

Internal Stakeholders' Satisfaction Levels on WhatsApp Usage for Corporate Communication in Public Universities of Kenya

¹Rose Awuor Ochieng, ²Prof. Idah Gatwiri Muchunku, ³Dr. Sammy Yaah Baya

¹(Postgraduate Student, Department of Journalism and Communication,
Multimedia University of Kenya)

^{2,3}(Lecturer, Department of Journalism and Communication, Multimedia University of Kenya)

ABSTRACT : WhatsApp is a popular App that allows users to send text messages, voice messages, make voice and video calls, share images, videos, documents, user location, and other media. It has been widely used by university administrations for their corporate communication. The study aimed at assessing the level of satisfaction of WhatsApp usage for corporate communication among internal stakeholders of public universities in Kenya. The study is anchored on Katz's uses and gratification theory and Palmgreens expectancy evaluation theory. This was a quantitative research study. The study targeted a population of 9,341 comprising of the 108 teaching staff, 276 non-teaching staff and 8,957 students at Multimedia University of Kenya. The study had 384 respondents comprising 12 teaching staff, 26 non-teaching staff and 344 students of Multimedia University of Kenya. Data was collected using close-ended questionnaire. Data was analysed using Special Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Data was presented in both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The study determined that WhatsApp usage had positive significant effect on internal corporate communication, accounting for 58.4% among students and 68.9% among staff of Multimedia University ($R^2=0.584$) and ($R^2=0.63.2$). The study therefore recommends that WhatsApp developers should take into account users' needs while customizing and developing WhatsApp features.

KEY WORDS: WhatsApp, Corporate communication, Internal stakeholders, Level of satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Corporate communication plays a vital role in the survival of any organization. Majority of the communication needs that exist are met through digital communication platforms and knowing how to use them for the good of the organization becomes paramount (Lee & Baek, 2019). According to OnDevice (Mobile agency, WhatsApp has 2.7 billion active users and is the number one downloaded App in South Africa (Mefolere, 2021). The application has grown substantially; as of January 2014, WhatsApp announced that it attracted 100 million individual users from across the African continent. Universities use WhatsApp to provide accessible support channels for students (Udenze & Oshionebo, 2020). This immediacy in communication helps in addressing student concerns promptly. Also, professors and lecturers use WhatsApp groups to extend the classroom experience (Segbenya, Nyagorme & Appiah, 2020). The youth are sharp and fast learners as compared to the older generation. With Kenya having a mean age of 18 years and a median age of 19 years, WhatsApp is the best choice for fast communication among the youths (Munyao, 2024). The built-in applications are a really good feature for them to share and discover unlimited information. Therefore, this study sought to assess the satisfaction levels of internal stakeholders on the use of WhatsApp for corporate communication in Multimedia University of Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective communication is essential in fostering a conducive environment for conflict resolution. Unrest in Kenyan universities has always been caused by delayed communication, miscommunication or lack of communication. WhatsApp has been widely used by university administrators in their internal corporate communication. This is because about 96% of the Kenyan university students have smartphones (Communication Authority of Kenya, 2023). Since the inception of Multimedia university of Kenya in March 2013, there has been a number of student unrest cases. There has also been lecturers and non-teaching staff strike leading to closure of the university (Standard Media Group, 2021). Consequently, there is need to enhance corporate communication among the administration, student and staff. Therefore, this study aimed to assess satisfaction levels of internal stakeholders on WhatsApp usage for corporate communication in Multimedia University of Kenya.

1.3 Objective of the Study

Assess the satisfaction levels of internal stakeholders on WhatsApp usage for corporate communication in Multimedia University of Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT): This research is based on Kartz's Uses and Gratification Theory. UGT is a communication theory that focuses on how people actively seek out media to meet specific needs or interests. Additionally, the theory also assume that media users have awareness of media choices, interests and motives. The UGT theory was developed by Blumler and Katz in 1994. According to Kart, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974), the last few years have seen a revival in the direct investigation of consumer use and satisfaction.

