web

**Digital platform** – Nation website

**Citizen Journalism** – Analysis of news or information by members of the public

**Messenger** – A digital tool for passing information and communication

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the effect of WhatsApp Messenger use in media houses. The study focused on the use of WhatsApp Messenger by Nation Media Group journalists. The study was premised on three objectives namely, to find out the extent of WhatsApp Messenger use in news reporting by journalists at the *Daily Nation* newspaper, the role of WhatsApp Messenger use in news reporting at the *Daily Nation* newspaper publication and the outcome of WhatsApp Messenger use in new reporting at the *Daily Nation* newspaper. The company is the largest independent media house in east and central Africa serving Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. It has several publications in Kenya namely: *Daily Nation (DN)*, *Taifa Leo (TF)*, *Business Daily (BD)*, *Nairobi News (NN)* and *The East Africa (TEA)*. The *Daily Nation* newspaper which is the flagship brand of the company will be the focus of this study. The newspaper is the highest circulated publication in East Africa with a daily circulation and readership of more than 200,000 copies. The study employed mixed methods approach, the qualitative research method and quantitative research method. The theoretical framework of the study employed the Critical Theory of Communication in Organizations. The theory explains how communication flows in an organizational setting. The study also used the Media Richness Theory, which sometimes is known as the ‘Information Richness Theory’. It assumes that media is capable of passing on needed information. The theory further implies that various media possess varying levels of richness in their information. The third theory used is the social influence model of technology use. This model can be used to explain how organisations have adopted IT, especially in social computing context. The study found out that WhatsApp use has increased efficiency in receiving information and disseminating news. The platform has also enhanced the ‘digital first’ initiative being implemented in the newsroom as reporters are able to give details of stories as they happen through the *nation.co.ke* WhatsApp group. Further, the platform has also enhanced news packaging, because editors get story updates early enough, thereby providing enough time for quality checks. The overall conclusion is that the platform is effective in the newsrooms and has improved mobile interpersonal relations and communication between the reporters and editors. The platform has to lead to adaptation of new technological practices in the newsroom.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

This section discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions, justification of the study, scope and limitations of the study.

### **1.1 Background**

From the organisational standpoint, communication is very significant as it can greatly determine or contribute to its seamless functioning (Johansson, 2007). There are several principles that underpin organizational communication. First and foremost, communication has to be efficient and prompt (Jain & Singh, 2007). Whenever an employee receives a text, email, memo or letter, he/she has to respond as quickly as possible. Both the initial message and the response should be complete, or at least notify that the response will be given in a timely way. Secondly, any information being communicated should be true and valid. It should be based on fact and documented for later use. Thirdly, the message should be clear and concise to avoid miscommunication. Last but not least, organisational communication should be confidential (the level depending on the sensitivity of the message) and reliable (Shewan, Moes & Bristley, 2012). The implication here is that communication should be secure because organizations often have sensitive and confidential information.

There are two broad types of communication in the organisation – internal and external (Johansson, 2007). On the one hand, internal communication incorporates the exchange of information within the organisation. In other words, internal communication is where information is spread among internal organizational stakeholders, for instance,

from the management to the employees. This type of communication can take place via the telephone, intranet, or personal contact. According to Reka and Borza (2012), this kind of communication is imperative as it allows the people in the organization to execute their work effectively and understand the mission and vision. On the other hand, external communication is where communication flows outward from the organisation. In other words, organisations use this type of communication to communicate to external stakeholders, who may include the customers, suppliers, government, or the society in general. External communication is important because it determines the image of the company. As Reka and Borza (2012) posit, when communicating with the outside world, companies have to carefully craft their letters, web pages, or messages to the outside world because it impacts their image and quality. Notably, organizational communication can be formal or informal.

This research paper seeks to delve into the aspect of organizational communication by looking at how a Kenyan media house utilizes social media to communicate internally among internal stakeholders. Therefore, there is an aspect of technology being considered in studying organisational communication herein. Nwabueze and Agbanu (2019, p. 291) point out that “throughout history, developments in technology and communication have gone hand in hand and the latest technological development such as the internet has resulted in the advancement of the science of communication to a new level”. Edosomwan et al. (2011) define social media as a phenomenon that has transformed the interaction and communication of individuals throughout the world. Over the years, the new media has been evolving and has impacted human communication. In newsrooms, social media gives reporters a medium to create, share and exchange information among themselves and with editors. In the last five years, media houses have been adapting the ‘digital first’ policy in their newsrooms as they

compete to sustain their market in the changing times where traditional ways of reporting are being phased off.

An article by SHRM (2016) outlines a number of benefits that organisations can usurp from incorporating social media into their communication strategies. First, it enables sharing of ideas and information. Team members or different departments can use them to execute brainstorming sessions or kick start conversations about specific projects. Besides, employees can share research and best practices with each other using social media. With this in mind, the article posits that these collaborative technologies are effective towards building relationships, enhancing communication, and improving teamwork and understanding among members. This is why it has become a darling for several organisations. The provision of conversational tone where people can discuss and receive instant feedback is what makes these platforms tick. However, the article warns that organisations should not blindly rush towards adopting social media platforms given that they are still new and there is little knowledge on how they can be deployed at the workplace. Nonetheless, the most significant step is to make use of the business benefits and avoid the negatives.

Nation Media Group (NMG), a popular media company headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, is the largest independent media house in East and Central Africa serving Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. According to the Nation Media Group website, the brand is committed to generating and creating content that informs, educates, and entertains their customers. The company runs newspapers in both English and Kiswahili, and owns a radio station (Nation FM) and a TV station (NTV). The company Nation Media Group's publications portfolio in Kenya are the *Daily Nation (DN)*, *Business Daily (BD)*, *The East African (TEA)*, *Taiifa Leo (TF)* and the *Nairobi News (NN)* which is published

online. The most popular publication is however Daily Nation which was launched in 1960.

Of late, the company has been downsizing staff rendered redundant by adoption of modern technology. WhatsApp Messenger is now the preferred communication platform between resident journalists and their editors, especially when communicating breaking news, sending video clips, and submitting short stories for the web while in the field. They also use it to notify fellow journalists of certain events affecting their reporting beat. The coordination of the numerous journalists using different WhatsApp groups enables them to report directly to the newsroom on both digital and newspaper production platforms.

The use of WhatsApp by businesses and organisations in general is not strange through it has become so popular in that it can be used to establish a community of loyal customers and/or build brand visibility (Olafson, 2021). It is considered a social media platform where friendly interactions with customers can be achieved, their queries answered, offer staff and customer support, promote popular products, as well as get feedback and reviews. WhatsApp helps in maintaining a quick, comfortable and direct line of communication among employees as well (Attalla et al., 2020). Apart from customer support interactions, WhatsApp is used to share a company or product updates, news, and relevant offers with customer bases.

However, given that it is a popular platform with the common person, there is often the concern of the line between personal and organizational use of WhatsApp. As such, there has to be a policy or certain rules that are vital to its use. For instance, before sending promotional messages to clients and customers, one first needs their consent by asking them individually in the opening conversation (Attalla et al., 2020). A very effective and popular way in attracting more sign ups is by running a PPC campaign



through Facebook ads, then synchronise it with company WhatsApp Business Account. After the audience clicks on the ad, a WhatsApp chat box opens automatically. The best way of incentivizing its use is by promising exclusive offers, hosting giveaways or by offering a compelling lead magnet.

Therefore, it becomes clear that businesses can as well use WhatsApp and other social media accounts. As a matter of fact, the parent company Facebook has offered the WhatsApp Business Account for official use. From here, companies get access to business-tailored communication solutions (Attalla et al., 2020). There are instances where companies have utilized the WhatsApp business account for segmentation. The account allows the company to organise employee or customer contacts with labels, making it easy to differentiate them and to send tailored messages based on different criteria. There are several reasons as to why organizations are increasingly utilizing WhatsApp (Olafson, 2021). It offers instant messaging, it is affordable, has a global appeal, is easily accessible, and offers useful features such as group chatting, voice messages and location sharing.

### **1.1.1 The Daily Nation**

The *Daily Nation* (DN) is Kenya's and the region's most widely read newspaper, according to the Nation Media website. The newspaper is the only one in Kenya subscribed to the Audit Bureau of Circulation. It was started in 1958 as a Kiswahili weekly paper called *Taifa*. In 1960, the *Daily Nation* was established and maintained the Kiswahili paper as a shorter version of the main paper. The Nation website reports the paper's daily circulation and readership above 205,000 copies. The *Daily Nation* can be accessed through print and the digital copy of the paper can be accessed through online subscription. The website attracts over three million readers daily according to the company. The paper is available from Monday to Friday while on weekends, the paper is

published as *Saturday Nation* and *Sunday Nation*. According to Ngoge and Nyabera (2014), “a newspaper audience in Nairobi, such as that served by *Daily Nation*’s online editions has specific needs that do not match those of people in the other counties of Kenya (pp. 28–39). To meet this need, the newspaper covers news, feature stories, and sports. Other segments include politics, education, environment, business, and health, children and women stories. The paper also covers entertainment, crime and court news. This growing popularity presents a unique challenge to the Nation Media Group’s news team.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In media houses, viewer traffic is largely determined by the promptness of reporting breaking news. The challenge has been how to be the first to report breaking news in the highly competitive media world. This challenge is compounded by the adoption of citizen journalism easily utilized by bloggers and social media journalists to disseminate breaking news. This possibility requires the mainstream media houses to act with urgency to deliver truthful and accurate news long before bloggers and freelance social media journalists disseminate theirs. Some bloggers have been accused of spreading fake news. Real-time reporting in the mainstream media fraternity thus requires participation of various professionals to ensure truthful news. According to Ghadeer (2018, p. 143) “the evolutionary history of news reporting, story development and editing is filled with many changes.” To improve efficiency within this system, many media houses are increasingly using WhatsApp Messenger as a communication channel between news reporters and editors. This initiative, aimed at easing interpersonal and group communication within the media houses, has real benefit of improving news reporting cycle. Yet, despite this crucial role, the use of WhatsApp Messenger as a means of communication between journalists and editors at Nation Media Group while reporting

breaking news has not been studied and the results shared for the staff to appreciate its place or usefulness.

### **1.3 General objective**

The general objective of this case study was to assess the effect of WhatsApp use in news reporting at Nation Media Group's *Daily Nation* newspaper. The study investigated how the use of WhatsApp in the newsroom has affected news reporting and dissemination between reporters, and between reporters and editors.

### **1.4 Specific Research Objectives**

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To examine the extent of WhatsApp use in news reporting at the *Daily Nation* newspaper publication.
- ii. To find out the role of WhatsApp use on news reporting at the *Daily Nation* newspaper publication.
- iii. To investigate the outcome of WhatsApp use for news reporting at the *Daily Nation* newspaper publication.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. To what extent is WhatsApp use in news reporting being used by journalists at the *Daily Nation* newspaper?
- ii. What is the role of WhatsApp use on news reporting at the *Daily Nation* newspaper publication?
- iii. What is the outcome of WhatsApp use for new reporting at the *Daily Nation* newspaper?

