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Association between Prevalence of Social Media Usage and Violent Behavior among Secondary School Students in Langata Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya

Wilfred Musila Muia

Head, Department of History and Geography, Nairobi Academy, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

There is evidence that the emergence of the social media and associated proliferation within the country has posed some influence on negative behavioral changes among the youths. The ability of social media to offer discretion and a seamless sharing tool has led to the increase in deviant behavior among secondary school students. The research sought to examine the association between prevalence of social media and deviant behavior among secondary school students in Langata Sub-County in Nairobi. The total sample size for the research was 48 teachers. Data for the research was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The collected data was edited and coded into SPSS 22 for descriptive analysis in the form of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Findings from the research showed an increasing proliferation of social media usage among secondary school students mostly Facebook and WhatsApp. The results of the research indicated that there is an increasing trend of violent acts within the schools which spread has been supported by the availability of social media sites. Findings of the study also indicated that lack of sufficient monitoring of social media usages promotes molesting and cyber bullying among users. The findings of the research will be of great significance to school management in designing policies that will curb over usage of social media sites and guiding on the content that is permissible to be shared among students. More so the findings can be of importance to policymakers in designing regulations on accessibility of smart gadgets within the school and monitoring their usage among students.

Keywords: Deviant behavior, Social Media, Cyber Bullying, Violence

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

According to Bryer and Zavattaro (2011) social media is a body of technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation across stakeholders. These technologies include but not limited to sharing tools, networking platforms, virtual worlds and wikis. The main social media components are the social interactive communication platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace and Snapchat. According to Boyd (2007) teenagers are spending much of their time on social media sites interacting with peers, sharing information and in the process leading to re-formulation of their social personalities. However, literature has been limited on whether this information sharing and interaction are constructive or destructive towards the young adult's deviant behavior. Nwankwo (2006) defines deviant behavior as a string of abnormal or antisocial behaviors that are not in tandem with societal norms. Roberts (2001) acknowledges that youth deviancy is a major problem within society today and the lack of a common perceived factors that is contributing to deviancy has made its management quite impossible. Social network sites which were introduced in less than a decade ago have drawn large numbers of users (students). Studies have confirmed that the involvement of students in social media has increased considerably since 2004. Recent studies carried out by some researchers reported that 80% to 90% of students are actively involved with at least a particular social media site (Kord, 2008).

Amichai-Hamburger (2005) notes that the internet allows individuals to connect efficiently even from isolated locations. These individuals can communicate over large geographical dispersions and often form social groups that support and validate their identities and ideologies. This has often contributed to the influence that peer pressure has on many young minds. According to Rogers, Smoak, & Liu (2006) the prevalence of internet usage has presented unique opportunities for deviant behavior due to the anonymity it offers the users. According to Ananad (2008) the influence of electronic media on violence among children is no longer an open debate since the excessive portrayal of violence on media such as videos, online sites and video games has contributed to aggressiveness and violence portrayals among young children. David (2011) notes that the lack of regulation of social media has led to lack of stricter controls and censorship of content that is not age-appropriate. For instance, streaming of live violent scenes on social media sites has been blamed as a cause of violence oriented growth among young adults. Boehm (2010) notes that lack of appropriate

and strict monitoring of social media sites has fueled the increase in cyber bullying and molestation among teenagers. Despite above studies affirming an association between prevalence of social media and deviant behavior; the findings may not be replicated in the current study due to cultural and structural differences between the target groups for the research.

Locally, Mutua (2011) indicates that with internet access of 49% among the youth in Kenya; teenagers have been exposed to both negative and the positive sides of the online communities. The researcher notes that the majority of the time spent online exposes the teenagers to online bullying which lowers their self-esteem and ultimately contributes to poor academic performance. Ikinza (2012) points out that access to monetary support from parents allows some students to play online video games which expose them to violent acts as well as being targeted by online hackers who can release damaging private information. Mwangi and Birgen (2008) note that the spread of school violence in the first half of 2008 was largely supported by availability of Facebook, Twitter and SMS messaging which allowed students to seamlessly and confidentially communicate. Wanjiru (2009) adds that the growth in the local technology infrastructure has made access to online communities cheap which has resulted in underage teenagers accessing violent materials and information online which leads to common deviancy acts such as indiscipline, drug abuse, stealing, fighting, school strikes, bullying and sneaking from school. However above research studies have not exhaustively examined the association of social media usage and deviant behavior especially in urban areas and at a time when internet access in Kenya is at 89% hence the current research sought to enhance the available evidence.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Over the recent years there has been a growing national concern on the increasing the increasing rampant school destruction as witnessed in the country during the year 2016. Different policy makers have differed on the exact root cause of the violence exhibited by the young secondary school students. However, one predominant theme witnessed was the ease through which students were able to plan and execute the destruction of school property through use of smartphones which offer confidentiality through the myriad of available free social media applications such as WhatsApp. More so through user groups created on online sites such Facebook students have been able not just to arrange violent acts but also cyber bully and molest other younger students and rival schools. However, despite the continuing growth of deviancy among secondary school students there has been minimal research evidence examining how the prevalence and ease of access to smart gadgets is shaping behavior among students in school. More so, within peri-urban areas where the middle class is concentrated access to cutting-edge devices has not been a limited factor to the students hence there is need to map how this trend reflects on the deviancy among students in such areas. Findings from such an examination will be of great practical and policy importance stemming from current trends of violence and bullying witnessed within the country at large. The current research will solve the problem; what is the association between prevalence of social media usage and deviant behavior among secondary school students in Langata Sub-County?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between prevalence of social media usage and violent behavior among secondary school students in Langata Sub-County.