2.1.2 Expectancy-Value Theory: The second theory that guided this study is Palmgreen's theory of Expectancy-Value theory which was founded in 1984 by Phillip Palmgreen and J.D. Rayburn, this theory states that individuals with goals make plans, set expectations about the media they use and develop strategies to achieve their desires. The gratifications sought from media are determined by a person's attitudes towards the media (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). The theory explains how goal-oriented people make plans, set expectations for the media they consume, and develop courses of action to satisfy their needs.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by a conceptual framework (Figure 1) that shows the interaction between WhatsApp usage and internal corporate communication in Multimedia University of Kenya.

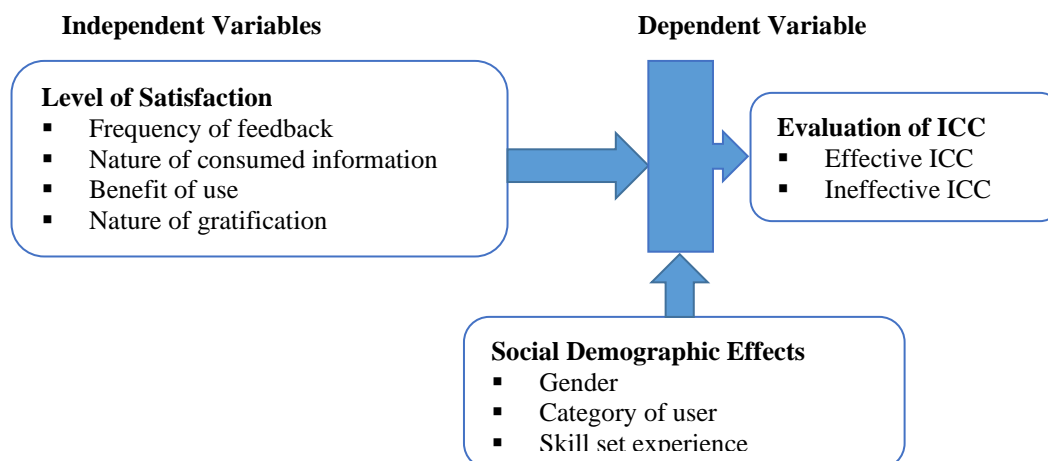


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3 Empirical Review and Critique of Existing Literature

According to the study conducted by Pang & Woo (2020) "What about WhatsApp: A systematic review of WhatsApp and its role in civic and political engagement," established that users draw on the affordability of the media for informal communication. This study asserts that organizations adopted WhatsApp due to its affordability. However, the current study evaluated the effectiveness of WhatsApp for internal corporate communication in Multimedia University of Kenya. Farzana et al. (2023) study titled, "The Effectiveness of Whatsapp in Disseminating Work-Related Information: The Case of Universiti Poly-Tech Malaysia (UPTM)", established that the level of satisfaction employees experience with WhatsApp can significantly impact their engagement, productivity and collaboration. However, this study did not address the level of satisfaction of the use WhatsApp for corporate communication among employees. This is the area that the current study focused.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and Sample Size

This study adopted a descriptive research design. This was to examine phenomenon, information or behaviour to establish the way it is at that particular moment in time (Yin, 2013). The design was suitable due to the fact that the subjects will be observed in their natural environment for them to respond and provide an in-depth view of the topic under study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). This study was primarily quantitative study. The target population was 8,957 students, 108 teaching staff and 276 non-teaching staff drawn from Multimedia University of Kenya. The university was chosen because of its recent student unrests and staff strike that require effective corporate communication strategies. Yamane (1967)'s formula of determining sample size was used.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = 9341/24.3525$$

n = 384. Therefore, sample size = 384

Where; n = sample size, N = population, e = margin error.

3.2 Sampling Technique

This research utilized stratified random sampling, to gather a representative sample from each segment (Kothari, 2019). The population was categorized into teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students. Stratified random sampling ensured that every individual within the strata had an equal opportunity to be included in the study (Noor et al., 2022).