## **1.6 Justification of the Study**

The study sought to understand how Nation Media Group's newsrooms, specifically the *Daily Nation* newsroom, is using WhatsApp Messenger to report, break and disseminate news. To achieve this, the study investigated the factors that led to editors and journalists both in print and electronic media to incorporate WhatsApp Messenger as part of their news reporting tools. While research papers have been done on the impact of social media in newsrooms, there is no specific research that has been done on the impact of WhatsApp use in the newsroom, specifically, at the Nation Media Group. The study did not seek to come up with conclusive findings, however its findings will be a baseline to support further research on the potential of WhatsApp Messenger use to enhance journalism. The study can be a learning exercise for understanding increasing trend of WhatsApp usage among journalists and editors.

## **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study focused on the *Daily Nation* newsroom in Kenya. During the study, both print and online journalists based in Nairobi and field reporters were interviewed.

## **1.8 Limitation**

Since the study analysed responses of interviewees and respondents including reporters and editors who might be busy in their work, it is likely that they may have taken longer before they responded to the questions, hence delaying the research process.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This section presents review of theoretical and empirical literature with regard to WhatsApp use in the media industry.

#### **2.1 Organisational Communication**

In many ways, the research topic revolves around the topic of organisational communication, which has been covered extensively in research. However, a definition of “communication” that all practitioners and researchers agree upon is elusive. Different scholars define communication differently. Nonetheless, one useful definition considered in this study is that given by (Wrench, McCroskey & Richmond, 2008). They argue that human communication is the process where an individual or individuals seek to stimulate meaning in another individual or group’s mind using mediated messages, which could be verbal or nonverbal. From the definition, it becomes clear that communication has four important elements: Source of the message, the receiver of the message, the message, the channel of communication, and the source. For communication to be effective, these elements have to be incorporated and considered.

With a clear definition, next is to consider what organisational communication is. Herein as well, different scholars view organisational communication in different ways. Mumby and Stohl (1996), for instance, consider organisational communication to be a field or discipline because there are many people who have studied and continue to study it. Deetz (2001), however, regards organisational communication as a descriptor for events that take place in organisations. Other scholars view organisational communication as an event or phenomena that happens in an organisation. For instance, an interaction

between two employees is an enactment of organisational communication. Another common phenomenon is the delivery of information using PowerPoint.

For the purpose of this study, the view of organisational communication is where a stakeholder in the organisation seeks to stimulate meaning in another stakeholder's mind via the use of mediated messages, which could be verbal or nonverbal. This is a view and definition that resembles the one given by Wrench et al. (2008). Stakeholders are individuals or entities with a vested interest in an organisation, for instance, a client, employee, or shareholder (Scott, 2009). Communication that takes place in the organisation, as already mentioned, can be formal or informal depending on many other aspects.

Stevanovic and Gmitrovic (2015) also define organisational communication as the process where information between an organisation's management and its employees is shared and exchanged. What becomes clear is the significance of organisational communication to the organisation itself and stakeholders. Studies have pointed out that strategic change failure happens when employees do not promote effective organisational communication. Therefore, practitioners such as Tariszka-Semegine (2012) encourage organisations to invest towards ensuring effective internal communication as it gives motivation to the employees, offer support the decisions made, and ensure positive change management. While at it, it is essential and key to involve employees in every step of strategic communication, in order to avoid lack of trust, fear and uncertainty.

Atak (2005) adds to this debate by pointing out that one of the most important factors in the success of managers and their organisations is by having a great organisational communication. Organisational communication does not focus on formal communication alone but also the informal communication. Atak (2005) established that more than 65% of the communication in an organisation is done through informal

communication channels. Informal communication literally occurs as a natural consequence of personal intimacy and relationships, in scenarios where employees are conversant with others very well. This form of communication tends to be 'gossip' (Atak, 2005). Gossip in literature means "empty talk," "chatter," "talking about daily life, social or personal events," "women's talk," and "the exchange of personal information. This can either be positive or negative in an evaluative way, or can be either positive or negative about absent third parties". It is therefore necessary to harmonise both internal and external communications.

The main aim of internal communication is to empower the internal integrity of the organisation and has been categorized into horizontal and vertical communication. Horizontal communication takes place among individuals of the same organisational level or departments (Stevanović & Gmitrović, 2015). They are less strongly related to levels of commitment than vertical ones. The main focus of vertical communication is in collecting and collating information for decision making, which takes place in two directions, downward (from higher to lower organisational level), and upward (from bottom up) (Stevanović & Gmitrović, 2015). Research has posited that vertical communication is crucial for organisational identification, and horizontal communication predicts the professional identification.

Internal communication in a company detects an essential communication network of a company. Communication is important in the quality of relationships, trust and collaboration among construction project team which is critical for achieving better project performance. If internal communication is of a higher level, chances of quality customer service are high (Stevanović & Gmitrović, 2015). Therefore, internal communication modalities can enhance organisational effectiveness, as well as employee

involvement and morale. This is when the leadership see employees as partners and most important part of the company.

Overall, organisational communication research is extensive and covers many topics. One of the prevalent topics is on the internal type of communication, which is superior-subordinate communication. Herein, communication has not changed despite the many years of organisational changes. The most significant considerations evident in research on this type of communication is the significance of dialogue and sense making although not many put this to use (Simonsson, 2002). Communication issues are often prevalent, many of them technical or structural. There are instances where managers do not have adequate knowledge of the work situations of employees, and such run into communication problems.

Another significant research topic links communication to learning. Herein, researchers have outlined that it is imperative for organisations to pay close attention to the daily conversations that go on in the workplace (Cheney et al., 2004). They can contribute to decentralised and innovation-oriented activities. Also, these conversations give people a learning potential. Intranet, especially, can give colleagues better insights regarding the organisation as it gives employees significant access to information. Next is communication efficiency where researchers outline the significance of having efficient communication (Cheney et al., 2004). The strategy that people use to communicate in the organisation has an impact on employee participation and motivation.

## **2.2. Technology and Organisational Communication**

A very significant topic today in research towards organisational communication is the impact that technology has had towards enhancing it. The introduction of technology on organisational communication has had both positive and negative impacts to the organisation. However, from business organisations to other types of organisations



there is no doubt that technology has brought significant changes on how business employees and all other people communicate today. According to Cuel and Ferrario (2009), researchers have covered how continuous technological innovations have offered communication solutions to organisations, and also the contradicting empirical impact such technology has had on organisations. What becomes clear is that technology has enabled organisations to navigate dynamic markets, utilise outsourcing, enable distributed production, and much more.

Communication technologies such as telecommunication and emails have made communication in the organisation easily accessible. Distance as one of the barriers to organisational communications is no longer a problem. According to the work by More and Laird (1983), communication technology has had an impact on the work of organisational managers. With sufficient data at hand, for instance, managers are able to make suitable decisions for the organisation. Also with communication technology, the organisation is more connected than before. There is greater connection among employees themselves, between employees and managers, and between managers and other stakeholders (More & Laird, 1983). Information is now fast and easy. Using social media platforms, for example, Facebook and WhatsApp, makes it easy for managers to reach all group members, instead of calling each worker individually.

Another impact of technology as outlined in research on organisational communication is that the employees have now more access to information than before (Saleem et al., 2020). When organisations recruit new employees, there is a period of adjustment set aside for the new employees to learn the norms of the organisation. Every employee has to learn something new from the first time they join a team for example key terms and specific skills that will enable them to perform the tasks. Before the introduction of novel technology, employees had less access to information than they are

now (Saleem et al., 2020). They could only access new information through industry guides/books, experienced mentors and supervisors, or industry experts. Conversations in the office of the boss or formal business letters were the main form of communication which was time consuming. With the Internet, access to information and communication can be instant, including replies or feedback.

Technology has moved today's communication into a new realm where there is instant messages access and delivery, computers programs are now assigning and managing tasks. According to Kalogiannidis (2020), recent technological advancements in organisational communication has not only improved efficiency and workflow but also business relation qualities. Technology has also been used to implement project management systems that enable the employees to collaborate. Sharing of ideas between workers themselves or between workers and the management no longer takes place in lengthy meetings (Kalogiannidis, 2020). Individuals can now create task lists, upload content, assign work, trace progress of the work or set appointments by using one app whether they are at home or at the business headquarters.

Another impact of technology on business communication as captured by Kazakov et al. (2021) is that it has changed customer service. Instead of employees speaking to clients directly, technologies such as automated voice and chatbots can replicate human employees and serve the customers unless the issue is too complex and requires human intervention. This has enhanced customer services in numerous ways. Employees can use the time to focus on other significant organisational tasks. Technology has also offered an open opportunity for criticism. For example when there is an online forum an employee can raise a complaint about the working conditions. The manager will eventually look into the complaint and make necessary changes.

Apart from the above positive impacts, nonetheless, research on organisational communication also points to a number of negative impacts that technology has brought. As Mumby (2012) established, communication tools and social media have become a distraction to employees while they are at work. Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Twitter and the likes are the major innumerable social media distractors. Even business communication tools such as Slack can be employee distractors as employees can use private channels to send funny memes or other content that is non-business related to their friends. Martin, Shilton and Smith (2019) also contribute to this debate by pointing out that the introduction of technology to the scene of organisational communication has increased accessibility of people, systems, and data, which can complicate the boundaries between home life and work life. The use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, for instance, blurs the boundary between what can be considered official organisational communication medium and what can be considered for personal communication use. Therefore, closely tied to the above negative challenges of technology are the ethical challenges.

According to Martin et al. (2019), these new technologies pose certain moral and ethical challenges, and the responsibility to deal with them rests with organisations. The reason they give for this statement is that at the moment, there are no agencies or methods to watch over how organisations utilise new technologies, especially those that pose ethical issues. Apart from this, it is the organisations that generally determine and design how they can utilise social media to create a competitive advantage. Therefore, it is in their interests as well to ensure fairness and transparency. As employees and clients interact with their organisations on social media, they create data that organisations manage. This raises the issue of privacy and safety of such data, especially sensitive data such as names, addresses, financial information, and much more (Barocas & Selbst,

2016). Recently, there have been reports of social media platforms being used to manage public debate, for instance, on politics. This is just an example of how ethical issues are still hanging over the use of social media. As the debate on the use of social media for organisational communication continues, therefore, this is a topic that will also linger in the years to come and scholars have to grapple with.

### **2.3 The Emergence of New Media**

Since 1990's the media has seen rapid transformation which came with the use of computers and the internet. This led to transformation of old media where reporters would write their stories and present them to the secretary for typing using typewriters. New media includes the use of websites, chat rooms, bulletin board services and emails. The emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, Skype and WhatsApp has made it possible for journalists to make their interactions easier.

New media makes it easier for people to contact people across the world.

CiacuGrasu (2008) "the new media technology has generated massive social changes in the behaviour and lifestyle patterns of the consumer. New media has shaped modern culture, by affecting the way people behave, communicate, learn and conceive of themselves and their world," (p. 1–2). The emergence of social media, according to Ganiyu and Akinreti (2011), has increased interactivity among people making them to be producers and consumers of information in a simultaneous manner. Through social media and the internet, media houses and their reporters can develop websites specifically for the masses share views and stay in touch with their audiences (Oberiri, 2016, p. 60). The researcher argues that social media has become a journalistic lexicon. Ruth (2010, p. 15) argues that social media via online newspapers can be used to spread information far and wide.