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data was collected using the questionnaire. The structured questionnaire is chosen for its capability to obtain direct information and provide informed responses to the issues being examined (Kothari, 2019). The questionnaire has a 5-point Likert scale.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are guidelines that describe both acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in research (McCombes, 2019). Before proceeding to the field to collect data, pre-requisite permissions were sought from both Multimedia University of Kenya and National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Participants decided to participate in the study by filling a Consent Form. Respondents were asked not to put their identities on the questionnaires and assured that their responses will only be used for the sake of this study.

3.5 Pilot Study, Reliability and Validity

Out of the 52 respondents who participated in the pilot study, 91% reported using WhatsApp daily, indicating that most respondents were active on the platform. Test-retest method of estimating reliability was used to determine the reliability. Same instrument as administered twice to the same group of subjects at different times. The collected data was analysed using SPSS v 27. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.721. This implies that the instruments reliability met the threshold. An instrument is valid if it measures what it is intended to measure (Keeves, 1997). Research experts in the Faculty of Media and Communication (FAMECO) at Multimedia University of Kenya validated the instruments of data collection for this study. According to Kothari (2019), an expert's rating for content domains should range from five to ten. University supervisors served as the expert to determine the CVI. The results were 0.85 (student's) and 0.83 (staff's questionnaire).

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data, which was then presented in form of figures, tables and graphs. To assess the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable, the regression model was employed. The overall statement of relationship is: $Y = f(X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n)$. Where Y is the criterion (dependent) variable while X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n are the explanatory (independent) variables. Generally, the model will be as follows:

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$. Where; Y = Internal corporate communication, α = y regression intercept, β_1 = Model coefficients, X = Level of satisfaction, ϵ = error term.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Frequency of Feedback

Results on the frequency with which respondents receive or give feedback on posts shared on WhatsApp are in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of Feedback by Staff

Frequency of feedback by staff	Never (%)	Once a day (%)	Many times, a day (%)	1-2 days a week (%)	3-5 days a week (%)
How often do you give feedback or comment on the posts?	31.6	18.4	31.6	13.2	5.3
How often do you receive feedback or comment on the posts?	7.9	10.5	60.5	10.5	10.5

Source: Researcher (2025).

Results in Table 2 show that 31.6% of MMU staff never provide feedback or comment on any WhatsApp post. Meanwhile, 18.4% give feedback or comment once a day, 31.6% give feedback multiple times a day, 13.2% give feedback once or twice a week, and 5.3% give feedback three to five times a week. Regarding the frequency of receiving feedback on their posts, 7.9% of MMU staff never receive any feedback, while 10.5% receive feedback once a day. A significant 60.5% receive feedback multiple times a day, 10.5% receive feedback once or twice a week, and another 10.5% receive feedback three to five times a week.

Table 3: Frequency of Feedback by Students

Frequency of feedback by students	Never (%)	Once a day (%)	Many times, a day (%)	1-2 days a week (%)	3-5 days a week (%)
How often do you give feedback or comment on the posts?	18.8	29.8	41.1	8.9	1.5
How often do you receive feedback or comment on the posts?	5.7	11.0	69.6	8.6	5.1

Source: Researcher (2025).

Findings in Table 3 indicate that 18.8% of students never give feedback or comment on WhatsApp posts, while 29.8% give feedback once a day, 41.1% give feedback multiple times a day, 8.9% provide feedback once or twice a week, and 1.5% give feedback or comment on WhatsApp posts three to five times a week. On the other hand, 5.7% of MMU students never receive feedback or comments on their WhatsApp posts, 11.0% receive feedback or comments once a day, 69.6% receive feedback or comments multiple times a day, 8.6% receive feedback once or twice a week, and 5.1% receive feedback on WhatsApp posts three to five times a week.

4.2 Time Taken to Reply to A WhatsApp Message

Figure 3 has findings on the amount of time they typically take to reply to WhatsApp messages.

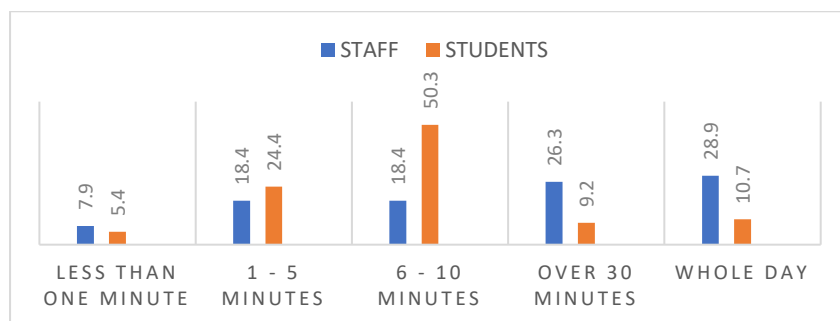


Figure 3: Time taken to reply to WhatsApp Messages

Results in Figure 3 show that 7.9% of MMU staff take less than one minute to reply to WhatsApp messages, 18.4% take between 1-5 minutes, another 18.4% take 6-10 minutes, 26.3% take over thirty minutes, and finally, 28.9% of MMU staff take a whole day to reply to WhatsApp messages. Therefore, the findings conclude that the majority of MMU staff (59.4%) take more than 30 minutes to reply to WhatsApp messages. At the same time, 5.4% of MMU students take less than one minute to reply to WhatsApp messages, 24.4% take between 1-5 minutes, and the majority of MMU students (over 50%) take between 6-10 minutes to reply to WhatsApp messages. Additionally, 9.2% take over thirty minutes to reply, and 10.7% take the whole day to respond. Therefore, based on this study, the majority of MMU students reply to WhatsApp messages within 6-10 minutes, making WhatsApp a favourable platform for communication at MMU.

4.3 Nature of Consumed Information

Table 4 indicates the nature of the information they consume on WhatsApp.

Table 4: Nature of consumed Information on WhatsApp

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

Nature of consumed information by Staff	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
You use WhatsApp for entertainment purposes	10.5	7.2	18.7	44.2	19.4
You use WhatsApp to stalk your friends and colleagues	15.8	5.3	28.4	33.1	17.4
You use WhatsApp to learn what is trending in the organization	10.4	8.2	23.0	34.1	24.3
You use WhatsApp for work related activities	6.6	5.3	13.2	48.4	26.5
You use WhatsApp to see others profile	5.3	7.4	44.6	24.2	18.5

Sources: Researcher (2025).

Findings in Table 4 indicate that out of 38 staff members, 24 use WhatsApp primarily for entertainment, while only seven strongly disagree or disagree with the statement. Additionally, 33.1% (equivalent to 13 staff members) agree that they use WhatsApp to check on friends, while 17.4% strongly agree with this statement. Regarding the use of WhatsApp to stay informed about trends within the organization, 22 staff members rely on the platform for this purpose. Furthermore, a total of 16 out of 38 staff members use WhatsApp to view other people's profiles.

These findings agree with Attala et al. (2020) study on *Staff Reflection on the Effectiveness of WhatsApp Usage for Organizational Communication: A Study in a Private Malaysian Medical School*. Their established that only 33.3% of staff used WhatsApp for entertainment. However, similar to the present findings, Attalla et al. (2020) established that the majority of staff members used WhatsApp to stay updated on organizational trends and work-related matters, while a smaller proportion used it to view other people's profiles.

Table 5 shows the nature of consumed information on WhatsApp.