Bahri (2019, p. 4) argues that social media is used as a means of communication to send text messages, pictures and video calls. Social media also plays an important role in news reporting similar to online journalism which is the online version of the traditional journalism (Kuyucu, 2020, p. 72). It involves the use of web related applications, technology and platforms used by reporters, agencies and even unemployed and unprofessional bloggers and writers to develop content. Social media further involves the use of Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and linked in, Telegram among other platforms. The platforms enhance socialization aspects of journalists.

Kumari and Pradhan (2018) say social media is an “add on” to the conventional journalism and has converted the public from being the consumer of the content to becoming the creator and publisher of it. The platforms enable people to create global online communities to share information, facilitate relationship building and democratize news content. According to Kuyucu (2020, p. 79), the social media platforms and the internet are now bombarded with news. The platforms also have so much information that is almost next to impossible to find out fake news from the real news. With Twitter and Facebook being the most common and popular media platforms, journalists use them to dig in for breaking news from interview sources and personal tweets of eminent sources in their different reporting beats. The future of using social media is both bright and filled with anticipations and suspicion. Cheney (2013) states that social media is not only used as a way to communicate and keep connects but also as a well-developed system of sharing and building communities by disseminating information. The platform changes the traditional perspective on journalist’s identity.

Uche et-al (2019, pp. 1–2) argue that communication media are on the move, constantly evolving and changing the world we live in. “The New Media has altered not only the landscape of communication but equally permeated all facets of life, including

governance, commerce, cooperate management, security, family affairs, banking and finance and aviation” (p. 1). The growth of internet ushered in a new age making cooperate organizations to develop websites where they communicate and publicize their institutions to the globe.

The New Media has increased efficiency and speed as well as helped in reducing cost in most of the organisations. The New Media technology has enhanced two-way communication, enhanced development of positive image and made it easy for the assessment of current corporate position. The New Media has also offered obliquity and made planning and implementation of media relation easier. According to Nicoleta (2008, p. 1), blogs, podcast, video games, virtual worlds, Wiki encyclopedia and other media devices, interactive televisions, websites and emails are considered as new media. The revolution in media industry also recognized that media New Media has changed the way communication in society is done. Compared to the old model where there was only one source of truth, the new media provides multiple sources of truth and demands engagement. The old model required the media industry to base on aggregating large passive audiences and holding them captive during advertising interruptions. However, “in the new media, the audiences will are occasionally large, but often small and usually tiny,” (Nicoleta, 2008, p.6).

New Media technologies are having a major impact on the society as a whole. The technologies have assisted in bridging the general and digital divide (McGrath, 2012, p. 1). The New Media is meant to encompass the emergence of digital, computerized or networked information. It has also enabled large number of participation in public discussions.

## **2.4 Social Media and Organisational Communication**

There is plenty of research into the introduction of social media into the organisational world. Amalia and Mahendrawathi (2019) define social media as a Web 2.0 manifestation. In other words, social media has come from Web 2.0. Organisations have come to embrace social media because they understand its ease of interaction. From here, they can build meaningful and long-term relationships with clients. It is easier to gather data and insight regarding consumers from social media than the traditional ways of using surveys and ethnography. More so, social media allows for two-way communication, unlike the traditional communication platforms that are/were one-way, thus not suitable to use to build customer relationships. When it comes to impacting the organisation, Amalia and Mahendrawathi (2019) mention that it has impacted marketing and strategic planning. More so, it can help with the following: Grow business partners, increase customer loyalty, encourage innovation, enhance sharing of ideas and information, and also act as a source for news.

Schlagwein and Hu (2017), conducted a study and identified five reasons as to how organisations utilise social media. First, there are those that use it to broadcast news or information to stakeholders, for instance, employees, teams, or customers. Second, there are those that use it to carry dialogues. This is where communities are formed for conversations, for instance, during a project lifecycle or brainstorming session. Third, others use it for collaboration purposes. Fourth, there are organisations that utilise social media for sociability. Last but not least, organisations also embrace social media for knowledge management. Out of these five, use types such as dialogue support the absorptive capacity and performance of the organisation more than others.

In explaining the use of social media by organisations, Leonardi, Huysman and Steinfield (2013) came up with a new term called Enterprise Social Media. They define

this as web-based platforms that enable employees to communicate, manage text and files, connect with communication partners, and view co-workers' files within the same platforms. In coming up with this term and its definition, Leonardi et al. (2013) reveal two insights about the introduction of social media to the context of the organisation. First, they are used for external communication, with customers, suppliers, or the public. In doing this, a company will open multiple social media pages, for instance, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Second, companies use social media for internal communication, although this is less common with organisations using different platforms for different functions. Enterprise Social Media brings all these possibilities together.

Another study that employs the term Enterprise Social Media is (Oksa et al., 2020). They posit that these are social media platforms that combine the capabilities of several features including file sharing and microblogging under one place. It is very useful in the organisational setting for collaboration and coordination, employee orientation, and much more. Specifically, Oksa et al. (2020) believe that employees can utilise social media to communicate and also grow their knowledge. This is made possible by the fact that they can share information instantly without the barriers of location or time. Besides, employees can use social media and still address specific colleagues, for instance, supervisors, before addressing a bigger audience, thus enhancing the quality of their work. Another key revelation by Oksa et al. (2020) is that social media can help the organisation build and enhance social support for employees. There is a sense of connectedness and closeness that employees feel when using social media as opposed to formal communication channels. When it comes to workplace engagement, Oksa et al. (2020) found out that social media is a strategic tool that the organisation can deploy to contribute to and enhance work engagement. In this instance, employees do not have to



be at the office to share files or execute certain tasks, rather they can do this while at home or executing other personal or organisational duties.

In research, the concept of work engagement is closely linked to other positive work aspects such as increased productivity, work performance, and initiative-taking. When employees are work-engaged, they will be more willing to share information, ideas, and help their colleagues solve problems, thus help manage burnout. An important work-related concept that is associated with work engagement is organisational identity. According to Oksa et al. (2020), employees that embrace social media positively that makes their work easier will post higher job satisfaction, and when this happens, they will also have higher organisational identification. In other words, they will be proud to associate with the organisation, thus become more loyal and productive, which is a win-win for both parties.

SHRM (2016) makes it clear that organisations that have not yet considered social media as part of their business strategy may miss out in the market. Some conglomerates that were the hallmark of brick and mortar have made the move towards utilizing social media. Many more are using social media to recruit, execute organisational change, engage in strategic planning, and also train and develop employees. In application, nonetheless, SHRM (2016) posits that there is no single approach that is the best. As such, an organisation ought to consider the benefits and drawbacks of social media use in the workplace. On the one hand, the benefits include: Facilitation of open communication and enhanced discovery and sharing of information; facilitation of discussion of ideas and news sharing; widening of business contracts; excellent recruitment; reduce the need for advertising; and promote the aspects of inclusion and diversity. On the other hand, possible drawbacks may include: Cyber insecurity;

compromise of business data; online bullying and spread of negative comments; and legal consequences due to offensive or illicit content.

#### **2.4.1 WhatsApp Messenger**

WhatsApp Messenger was developed in January 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum with the aim of easing communication. It was later purchased by Facebook in February 2014. As of 2016, it had 950 million active users globally, making it one of the most popular instant messaging smart phone application (Global Media Insight, 2016). WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging application that allows exchange of messages, that is, a social media application which involves direct messaging as well as sharing media including voice messages, videos, and photos among others (Steele, 2014).

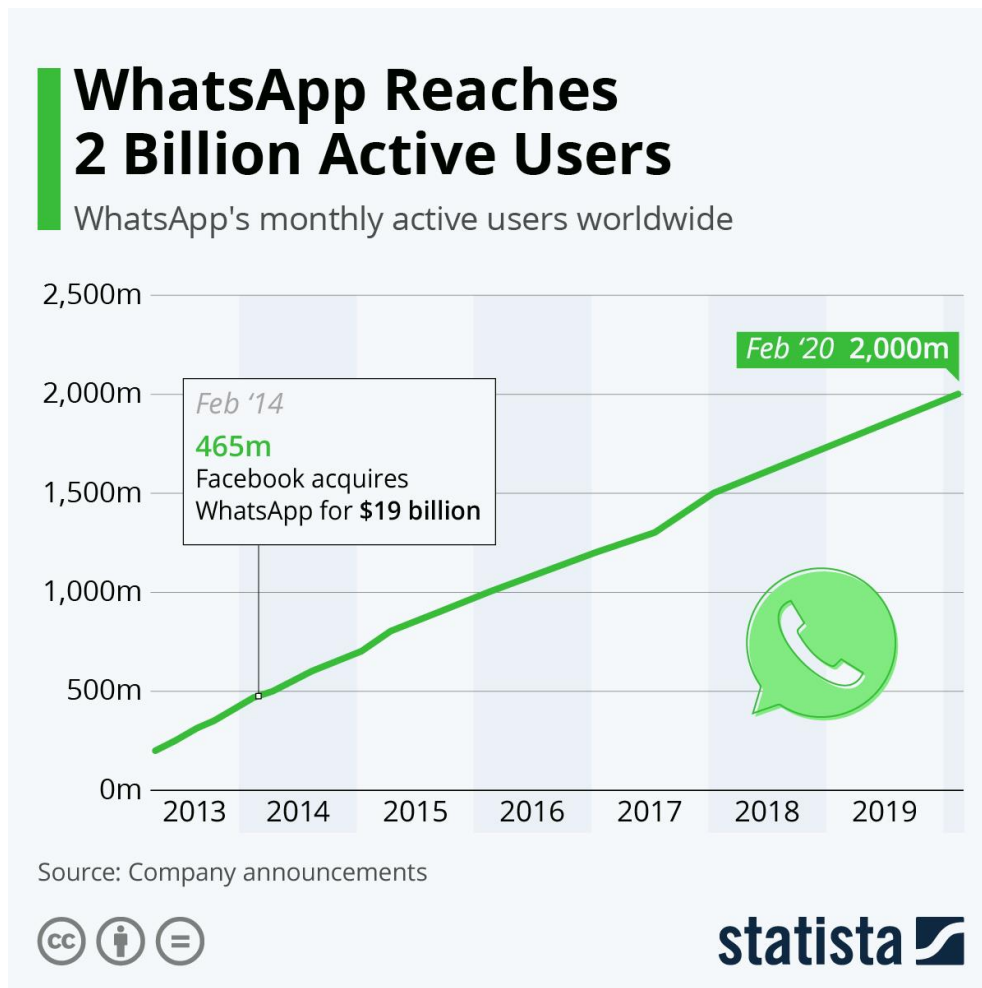
The application, which relies on internet connectivity, supports the exchange of text messages, voice calls, video calls, photos, and documents between individuals or groups. Presently, businesses and organisations have adopted WhatsApp for both interpersonal and group communication. It is available for iPhone, Android, Blackberry, Windows phones and other smartphones (Batra, 2016). It is mainly a communication application for mobile users. WhatsApp allows its users to send and receive not only text but also share real time locations, images, voice recordings, documents and videos (Church & de Oliveira, 2013, p. 352). The perceived security of information sent through WhatsApp, implied by the End-to-End Encryption (E2EE) technology used by the application since 2014, has promoted rapid growth of the application's user base.