Table 5: Nature of Consumed Information on WhatsApp

Key: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N= Neutral, A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

Nature of Consumed Information by Students	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
You use WhatsApp for entertainment purposes	2.1	7.1	15.2	40.8	34.8
You use WhatsApp to stalk your friends and classmates	4.2	6.5	24.1	45.5	19.6
You use WhatsApp to learn what is trending in the organization	1.2	4.2	25.9	38.4	30.4
You use WhatsApp for academic purposes	0.9	7.7	25.3	42.9	23.2
You use WhatsApp to see others profile	2.7	5.4	28.3	43.8	19.9

Sources: Researcher (2025).

Results in Table 5 show that 75.6% of students use WhatsApp for entertainment, while 65.1% of students use WhatsApp to stalk your friends and classmates. At the same time, 68.8% of students indicated that use WhatsApp to learn what is trending in the organization while another 66.1% of the students use WhatsApp for academic purposes. Similarly, 63.7% of the students reported that they use WhatsApp to see others' profile.

This study aligns with Serende (2015), who, in his study on *Factors Influencing the Choice of Social Network Sites Among High School Teenagers in Nairobi, Kenya*, confirmed that most students prefer social networking sites that cater to their needs. Similarly, the present study establishes that WhatsApp is widely utilized by MMU students as it effectively serves their communication and engagement purposes. According to the findings of this study, out of 336 respondents, 253 students use WhatsApp for entertainment purposes, while only 31 do not use the platform for this purpose. These findings align with Anyango (2024) similarly found that most undergraduate students at MMU use WhatsApp primarily for entertainment. Additionally, 219 respondents confirmed that they use WhatsApp to stalk their friends, while 231 students reported using the platform to stay updated on trends within the organization.

4.4 Benefits of Using WhatsApp

Table 6 has findings on benefits of using WhatsApp platform.

Table 6: Benefits of using WhatsApp

Benefit of use	Staff Mean	Student Mean
WhatsApp is cost-effective	3.7	3.6
WhatsApp is faster means of communication	4.1	3.8
Easy communication	4.0	3.6
WhatsApp can be used at any time of the day	4.2	3.9
Users can personalize messages with emojis, GIFs & pictures	2.8	3.8
End-to-end encryption makes it more secure	3.4	3.8
You can message someone privately	4.5	4.0

Sources: Researcher (2025).

Results in Table 6 show that majority of respondents consider WhatsApp beneficial primarily due to its cost-effectiveness, with a mean score of 3.7. Additionally, staff members find WhatsApp useful to facilitate faster and easier communication (mean = 4.1). Furthermore, many staff members appreciate the platform's accessibility, allowing them to communicate at any time of the day (mean = 4.2). These findings align with Farzana et al. (2023) in their study on *The Effectiveness of WhatsApp in Disseminating Work-Related Information: The Case of UPTM*,

which confirmed that over 75% of staff agreed that WhatsApp is an easy and fast means of communication. This supports the accuracy of the current study's findings. Regarding the personalization of messages using emojis and pictures (mean = 2.8). These findings are consistent with Attalla et al. (2020) in their study on *Staff Reflections on the Effectiveness of WhatsApp Usage for Organizational Communication: A Study in a Private Malaysian Medical School*, where only 16% of respondents agreed, and 4.8% strongly agreed, that they used WhatsApp for sending videos, pictures and emojis, and benefited from using WhatsApp to send private messages (mean = 4.5).

Students indicated that they find WhatsApp beneficial due to its cost-effectiveness (mean 3.6. Additionally, students agreed that WhatsApp is a faster (mean = 3.7) and easier (mean = 3.5) means of communication. A mean of 3.7 suggests that students have benefited from personalized messages with pictures, videos, and emojis. However, only a few students reported benefiting from WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption for security, with a mean of 3.7, private messaging was highly valued, with a mean of 4.9, showing that many students benefit from this aspect of WhatsApp.

4.5 Nature of Gratification

Table 7 has results on the nature of gratification they receive from using WhatsApp.