According to Endeley (2018, p. 95), this encryption “allows for data between communicating parties to be secure, free and eavesdropping and hard to crack.” Ward Hadley et al (2021), found out as at July 2021, the platform became the most popular global mobile messenger app worldwide with approximately two billion monthly active

users, outranking Facebook Messenger at 1.3 billion and WeChat at 1.2 billion users. Following Facebook and YouTube, the platform is the most popular social network worldwide. In the recent years, WhatsApp has seen a tremendous growth making it an affordable communication tool for media houses. The platform brings together everyone under one platform where people can discuss in words, pictures and videos.

Mehner (2020) WhatsApp has 2.0 billion users worldwide making it the most used application alongside Facebook Messenger which has 1.3 users. It influences daily news processes as well as news audiences (McIntyre & Sobel, 2019, p.705). Journalists use the app to generate ideas, communicate with sources, disseminate news, receive audiences' feedback and collaborate with one another and promote professional practices. News rooms have used the group service which allows a message to be sent to the group members at once. The sender is able to view those who have read the text, those whose messages have been delivered and those yet to receive or read it. WhatsApp's new application in media industry, particularly its impact on news reporting, is the focus of this research.

The table below shows the growth of WhatsApp since 2013 to February 2020. In 2013, the number of people using WhatsApp was 465 million. The number continued to grow tremendously to the current over 2 billion people.



**Figure 1: Growth of WhatsApp users**

Retrieved November 2, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/chart/4245/whatsapp-user-growth/>

### 2.4.2 The extent to which WhatsApp is being used

WhatsApp Messenger has become one of the top selling smart phone apps. The impact of WhatsApp Messenger usage on organisational communication is presently being witnessed in the world. According to a recent research, WhatsApp messaging is emerging as a key network for news (Mefolere, 2016). “WhatsApp messaging has tipped the smartphone into mainstream culture and has revolutionized a global scale including developing countries” (p. 617). Beckett and Mansell (2008, p. 1) note that every journalist becomes a node in a network that functions to collect and distribute information. The elements called nodes according to Castells (2014, p. 1), units are often called system and

culture of network society are largely shaped by the messaging exchanged in composite electronic hypertext made by the technologically linked network of different communication modes.

Ludtke (2009) says for news organisations to stay ahead in the field, they have to embrace new technology and adapt their products in ways that add value to what they do. Pindayi (2016) continues by saying that, “This triple C model qualifies WhatsApp as part of social media in that there is cognition as users send and receive texts, communication as users send texts that maintain relationships, and cooperation as users of a group forum exchange ideas and views about various subjects” (p. 35). Many users also perceive WhatsApp as a social media platform (Boczkowski, Matassi & Mitchelstein, 2018, p. 245). Bunce et al. (2018) argue that “a virtual newsroom similar to a WhatsApp group, helps journalists by allowing them to strengthen their relationships and develop new strategies that reach beyond previously held geographic boundaries” (p. 3382).

Change in the news industry according to Ekstroom and Westlund (2019) “has led scholars to reconsider epistemologies in (digital) journalism, or how journalists attain and justify their knowledge, in part through their practices and routines” (p. 35). Currently, reporters are increasingly using social media networks sites to generate story ideas, find sources, connect with their audiences, receive feedback, and disseminate news. Although WhatsApp is widely being used, researchers show that its use has some disadvantages. Godler and Reich (2013, p. 95) found that information is hard to verify and not always reliable. It has also been noted that rumours can spread faster than news professionals can verify the information (Pindayi, 2016, p. 36). Moreover, the communication on social media is less formal than it is with other mediums, like on the phone or face-to-face.

McIntyre and Sobel (2019) found that Rwandan journalists overwhelmingly agreed that the use of WhatsApp influences their newsgathering and news dissemination

practices, which could be understood as a broadening of their knowledge-gathering and transmission capacities. In their interviews, the Rwandan journalists discussed how they use WhatsApp to generate story ideas, find and communicate with sources. The journalists said WhatsApp has improved their news routine. Ellanti et al. (2017) conclude that “compared to the other pager systems, the use of WhatsApp is easy, inexpensive and reliable” (p.5). McIntyre and Sobel (2019) argue that “WhatsApp is particularly helpful in finding and reporting news stories in remote areas of the country, where news organisations might not have correspondents” (p.710). According to Ruth (2010), social media helps reporters to post instant news, giving the reporter ample chance for the audience to get news and information as well as feedback.

Kelion (2017) states that WhatsApp has become one of the prevailing ways people discover and discuss news. A Digital News Report (2017) shows that in Malaysia more than 50 percent of those surveyed said they use WhatsApp at least once a week compared to the 2 percent in United States and 3 percent in United Kingdom. The study revealed that WhatsApp has benefited from the fact that in much of Latin America and elsewhere mobile networks are offering unlimited data use within the program. The report shows that the use of WhatsApp for news is starting to rival Facebook in a number of markets including Malaysia (51 percent), Brazil (46 percent) and Spain (32 percent). The Digital News Report (2017) further found out that more people think social media does a good job for news media compared to a few who think it is difficult to separate facts from fiction when using social media. The report further showed that the use of WhatsApp for news has jumped significantly in the recent years.

Perez (2020) reveals that WhatsApp has seen a 40 percent increase in usage from the initial 27 percent in the earlier days of the pandemic. The growth in usage has been the largest in the youth especially those aged 18 to 34 years old. The platform has positive

connotation which has made the approach more interactive compared to classic survey instruments (Garcia et al., 2015, p. 3). Staudacher and Kaiser (2016, p. 36) argue that mobile instant messaging fosters an informal style of communication. Even though WhatsApp is widely used, it is impossible to trace back the original source of a message sent within a group. The app strips also strips images any useful metadata (Reid, 2016). WhatsApp is most frequently used by people in countries in Latin America and Africa, presenting an important opportunity for emerging, digital first titles and smaller newsrooms looking forward to expand their distribution (Oliver 2021).

Newman.N et al (2020) in their Digital News Report usage of smartphones is highest in Global South countries with Kenya being the highest. According to Spagnuolo (2019), WhatsApp has emerged as a primary source of news for many people. In countries such as India and Indonesia, it is the leading source of information. The platform also allows one to block nuisance users. WhatsApp also has an app for businesses which works once to receive news from customers and readers

### **2.4.3 The role of WhatsApp use in news reporting and communication**

According to Kariuki (2017, p. 39) the penetration of WhatsApp in organisations is fast growing. The researcher says, “With the current growth rate, the need to understand the usage and the satisfaction that users are getting from it cannot be overlooked.” WhatsApp being a pub phrase “What’s Up?” which means what’s happening or what’s going on is currently being used as one of the common methods in both interpersonal communication and group communications. The researcher opines that this could inform how companies communicate with their employees internally and within other key stakeholders. According Jebakumar and Jisha (2014) “WhatsApp, as a social media platform, provides a platform for entertainment, collaboration, education, instantaneous sharing of information as well as maintenance of a community (p.5). The

app allows a recipient of a message to accept or reject messages from different recipients. The app has now been modified to allow a sender to delete messages sent by mistake or to a wrong recipient(s). The app also allows its users to share interesting photos and messages to all their contacts through a WhatsApp status platform.

Kariuki (2017) argues that “WhatsApp remains a key platform for creating and maintaining social connections among staff in an organisation, so long as its use is permitted” (p 40). Compared with normal phone messaging, Yeboah and Ewur (2014) describe WhatsApp Messenger communication as easier, faster and cheaper. “It is less expensive compared to the normal phone messaging” (p.158). The app uses data bundles from mobile technology networks or WiFi. WhatsApp satisfies a wide range of needs. For journalists who travel globally, the app allows them to make calls and file stories to their news editors without delay.

Humans have found ways to revolutionize communication so that it can become more equipped to our ever-changing needs (Ali & Kootbodien, 2017). Despite the incredibly large trends of change within the last few decades, communication is constantly changing. According to Global Media Insight (2016), by March 2016 there were 950 million monthly active users with 30 billion messages sent via WhatsApp daily. Top countries that use WhatsApp are India, Brazil, Italy, Turkey and Spain. Hadley et al. (2021) indicate that as at July 2021, the platform became the most popular global mobile messenger app worldwide (Statista, 2021). Si (2012) found out in his study that instant messaging actually increased the amount of social intimacy as the desire to want to communicate face-to-face. Lin Si explains that the more one communicates through WhatsApp with someone, the closer the person gets to them. The researcher however argues that “although there are positive aspects of WhatsApp during interpersonal communication including quick communication with loved ones far away; it could also



create communication barriers with different interpretations of a message that may result in a wide array of negative emotions” (p. 30).

According to Gagnon et al. (2017), chat apps also allowed reporters to first use open or closed networks and choose one of several approaches. “They could trust the network, typically by using closed network and encrypted applications such as Telegram and WhatsApp” (p. 8). The research found that reporters sought to master the network to be more trustworthy to the source and could also abandon the network for being untrustworthy. In WhatsApp Messenger, a lot of information passed has been found to be untrustworthy. The App has also been used to spread fake news faster through forwarded messages which are posted in chat groups.

According to Spagnuolo (2019), WhatsApp helps news organizations to create verified accounts for news organisations. Bahri (2019, p. 2) argues that WhatsApp has a close connection with journalists, sources, obtainability of information and the reshaping in the temporalities of news making. Both journalists in the print media and electronic use WhatsApp. In his findings (Bahri 2019, p. 10) established that whereas emails are still being used in new rooms, journalists use WhatsApp more often because of its speed in uploading and downloading videos and photos. The speed and ease of using the platform is also being used by journalists to make appointments for face to face interviews with news sources, call sources from diaspora and send questions to sources.

#### **2.4.4 Outcome/Impact of WhatsApp Messenger in news reporting**

Church and de Oliveira (2013) found out that “WhatsApp offers benefits such as cost, sense of community and immediacy” (pp. 352–353). Batra (2016) in his study found out that WhatsApp is very popular among youth and is being used prominently in news communication. The maximum of the content includes current issues covered in media. Newman et al. (2018) described WhatsApp as the most used channel for news

transmission. The researcher says WhatsApp use for news has almost tripled since 2014 and has overtaken Twitter's importance in many countries.

According to Bahri (2019) WhatsApp usage has increased among journalists as well as high authorities around the world. The platform is believed to be the fastest mobile application for news sharing and reporting as it gives a safe environment to practice journalism. The platform also offers a possibility to access large amounts of information. "It is also changing the way some journalists engage in the process of news making and with their sources" (Bahri, 2019, p. 2).

Aside from chatting, journalists use WhatsApp as a professional platform that helps them in instant news gathering process. The platform allows people to communicate without SMS fees as it uses internet. Journalists use the different WhatsApp groups to share news items, photos and videos which others can use to check out and verify. "The routinization of WhatsApp has brought more granular information to news narrative since it offers a constant stream of specific points in a larger context" (p. 8). The platform opens new possibilities for audience involvement in news production.

Sending information using WhatsApp is also believed to be easier unlike using Emails which is more difficult to use. The platform also allows public relations officers to send press releases to reporters instead of using the emails as they see it as a fast way of passing information to journalists. Those in WhatsApp groups with journalists use the platform to send invites. Bahri (2019, p. 13) argues that reporters are obliged to share information they source from various sources to their media house WhatsApp groups while editors often provide direction and guidance. The platform is also being used to share important information, helping in sharing of newsworthy information and discussions about newsgatherings. "WhatsApp because of the speed and it is easier most

reporters also use face to face interviews but when the sources are not available they use WhatsApp,” (Bahri (2019, p. 13.

Dodds (2019, p. 4) says technologies inside newsrooms are changing and journalism is changing with them. Elareshi and Ziani (2019, p. 242) research found out that most people use WhatsApp for social interaction, followed by communication, occupying leisure time with enjoyment and entertainment. The research also found out that people use the platform to increase knowledge and information, advertise social events and pass information. The research further established that WhatsApp is used to express opinions freely and enhance communication among social groups.

## **2.5 Theoretical framework**

This study considers three theories/models that touch on organisational communication: Critical Theory of Communication, Media Richness Theory and Social influence Model of Technology Use.

### **2.5.1 Critical Theory of Communication in Organizations**

To begin with, this theory explains how communication flows in an organisational setting. The theory was developed by Stanley Deetz and it seeks to balance corporate and human interest. According to Deetz, corporations are political as well as economic institutions. The theory explains how organisations’ communication helps in decision making. It also explains how employees are able to communicate with their bosses and the language used in organisations. The model emphasizes that language role shapes social reality. In Graffins (2012, p. 272) Deetz claims that most corporate successes are as a result of factors beyond managerial control. Managers use strategy and consent to maintain control over subordinates.

WhatsApp Messenger is one of the platforms which organisations are using to communicate with employees. In light of WhatsApp use in newsrooms, news editors are in the managerial position and taking control of the information being reported by writers. They work to promote work consent with reporters on the news to be published either on the online platform or in print. Deetz explains that “arbitrary authority relations within an organisation may be disguised as legitimate divisions of labour” (p. 272). The theory by Deetz is not however negative, he believes that joint, open decisions in the workplace are possible. He argues that “Meaningful democratic participation creates better citizens and better social choices and provides important economic benefits” (p. 272). The theory also advocates for stakeholder democracy and encourages open negotiations of power.

The theory further outlines how workplaces can become more productive and democratic through communication reforms. Deetz examines communication practices in organisations that undermine full representative decision making and thus reduce the quality, innovation and fairness of company policy. In newsroom set up, editors give directions to reporters on a day-to-day communication within the organisation and what is expected of them in developing a news story. The theory ignores the informational model that says communication is the transmission of information and challenges Shannon and Weaver’s theory. He believes that that corporate information perpetuates corporate dominance, colonization, managerialism and discursive closure on our life (Griffins, 2012). Deetz considers communication to be the ongoing social construction meaning and emphasizes on the issue of power through language and communication. According to Etana (2014), the Deetz theory considers communication to be the ongoing social construction of meaning.

### **2.5.2 Media Richness Theory**

The second theory, the Media Richness Theory, was developed in 1986 by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel (Dennis & Kinney, 1998). Sometimes known as the 'Information Richness Theory', it assumes that media is capable of passing on needed information. However, the capability of media to spread information depends on the time that the information will be used, especially during the time of uncertainty or equivocality. The theory further implies that various media possess varying levels of richness in their information (Sheer & Chen, 2004). The quality of media is categorized in accordance to their propensity to handle uncertainty and equivocality. The richness of a medium of communication ensures effective information. In its use, the Media Richness Theory gives its users a way of recounting and later decipher communication hurdles facing organisations, for instance, insufficient information needed to carry out a task with respect to a set level of performance (uncertainty).

The theory also gives a criteria through which one can rank the richness of a media (Dennis & Kinney, 1998). For instance, the media should have room to incorporate personal focus. Information that is delivered when a form of media invokes personal emotions is received in a much clearer manner. The ability of a media to give immediate response and feedback is also used to judge the richness of a medium. This involves the ability of the media to make it possible for a two-way communication among its users through which they can rapidly reply to each other (Sheer & Chen, 2004). The media should also be able to deal with multiple simultaneous information cues. This refers to the different ways through which a medium of communication can convey information and cues. These said cues can either be visual or auditory. Lastly, the media should have a variety of utilized natural language (Sheer & Chen, 2004). This refers to the different meanings that can be gotten by using language symbols or natural language.

A medium has more richness if it is said to have an access to excess levels of criteria. It is categorized in decreasing levels of richness; is ranked from the very rich media, to the fairly rich, to the lean media and to the very lean media (Shepherd, Martz & Benjamin, 2006). Media that does not facilitate the ability to judge the reaction of user physically is considered to be lean, for instance, the use of text messages and emails. Media that does allow this to happen is called rich media and the best medium of communication since it includes both verbal and non-verbal cues as people best respond to body language. This could include face-to face communication and virtual communication.

An aspect to consider in this theory is uncertainty, which can be described as getting the correct answer for a question. Another term, equivocality, refers to getting the correct question to answer (Dennis & Kinney, 1998). It is important in communication to reduce the two: uncertainty and equivocality. This theory demystifies this by having lean media, like use of emails, best reduces uncertainty while rich media, like face-to-face communication, being the better alternative to reduce equivocality. Therefore, it can be agreed upon that depending on the presence of uncertainty or equivocality in an event, there are different communication methods of media to use, with respect to the level of richness as well.

Evidently, the Media Richness Theory is an excellent consideration for this research as it can explain whether or not the use of WhatsApp at NMG makes it a rich type of media. As pointed out, a rich media ought to have an access to excess levels of criteria. Nonetheless, the theory has its critics (Shepherd et al., 2006). First, the level of richness of a medium remained the same despite being used by various people. Secondly, the tasks could have different levels of uncertainty and equivocality. Therefore, it is not

particularly accurate to decide on lean media and rich media to reduce the two respectively.

### **2.5.3 The Social Influence Model of Technology Use**

This third theoretical underpinning befits this study in a great way. According to Vannoy and Palvia (2010), this model can be used to explain how organisations have adopted IT, especially in social computing context. By definition, social computing is the novel environment that combines the deployment of communications technologies, networking platforms such as WhatsApp, and the Internet to enable communication, the formation of communities, as well as business and social networking opportunities. The main implication from this model, as the heading implicates, is that people socially influence each other to use specific technologies to communicate, thus making it popular. The model begins with a fundamental assumption that people process stimuli cognitively (Graf-Vlachy, Buhtz & Konig, 2018). However, it is imperative to establish that the model differs substantially with that of Rational Choice in determining how cognition changes and develops.

Media perceptions are partly subjective, partly socially constructed, and determined by objective characteristics. They are also determined by statements made by co-workers, attitudes they showcase, and behaviour they exhibit to some degree (Graf-Vlachy, Buhtz & Konig, 2018). For instance, co-workers socially influence others by making statements about features of a certain media or task that others will integrate into their evaluations. The overt statements they make will have indirect effects. When the co-workers discuss these characteristics, they increase the prominence of the features. Also, co-workers may air interpretations and judgements that individuals may accept. Such media perceptions are not objective and neither are they fixed; they vary across situations and individuals. Nonetheless, co-worker statements can affect choice making directly.

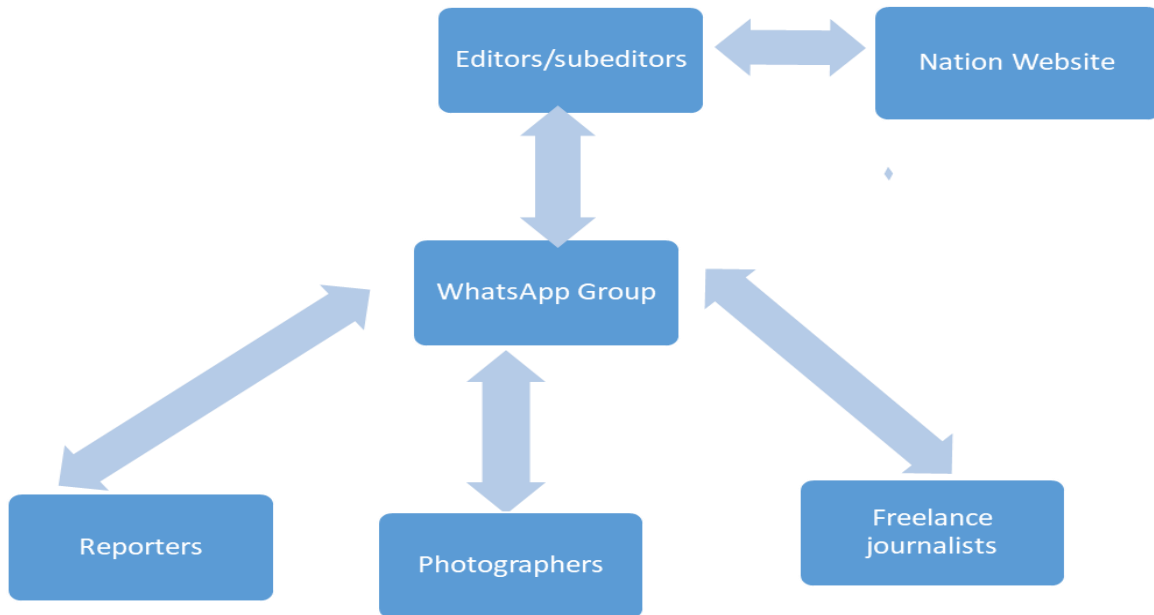
The remarks they make may cue an individual about what a communication task requires or help define task requirements in relation to the media options. More explicit co-workers' statements may be used to make certain recommendations about choice of media.

Social influence may also take place through vicarious learning, a kind of learning where one gains experience through observation (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Modelling of a behaviour may occur as a result of having positive consequences from the choices one had done. Thus, a good behaviour done by one person may lead to others copying it through what is called observational learning. Similarly, consequences that may occur as a result of a person making wrong choices may make others avoid such choices. Social influence perspective views assumptions of rationality differently – as retrospective, subjective and influenced by statements provided by others. Behaviour meaning and rationalization are given by cognitions which, however, may emanate from earlier social interactions (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Individuals perceive their own past and present behaviour and come up with explanations about it. Social influence processes are strongest when individuals are faced with ambiguous situations because they will rely heavily on the social comparison process.

Overall, this theory can be instrumental towards explaining reasons as to why the use of WhatsApp social media platform is prevalent or not at NMG. It could be that colleagues have influenced each other to use it by making explicit statements about the effectiveness of WhatsApp.



## 2.6 Conceptual framework



**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**

The above figure shows how variables under the study are interconnected. By identifying the variables, the conceptual framework provides a map to the researcher to pursue and investigate based on previous knowledge in the subject matter.