Table 7: Nature of Gratification

Nature of gratification	Staff Mean	Students Mean
WhatsApp fosters relationships that start face-to-face	3.5	3.73
WhatsApp fosters personal identity hence allowing you to portray your principles and views	3.1	3.65
WhatsApp helps you be aware of what is going on in your environment	3.7	3.77
WhatsApp foster entertainment and relaxation	3.4	3.56

Source: Researcher (2025).

According to results in Table 7, a mean score of 3.5 indicates that WhatsApp helps them foster relationships that begin face-to-face. A mean score of 3.1 suggests that WhatsApp allows them to express their principles and views, while a mean score of 3.7 shows that it helps them stay informed about organizational matters. Additionally, a mean score of 3.4 indicates that staff use WhatsApp for entertainment and relaxation. On the other hand, among students, a mean score of 3.7 suggests they use WhatsApp to maintain relationships that start face-to-face, while 3.6 indicates that they use the platform to express their views and principles. A mean score of 3.5 shows that students also use WhatsApp for entertainment and relaxation.

These findings align with previous studies. Anyango (2024) confirmed that the majority of MMU students use WhatsApp to foster relationships that begin face-to-face. According to her study, students also use WhatsApp to express their views and principles. Regarding entertainment and relaxation, Kariuki (2017) found that most staff at Safaricom PLC used WhatsApp to unwind after work. Similarly, Serende (2015) stated that majority of students in Nairobi County use WhatsApp to "kill time." Therefore, these findings confirm that the current research is relevant and accurate.

4.6 Level of Satisfaction

Table 8 has the results on satisfaction level with WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication.

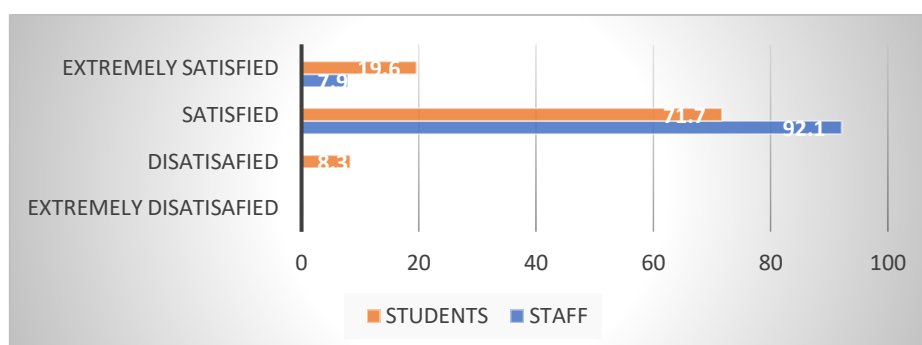


Figure 4: Level of Satisfaction

The respondents' opinions on WhatsApp's effectiveness for internal corporate communication at Multimedia University of Kenya are presented in the figure above. The results indicate that 71.7% of students and 92.1% of staff agree that WhatsApp is effective for internal corporate communication. Additionally, 19.6% of students and 7.9% of staff strongly agree with this statement. On the other hand, only 8.3% of students and 0.3% of staff expressed dissatisfaction or extreme dissatisfaction with WhatsApp usage. Based on these findings, it is evident that WhatsApp serves as an effective tool for internal corporate communication among stakeholders at MMU.

4.7 WhatsApp Recommendation

Figure 5 has results on willingness to recommend WhatsApp to someone else.

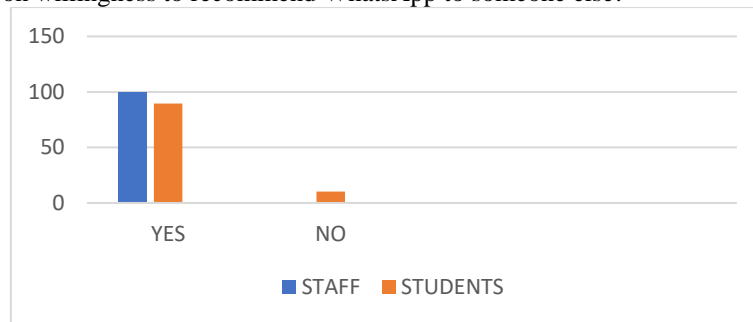


Figure 5: WhatsApp Recommendation

The majority of respondents agreed that they would recommend WhatsApp to someone else. Staff showed the highest level of agreement, with 100% indicating they would recommend the platform, followed by students at 90.5%. Only 9.5% of students indicated that they would not recommend WhatsApp to someone else.