In the media house, communication flows from reporters, photographers and freelance journalists to the multimedia editors and News reporters within the WhatsApp group. The information in the WhatsApp group is then picked by the Sub-editors and Editors and is processed for the *Daily Nation* website. The stories published on the website are then developed further for publishing in the print version of the *Daily Nation*.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This section describes how the researcher achieved the objectives. It comprises the study area, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, validity of instruments, reliability of instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design refers to an arrangement of conditions for collection in a manner that aims at combining relevance with the research purpose (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

The research design used will be a case study. This design will be appropriate because of the nature of issues addressed. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 72) described a research design as a plan that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. The study sought to answer the question “how” and “why” as posed by specific objectives. The research also focused on a mixed method. This involved the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define qualitative research as form of words rather than numbers. They define quantitative research as the use of designs and techniques that produce discreet numerical.

The research employed descriptive research design and aimed at collecting data without manipulating the variables or respondents in an attempt to assess the impact of WhatsApp in the newsroom.

### **3.2 Study site**

The study was carried out in the *Daily Nation* newsroom. The researcher used the newsroom as a case study to review how news is reported and how WhatsApp Messenger has helped to improve the speed of reporting news.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

Research approach refers to the plan and steps to be taken during a study. The study focused on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Grover (2015, p. 1) refers to qualitative approach as images and words. It includes ethnographies, grounded theory, case studies, narrative research and phenomenological research. Grover (2015) further defines quantitative approach as use of numbers and measurements. The study adopted a triangulation approach (use of both qualitative and quantitative methods) for collecting, analyzing and interpreting data (Creswell, 2014, p. 40). Using the mixed methods approach adds reliability and depth to the data

### **3.4. Data needs, types and sources**

#### **3.4.1 Data needs**

These are the data parameters. They are the activity-based models that may differ widely in terms of their theoretical underpinnings. This research relied on the data collected to come up with the findings and recommendations.

#### **3.4.2 Data types**

There are two types of data. The research focused on primary data and secondary data.

#### **3.4.2.1 Primary data.**

This is data collected from first-hand experience and has not been published yet. The data is usually not altered (Kabir, 2016). This study focused on collecting primary data through the administered questionnaires and interviews. “Primary data has not been changed or altered by human beings; therefore, its validity is greater than secondary data” (p. 204).

#### **3.4.2.2 Secondary data**

This is data collected from sources that have already been published. It involved review of literature. According to Kabir (2016) secondary data is collected by someone else for some other purpose. This study reviewed literature from books, newspaper articles, the Internet, journals and research articles. “A clear benefit of using secondary data is that much of the background work needed has been carried out” (p. 205).

#### **3.4.3 Data sources**

The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected from journalists and editors working at the Nation Media Group, the *Daily Nation* section. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The study focused on how the use of WhatsApp Messenger had changed the newsroom reporting among journalists and editors.

Secondary data was collected from relevant literature such as newspapers, journals, books, case records, the Internet and books.

### **3.5 Target population of the Study**

A target population refers to the specific group relevant to a particular study. A population is a group of individuals or objects that have the same form of characteristics

(Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The study targeted 60 journalists (reporters, sub editors, photographers and editors) for the *Daily Nation* newspaper.

### **3.6 Sampling**

The study used purposive sampling to administer questionnaires. The target population was categorized into two groups; one for a male respondent and the other for a female respondent. Sampling means the process of selecting a part of the population, where population is the group of people being studied in a research. It also ensures that research is manageable. Reliability of the findings of a research depends on how well a researcher selects their sample.

### **3.7 Sample size**

The research targeted to use a manageable sample size of up to 60 journalists and editors from which 41 responded to the questionnaire. The journalists involved in the study were those on the digital desk and the print media. The *Daily Nation* has approximately 400 journalists and editors. Sample size was 10 percent of the total number. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), when a study population is less than 10,000, a sample size of between 10 and 30 percent is good representation of the target population.

In this study, a sample size of 10 percent is adequate for analysis. The study used purposive sampling refers to the process of selecting a sample size based on the experience and knowledge of the group that is sampled. The process of sampling took account of various issues that depended on the organisation, type, time constraints and previous research in the area.

Sample size is determined by the level of confidence the researcher has given to generate credible results. The research involved journalists (reporters, photographers, sub

editors and editors) who have worked for the *Daily Nation* for more than one year. The choice of sampling journalists who had worked for more than one year working helped in getting credible and findings.

### **3.8 Sampling Techniques**

The study used purposive sampling which relies on the researcher's judgment in selecting subjects of study. Bernard (2002, pp. 146–147); Lewis and Sheppard (2006, p. 293) say that a researcher decides what information he/she is seeking by engaging people who will provide the information from the point of knowledge or experience. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003, p. 678) the research method is specific and not random.

### **3.9 Data Collection methods**

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire. The structured questions were advantageous in eliciting standard answers that enabled easy comparisons to be made between sets of data. For unstructured questions, the respondents had the freedom to express their views and thoughts without limited options. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the country which was first reported in March 2020, the questionnaires were converted to online survey through Google Form questionnaire. Respondents received a link of the Google Form questionnaire to give feedback and their data was collected. The research also relied on interviews to come up with findings.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

The results of this chapter were presented and discussed in relation to the research objectives and research questions outlined in chapter one. The data was analyzed qualitatively using content based on analysis of meanings and implications emanating

from respondents' information. The data also compared responses on the WhatsApp use in new reporting.

Data analysis involved production and interpretation of graphs and pie charts that described and summarized the data. Data collected was processed and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to answer the research objectives and questions. The filled questionnaires were analyzed to verify and compare the answers to draw the findings of the research study. Data analysis started after all data was captured. Closed-ended questions were analyzed using nominal scales by employing descriptive statistics and Google Form online analysis method was used to analyze open-ended questions. Tables were prepared during the construction of data collection instruments. They describe statistical result more clearly and economically than words. Bar graphs and pie-charts are used to present data. Quantitative data were analyzed by frequency bar graphs, pie charts and percentages.

### **3.11 Data Presentation**

Descriptive analyses include pie charts and bar charts that will summarize and organize data in addition to describing the characteristics of the sample population.

### **3.12 Validity and Reliability of research instruments**

#### **3.12.1 Validity**

Validity is the ability to indicate that a research data collection findings are true and sound. According to Heale and Twycross (2015), validity is the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study. Kothari (2004, pp. 10–12) defines validity as the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure under a study. Seliger and Shahomany (1989, p. 95) explain that any research can be affected by different kinds of factors which while extraneous to concerns of research can invalidate

the findings. It explains how well collected data covers the actual area of investigation (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2005, pp. 81–83). It is the measure that is intended to be measured. There are two types of validity, internal and external validity. The procedure of assessing the content validity of a measure is to use professional or expert in a particular field which helped in discovering question content, correction in the wording and the problems before the actual study according to (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). They define validity as the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data represents variables under study.

In this research, both internal validity and external validity were used based on the findings of the research. The internal validity includes factors in the study while external validity will involve general findings and other contexts.

### **3.12.2 Reliability**

Reliability relates to consistency of a measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015). An estimated reliability can be achieved through different measures. They include, homogeneity which is assessed using item to total correlation, stability, which is assessed using test-retest and parallel alternate form reliability testing and equivalence which is assessed through inter rater reliability. A research process must always have reliable data and findings according to (Nunan, 1999). Reliability enables the researcher to identify the ambiguities and inadequate items in the research instrument. The research instruments relied on the dependability, consistency and trustworthiness. Reliability is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). This research dealt with consistency of collecting, analyzing and evaluating data.



### **3.13 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations were upheld throughout the research process. Key respondents in the study remained anonymous. The information collected from the respondents was treated with confidentiality. The entire research was undertaken in a scholarly and professional manner. The respondents were informed of their right to refuse to respond if they are not willing. The questionnaire had this clear information to make this research ethical and to protect the respondents.

Approval to undertake the research was also sought from the University of Nairobi – School of Journalism and consent sought from the *Daily Nation* respondents.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents, analyses and interprets the data gathered from journalists at the *Daily Nation*. The data was collected through questionnaires.

#### **4.1 General and demographic information**

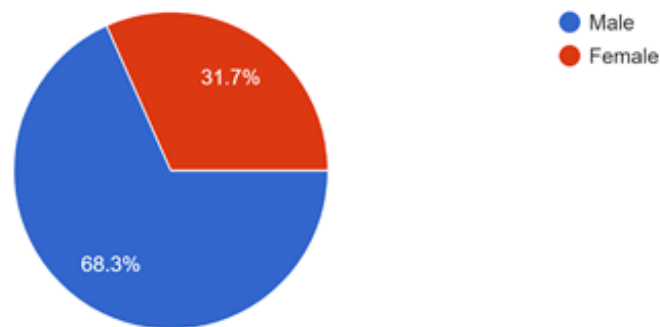
##### **4.1.1 Response Rate**

A total of 60 questionnaires were administered through the online Google Forms platform. This choice was, in part, necessitated by need for compliance with the Covid-19 preventive protocols. A total of 41 journalists responded while 19 others did not respond. The target number was 40 journalists which is 10 per cent of the total number of journalists at the media house. The study received responses from 80 per cent of the administered questionnaires and achieved 100 per cent of the targeted number. A further 10 journalists, five reporters and five editors were interviewed orally. This response rate exceeds the minimum of 70 per cent postulated by (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999) as sufficient to provide reliable data.

#### **4.2 Demographic information of the respondents**

##### **4.2.1. Gender of respondents**

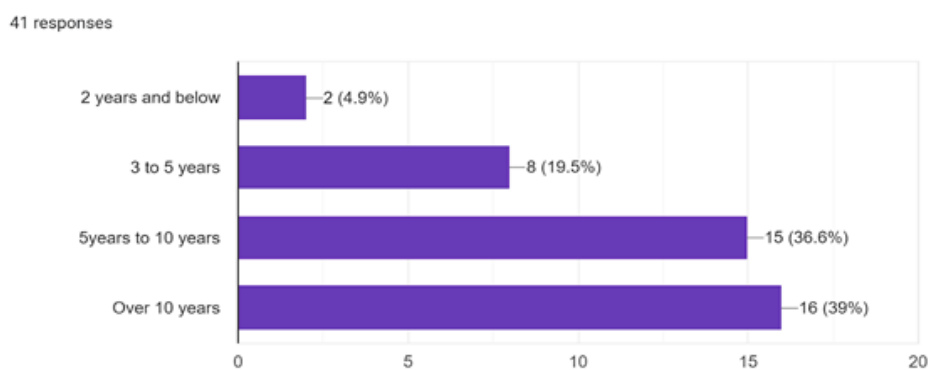
Out of the 41 journalists who participated in the study, 68.3 percent were male while 31.7 percent were female, meaning that more males responded to the questionnaire compared to female journalists.



**Figure 3: Gender of respondents**

#### 4.2.2 Length of time respondents have spent in the newsroom

The research also showed that 39 per cent of the journalists who use WhatsApp Messenger have been in the newsroom for more than 10 years. A further 36.6 per cent have been in the newsroom for between 5 to 10 years, 19.5 per cent of the respondents have been in the newsroom for between 3 to 5 years while 4.9 per cent of the respondents have been in the newsroom for 2 years and below.



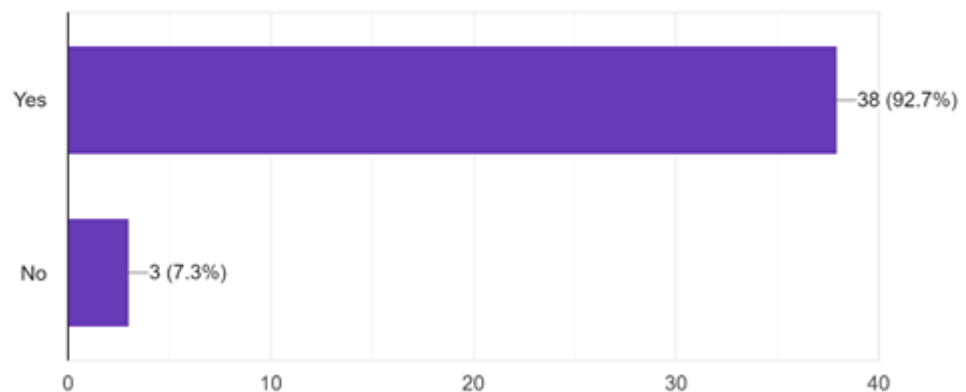
**Figure 4: The length of time respondents have been in the newsroom**

### 4.3 Survey findings as per the research objectives

#### 4.3.1 Objective 1: The extent of WhatsApp Messenger use in news reporting at *Daily Nation*

Findings from the research established that 92.7 percent of the respondents in the *Daily Nation* newsroom use WhatsApp Messenger as part of their tools of newsroom interaction and reporting. Only 7.3 percent of the respondents said they do not necessarily have to rely on WhatsApp Messenger platform. This finding is supported by Oyza & Edwin (2015) who ascertain that indeed, social media platforms became rapidly prominent just in few years they were launched. Apart from being used by individuals for interpersonal communication, organisations have also take up its use, thereby transforming organisational processes making them more effective.

41 responses



**Figure 5: Extent to which WhatsApp Messenger platform is being used in the *Daily Nation* newsroom**

Respondents said WhatsApp Messenger use at the *Daily Nation* is one of the platforms which reporters are required to use regularly. The platform is mostly used to submit news alerts, online stories, photos, and videos. It is also used for networking and

sharing of ideas which has been made easier compared to other platforms like email or physical meetings.

The WhatsApp group has also become a key communication platform to the extent that most communication along the editorial chain happens through the app. The respondents said the Nation WhatsApp group is practically now a part of the editorial process which the paper's digital team is fully dependent on. Reporters are required to update the group regularly while editors consult with their bosses regularly via WhatsApp Messenger.

Through the platform, reporters and editors are able to not only coordinate news gathering, but also keep each other abreast with the happenings around them and the world. There are also WhatsApp groups for teams that cover different subjects, used to share and develop new ideas. Respondents said the WhatsApp platform has made it easy for reporters and editors to communicate and interact. The platform has also prompted easier delivery of stories and provides interactive sessions on stories approach amongst editors and journalists.

When a reporter is in the field, interviewed editors said they find it easy to verify information from the reporter on the ground immediately after they send a news alert on the platform. The platform has also enabled both editors and journalists to verify information from each other and share news leads and contacts. WhatsApp also brings the reporters and editors together under one platform as it is a fast way of breaking news and sending alerts.

The respondents also said the platform has been promoting digital journalism in the newsroom by ensuring that news is shared on digital platforms as soon as it breaks, helps reporters mine more information from sources while still in the field and it is the easiest technological platform to use currently, therefore, more efficiency. The platform

has also broken the traditional and bureaucratic walls that existed in the newsroom creating a free flow of content and regular consultation between editors for better content. It has also improved the turnaround time for communicating story ideas, story tips, and breaking news.

Editors interviewed said most of the time instructions and feedback on WhatsApp platform have made it more efficient. Reporters interviewed said they find the platform more efficient and easy to use when it comes to filing photos and videos for the online platform.

The respondents also said WhatsApp Messenger has made it easy for reporters to give out information from the field to the editor promptly. Unlike before where stories had to go through the bureau chiefs, who would, in turn, send to the news desk, stories are now posted for everyone to see and colleagues can comment and make corrections.

The debates within the WhatsApp group also enrich the story. Aside from the titles, editors and reporters interact in the group as a team. The platform has also reduced the necessity of physical contact and long tedious back-and-forth emails. It has further enhanced the interaction between editors and reporters and has helped in eliminating delays in the delivery of stories. Editors are also able to follow up on developing stories and brief reporters as they file the stories.

The researcher found out that WhatsApp platform has made reporting on breaking stories, sending of news alerts, and coordination of news events much easier and simpler. The platform has further improved interpersonal relations between the reporters and editors through enhanced information seeking. Instead of person-to-person interaction, the relationship between reporter and editor has become virtual and general – meaning that all other reporters in the newsroom are involved through a common platform. It also

offers those with insights on the topic to contribute, thereby enriching the news and facilitating the reporter.

Taken altogether, the above findings are supported by Badea (2014) who concluded that social media has made it easy for users to exchange knowledge, opinions, and images. Communication professionals are not more creative and innovative thanks to these Web 2.0 tools. Organisations have benefitted as a result. Badea (2014) goes on to say that organisations have allowed employees to create communities to enhance cooperation and exchange of competencies and ideas in real time.

#### **4.3.2 Objective 2: Role of WhatsApp use on news reporting at *Daily Nation* newsroom**

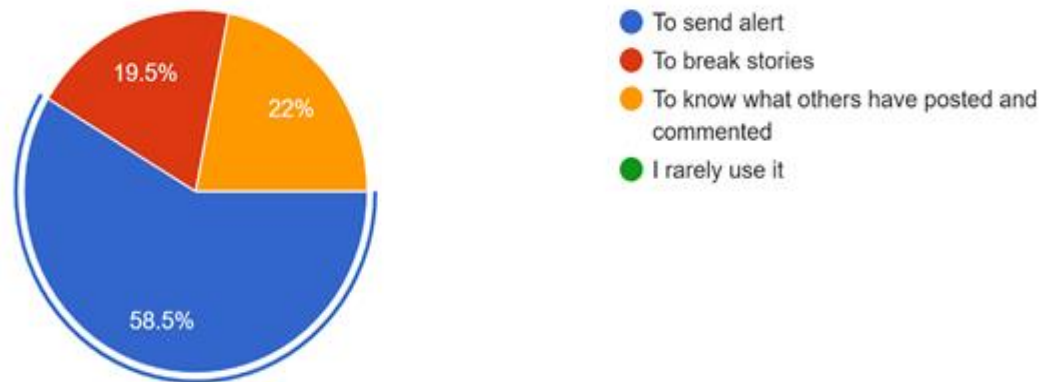
Respondents noted that since the emergence of new media, digital migration, and competition with other media houses, digital editors resolved to incorporate WhatsApp platform as part of the newsroom reporting channels. The need to adopt technology in the newsroom and competition from social media and community reporting also raised the urgency to reach audiences fast and efficiently, hence the adoption of the platform in the newsroom. Among the responses were that WhatsApp has made news reporting more efficient, fast, and reliable. This findings can be explained by the **Social Influence Model of Technology Use as covered in the literature review**. As Vannoy and Palvia (2010) established, this model can be used to explain how organisations have adopted IT, especially in social computing context. In this instance, it can be used to explain the adoption of WhatsApp by digital editors. The model assumes that media perceptions are partly subjective, partly socially constructed, and determined by objective characteristics. They are also determined by statements made by co-workers, attitudes they showcase, and behaviour they exhibit to some degree (Graf-Vlachy, Buhtz & Konig, 2018). In this case, it became clear that co-workers socially influenced others by making positive

statements about features of WhatsApp. It could also be possible that the social influence to use WhatsApp may have happened thanks to vicarious learning (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). This is where other digital editors adopt WhatsApp because they have watched their colleagues gain considerably from it.

Moving on, other factors that led the media house to use WhatsApp as a platform where journalists can break news to editors while in the field is because the reporting is instant and it is a faster way of sending photos and video clips compared to email. It is also cheap to send alerts via WhatsApp than using the normal Short Message Service (SMS) platform offered by telecommunication companies. WhatsApp has also proven to be more convenient and easy to use by both editors and journalists as they are able to coordinate. Interviewed editors said WhatsApp platform has made interaction with reporters easier when assigning duties as it acts as a complementary platform to the office emailing channels. These sentiments are supported by what the article by SHRM (2016) mentions on the same; that social media has enhanced employee engagement in organisations. Employees like a workplace where they are not only informed but their sentiments heard. The use of social media provides these benefits. Another significant benefit of social media captured by SHRM (2016) is that it has promoted collaboration and knowledge sharing. Herein, employees use social media tools to exchange experiences and ideas. This is what NMG employees are doing while using WhatsApp taking the above findings into consideration.



41 responses



**Figure 6: The role of WhatsApp in the newsroom**

### 4.3.3 Objective 3: Outcome/impact of WhatsApp use in news reporting

Respondents said the use of WhatsApp platform has enabled a revolution in the *Daily Nation* newsroom. Since the company shifted to digital-first and adopted the use of WhatsApp, journalists interviewed said it has made work easier and content can now flow in real-time reducing the need for multiple gadgets in multimedia production.

Respondents also said that reporters do not always have to return to the office to deliver breaking news, photos, and videos as they can do it via WhatsApp. Such a finding corroborates what Rogers (2019) in Forbes Magazine says, that Internet-enabled communication platforms have enabled near-instant communication. Communication is not only faster and easier, but also enables people to communicate without the hurdles of physical location and time. This has enhanced the enterprise possibilities in unimaginable ways.

The study also revealed that WhatsApp has enhanced the quick dissemination of information and accelerated how information reaches editors. It has also helped the digital editors get content and news alerts on time. Unlike the old/traditional forms of communication where newsrooms depended on email as the only official way of passing information, WhatsApp platform allows participants to ask questions, or raise issues

while getting feedback instantly. The study further revealed that the platform has also made work easy and effective. Some reporters who were interviewed said the platform has alleviated both over-reliance on email as a mode of communication and the need for physical contact between editors and reporters.

WhatsApp has also enhanced news packaging, because editors get story updates early enough, thereby providing enough time for quality checks. Further findings show that WhatsApp has helped improve and shape the focus when reporting news stories and build confidence and synergy with colleagues in the newsroom as it has made it easier to synchronize work. Overall, therefore, the study's findings resonate with those of Allameh et al. (2011) that information technology has positively impacted employee productivity. Communication technology has cut down on wastage and cumbersomeness of traditional communication channels such as news letters or paper-based memos.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary, recommendations and suggestions that can be used for further research of this topic based on the results of the study. The findings were based on the objectives of the study.

#### 5.1 Summary

The objective of this study was to assess the effect of WhatsApp use in news reporting; a case study of Nation Media Group's *Daily Nation* newspaper. The study investigated how WhatsApp Messenger has affected news reporting and dissemination between reporters, and between reporters and editors. The scope of the study was at the *Daily Nation* News room. The study targeted news reporters, subeditors, photographers and editors both in the counties and the Nairobi head office. The study findings discussed in the previous chapter can be summarized as follows.