4.8 Regression Model

Regression analysis was done using SPSS and the model summary is shown in Table 8 and 9.

Table 8: Regression Analysis for Students

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.342	0.251	5.346	.000
	Level of satisfaction of WhatsApp usage	0.132	0.030	4.470	.000

Dependent Variable: Effective ICC.

Predictors: (Constant), accessibility of WhatsApp platform, level of acceptance, level of satisfaction

Source: Researcher (2025).

Table 8 accessibility of the WhatsApp platform, level of acceptance, level of satisfaction if kept constant, the effectiveness of WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication at Multimedia University in Kenya has an index of 1.342. The resultant regression model was: $Y = 1.342 + 0.132X$.

According to the findings, increasing the level of satisfaction resulted in a 0.132 increase in effective WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication among MMU stakeholders. Mishra and Mishra (2020) confirmed that when employees are dissatisfied with WhatsApp usage, they prefer not to use it for internal organizational communication. This aligns with the current study, which found that increased satisfaction directly leads to greater application of WhatsApp for internal corporate communication. Onyango (2022) also found that WhatsApp's perceived privacy and degree of comfort contribute to higher levels of satisfaction among users.

Table 9: Regression Analysis for Staff

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.391	0.566	5.901	.000
	Level of satisfaction of WhatsApp usage	.213	0.120	4.460	.000

Dependent Variable: Effective ICC.

Predictors: (Constant), accessibility of WhatsApp platform, level of acceptance, level of satisfaction

Source: Researcher (2025).

Results in Table 9 shows that the level of satisfaction, if kept constant, the effectiveness of WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication at Multimedia University in Kenya has an index of 2.391. The resultant regression model was: $Y = 2.391 + 0.213X$. These findings from staff respondents imply that the level of satisfaction of WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication among MMU's stakeholders by one unit leads to a 0.213 (21.3%) increase in effective WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

Majority of students concurred that they use WhatsApp to express their opinions and beliefs and enjoy seeing how other people respond to the accomplishments they share. This is in line with the ideas put forth by Greenwood (2013) and Serede (2015), who stated that for the youth, projecting a positive self-image and receiving acceptance from peers is very important. According to Anyango (2024), WhatsApp Status was found to be the feature used by most students to portray views and principles and see others reactions on shared accomplishments. According to the regression analysis, the study established that a unit change level of satisfaction led to a 0.213 increase in effective WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication among staff and 0.132 increase of effective WhatsApp usage for internal corporate communication among students at Multimedia University of Kenya students, assuming all other factors remained constant

5.2 Conclusions

The study established that students primarily use WhatsApp to foster relationships. Majority of MMU internal stakeholders take approximately 6–10 minutes to respond to WhatsApp messages. Most respondents send and receive feedback on posts multiple times a day. Additionally, over 50% of MMU students use WhatsApp for entertainment purposes, whereas the majority of staff use it to stay updated on trending matters within the organization.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended as follows:

1. WhatsApp should integrate a chatroom feature within groups. This would allow targeted messaging to specific individuals within a group without all members receiving the message, thereby enhancing privacy and security.
2. WhatsApp should introduce an option for users to select video quality based on their internet connectivity, ensuring smoother content streaming and sharing.
3. WhatsApp should incorporate a tagging system, enabling users to categorize and archive shared information efficiently.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research should be conducted on security, privacy and compliance concerns. This includes analysing risks such as data breaches, confidentiality issues, and regulatory compliance when using WhatsApp for corporate communication.

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