On the extent of WhatsApp Messenger use in news reporting, the study found out that journalists at the station are required to use WhatsApp as a tool for newsroom interaction. An analysis of the responses found that mostly journalists use the app to send photos, videos, and alerts of breaking news. The research further found out that journalists in the newsroom use the platform to pitch story ideas to the editors. Editors said they use the platform to assign story ideas and to monitor breaking news as reported by reporters. The findings are newly all journalists have a smartphone and are using WhatsApp during their news reporting.

On the role of WhatsApp use in news reporting the research found out that, unlike before when journalists and editors had to rely on emails and phone calls as the only form

of communication, WhatsApp has made interactions in the newsroom faster and cheaper. The research established that it is now easier for reporters to share their ideas with editors while in the field and get further directives without necessarily having to make a call or write an email. Other findings are that the platform has enhanced virtual relationships between reporters and editors; and general meaning that all other reporters in the newsroom are involved through a common platform. WhatsApp plays a major role in offering insights on a topic to contribute thereby enriching news and facilitating the reporters in getting more detailed stories and ideas. For regional editors and reporters outside the Nairobi office, the research found out that WhatsApp has made it easier for them to report and interact directly with editors without having to wait for an official email. In a dispensation when the emergence of bloggers is on the rise, the research found out that the use of WhatsApp has increased the level of efficiency leading to elimination of fake news. The platform encouraged journalists to verify information from their colleagues in the WhatsApp group before they proceed to submit a story to the editor either for the website or for day two reporting.

On the outcome of WhatsApp use in news reporting, the research found out that the platform has increased efficiency in receiving information and disseminating news. The platform has also enhanced the digital-first initiative being implemented in the newsroom as reporters are able to give the main details in the *nation.co.ke* WhatsApp group. The research further found that editors are able to seek further clarifications from reporters concerning the stories that have been reported and give further directives to guide the reporter to write a well-balanced story for both the web and print. Other findings indicate that overreliance on email as the only official mode of communication has been alleviated making communication and interaction in the newsroom easier, faster, and effective.

## 5.2 Conclusion

An analysis from the findings on the use of WhatsApp Messenger platform in newsroom reporting concluded that the platform is effective in the newsrooms and has improved interpersonal relations and communication between the reporters and editors. The use of WhatsApp has contributed to the adaptation of new technological practices in the newsroom, causing especially the older journalists who were used to the traditional ways of reporting and communication to adjust swiftly to fit in the new era. In spite of the several challenges that reporters go through among them the need to buy internet bundles from telecommunication organisations for internet and some journalists not having high quality smart phones, the study concludes that WhatsApp Messenger has increased efficacy in receiving information and disseminating news and has helped in breaking down or simplifying texts for the editors to allay in social media and other platforms. Moreover, the platform has helped to minimize misreporting as editors can seek facts and clarifications from reporters before a story is published.

In view of the above findings by the researcher, it becomes clear that effective communication is very significant to the organisation as it can greatly determine or contribute to its seamless functioning and increased profits. An effective organizational communication has to fulfil the following conditions: First, it has to be efficient and prompt. Whenever an employee receives a message, he/she has to respond as quickly as possible, and both the initial message and the response should be complete. Second, the information being communication should be true and valid. It should be based on fact and documented for later use. Third, the message should be clear and concise to avoid miscommunication. Fourth, it should be confidential (the level depending on the sensitivity of the message) and reliable. In the case of the use of WhatsApp at the Daily Nation, this study has shown that it contributes to effective organizational

communication: It is efficient and prompt; it facilitates the communication of true and valid information given that it can be documented; Daily Nation employees use it to communicate clear and concise messages given that there is room for immediate clarification and feedback; and last, it is confidential and reliable given that the message can be directed to specific audiences. Something else outlined in academia that becomes evident in the Daily Nation is the benefits attached to the incorporation of social media platforms into an organisation's communication strategy: First, it enables sharing of ideas and information. Daily Nation editors and journalists use WhatsApp to execute brainstorming sessions or kick start conversations about specific projects; Secondly, they are effective towards building relationships, enhancing communication, and improving teamwork and understanding among members; Thirdly, Daily Nation editors and journalists can use it to discuss and receive instant feedback.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations made in this section were derived from the conclusion about the above findings.

- i. Media houses should consider making WhatsApp Messenger an official communication platform for all reporters, editors and photo journalists to minimize chances of inaccurate news reporting and publishing in the web and print.
- ii. Media houses need to invest in a programme that ensures that journalists get access to high quality smart phones which will enable them download WhatsApp Messenger app for use.
- iii. Media houses should empower their journalists by providing internet bundles to reporters to enhance communication while in the field.

- iv. Apart from the general digital and multimedia training given to journalists, media houses should develop modules for training on WhatsApp use and the importance of the tool in reporting.
- v. Given the numerous benefits of WhatsApp and other social media platforms, another recommendation is for media houses to reduce the drawbacks that come with its use, particularly, using organisational platforms for personal use. Apart from training, this can be minimised by the setting up of policies that rules of how to utilize such platforms for organisational benefits while reducing its negative impact.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for further study**

- i. Further study should be explored on how WhatsApp and other social media platforms have enhanced journalism training.
- ii. Further study on the future WhatsApp and other social media platforms in social communication organizations.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I'm Nyamai Wavinya Faith, a student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Master's Degree in Communication Studies. I am currently doing a study on the **WhatsApp use in newsrooms; a case study of the Nation Media Group--Daily Nation newspaper**, I humbly request your assistance in filling this questionnaire. The information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Kindly respond to all questions in the provided sections by ticking in the boxes or write in the spaces provided.

Your participation in the study is voluntary

**Instructions:** please tick (/) in the brackets for the most appropriate response. Where explanation is required, kindly use the space provided.

**NB: Do not write your name anywhere in this document.**

#### SECTION A: General information

1. Gender

Male ( )

Female ( )

2. For how long have you been a journalist?

2 years and below ( )

3 to 5 years ( )

5years to 10 years ( )

Over 10 years ( )

**SECTION B Extent to which WhatsApp platform is being used in the Nation Media Group- *Daily Nation's* Newsroom.**

1. Are journalists required to regularly use WhatsApp platform as a tool for newsroom interaction?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
2. To what extent which WhatsApp platform is being used in the Nation Media Group- *Daily Nation's* Newsroom? Kindly explain
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....

**Section C How WhatsApp messenger has influenced news reporting in Nation Media Group's *Daily Nation*.**

1. Are you in the Nation.ke.co WhatsApp Group?
  - Yes
  - No
  
2. How active are you on the newsroom WhatsApp group
  - Very Active
  - Active
  - Passive Member
  - Dormant
  
3. How fast do you break news to your editors on WhatsApp Group?
  - Immediately
  - After an hour

I never use WhatsApp ( )

4. How often do you use WhatsApp?

Many Times ( )

Occasionally ( )

Rarely ( )

Not At All ( )

5. Which of the following defines how you mainly use the Nation Media Group WhatsApp?

To send alert ( )

To break stories ( )

To know what others have posted and commented ( )

I rarely use it ( )

6. How has WhatsApp messenger influenced news reporting at Nation Media Group?

.....

**Section D Factors influencing WhatsApp platform usage among journalists in Nation Media Group.**

1. How effective is WhatsApp platform in the newsroom?

-----

2. What factors lead to adoption of WhatsApp platform in the newsroom?

a.....

b.....

C.....



3. How has the platform changed the news reporting channel and interaction of reporters and their editors?

a.....

b.....

c.....

## **Appendix II: Key informant interview guide**

1. Do you use WhatsApp to break news and pitch your story ideas to your Editor?
2. To what extent is WhatsApp messenger being used in the Nation Media Group's *Daily Nation* Newspaper newsroom
3. What factors influence WhatsApp\_messenger usage among journalists in Nation Media Group, *Daily Nation* Newspaper?
4. Compared to traditional ways or journalist/Editor interaction, how has WhatsApp changed news reporting flow in the newsroom?
5. How would you describe newsroom interaction between reporters and journalists in the face of WhatsApp use?
6. How has WhatsApp messenger influenced news reporting in Nation Media Group's *Daily Nation* Newspaper?
7. How has the Platform changed or impacted your work as Journalist?

### Appendix III: Research Authorization letter



## UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi  
Telephone: 254-020-491 0000, Ext. 28080, 28061  
Director's Office: 254-020 4913208 Direct Line)  
Email: [director-soj@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:director-soj@uonbi.ac.ke)

P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi.  
Kenya

YOUR REF:

**DATE:** June 23, 2021

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN** **RE: FAITH WAVINYA NYAMAI - K50/87567/2016**

This is to confirm that the above named is a bonafide student at the University of Nairobi, School of Journalism and Mass Communication pursuing Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies

Ms Nyamai has completed her course work and is currently going to collect data for her research project leading to a Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies. Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Cheron'.

**Wendy Cheron**  
**Senior Administrative Assistant**  
**Department of Journalism & Mass Communication**

## Appendix IV: Certificate of Fieldwork



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi  
Telephone: 254-02-3318262, Ext. 28080, 28061  
Director's Office: +254-204913208 (Direct Line)  
Telex: 22095 Fax: 254-02-245566  
Email: [soj@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:soj@uonbi.ac.ke)

P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi, GPO  
Kenya

REF: **CERTIFICATE OF FIELDWORK**

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Committee of Examiners meeting held on April 7, 2021 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for fieldwork.

Reg. No: K50/87567/2016

Name: FAITH WAVINYA NYAMAI

Title: WHATSAPP USE IN NEWSROOMS; A CASE STUDY OF THE DAILY NATION NEWSPAPER

Dr. Addamms S. Mututa  
SUPERVISOR

SIGNATURE

16/11/2021

DATE

Prof. George Nyabuga  
PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

SIGNATURE

16<sup>th</sup> November 2021

DATE

Prof. Ndeti Ndati  
CHAIRMAN

SIGNATURE/STAMP

DATE

17-11-2021

**Appendix V: Certificate of corrections**



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION**

Telegram: Journalism Varsity Nairobi  
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Email: [soj@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:soj@uonbi.ac.ke)

P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi, GPO  
Kenya

**REF: CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTIONS**

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Committee of Examiners meeting held on November 5, 2021 in respect of M.A/PhD. Project/Thesis Proposal defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the project can be allowed to proceed for binding.

Reg. No: K50/87567/2016

Name: FAITH WAVINYA NYAMAI

Title: WHATSAPP USE IN NEWSROOMS; A CASE STUDY OF THE DAILY NATION NEWSPAPER

Dr. Addamms S. Mututa  
SUPERVISOR

SIGNATURE

16/11/2021

DATE

Prof. George Nyabuga  
PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

SIGNATURE

16<sup>th</sup> November 2021

DATE

Prof. Ndeti Ndati  
CHAIRMAN

SIGNATURE/STAMP DATE

17-11-2021

**Appendix VI: Certificate of Originality**

Signed by:  
Addamms S. Mututa

Date: 18 November 2021

**Turnitin Originality Report**

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NEWSPAPER By Faith Nyamai

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