1.3.1. Specific Objectives

- i. investigate the effects of social media on cyber bullying among secondary school students;
- ii. evaluate the influence of social media on violence among secondary school students.

1.4. Value of the Study

The findings of this study will benefit secondary school administrators by highlighting the relationship between the use of social media and deviant behaviour among students. The findings of this research shall offer secondary school administrators with knowledge and insights to guide in the formulation of policies and procedures to guide ethical usage of the social media. Educational practitioners too will find the study findings useful in designing intervention strategies that are more holistic and inclusive of all stakeholders. Further the findings will provide basis for educating students on ethical usage of the social media.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

The researcher experienced some respondent's shying off from responding to queries regarding some of the information to be sought regarding issues such as their sexual practices as well as aspects regarding their drug usage. To counter this, the researcher conducted a briefing of the respondents before they give their responses in order to foster a mutually convenient environment for the respondents to air their opinions freely. Further, the researcher consulted with the school psychologists where available.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Usage of Social Media

According to Social Bakers (2013), there were 1,886,560 registered Facebook users in Kenya and it ranked sixth in Africa in terms of population usage of Facebook. This has tremendously grown to over 5,000,000 users as of 2015 (Internet World Statistics, 2016). Furthermore, a report titled "How Africa Tweets" by Portland Communications and Tweetmister suggests that in the last quarter of 2014, Nairobi posted 123,078 geo-located tweets making it the sixth most active city on Twitter in the continent (Portland Communication, 2014). Further, a survey conducted by the Consumer Network in Kenya revealed that 87% of Kenyan youth use the

internet to access social media (Consumer Network, 2013). This study is expected to establish the extent to which use of social media may be contributing to deviant behavior among secondary school students.

According to Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, and Shahar, (2016) the use of online media such as facebook has prompted youths to become self-derogatory as they seek the acceptance of other users online. This social derogatory has led to increasing negative social consequences such as posting of nude photos. The authors further highlight the plight teenagers have on social media of being ridiculed due to their complexions, body shapes and weight which has led to growth of violent tendencies among children. Furthermore access to these social media sites has fuelled the craving for drug and substance abuse to nab the depression and stress associated with the online ridicule and bullying.

2.2. Social Media and Cyber Bullying

Dowell, Burgess and Cavanaugh (2009), carried out an investigation on Clustering of Internet Risk Behaviors in a Middle School in the United States of America. The key findings were that, students reported the beginning of high-risk internet behavior, specifically, giving out personal information, using the Internet to harass or embarrass another person, and for a small number of students, chatting with strangers and starting relationships with them. Students who posted their picture online were more likely to have sent their picture to someone, made rude comments to others, played online jokes, harassed or embarrassed someone, and sought out violent-depicted sites. However, above study focused on middle schools unlike the current research targeting secondary school students. In addition, the study examined internet risk behaviors unlike current research which is focused on prevalence of social media usage and deviant behavior.

In her study Wanjiru (2009) investigated the factors that led to secondary school strikes in selected schools of Murang'a. The research discovered that most of the school strikes were orchestrated through use of mobile phones. More so the researcher noted that bullying of lower class students by their seniors created animosity which at times led to violence within the school and strikes at times. However, the research did not consider deviant behavior at large nor the association with the prevalence of social media usage.

2.3. Social Media and Violence

Katsumata, Matsumoto, Kitani and Takeshima (2008) investigated on the relationship between electronic media use and suicidal ideation among Japanese adolescents. The results of the study indicated that ideation with violence and suicidal intentions were largely associated with searching for information through social media and other network sites on self-injury and other violent acts. The above study however targeted adolescents in general thus did not consider secondary school students specifically. Schooler, Sorsoli, Kim and Tolman (2009) carried out a study focusing on incremental effects of media exposure on sexual and violent behavior. The findings of the examination indicated that exposure to content that depicted violent behavior was significantly associated with an increase in violent acts among teenagers. Above study fails to factor social media as part of the source of media content exposure.

On the same issue, Murumbi (2012) reported that, more than a hundred students in Tetu district went on strike after one of the students was suspended for having a mobile phone in school. Messages on strikes being passed through mobile phones can make schools to be rocked by violent strikes at a particular time of the year when no one is aware of the cause. This further explains why the current study is focused on finding out how social media could be influencing secondary school students' behavior as increased use of cell phones has not only benefited the society, but also disadvantaged some of its members especially the youth. Moreover, it is widely accepted that social media has profound influence on child health, including violent acts. However above research failed to consider the role of the prevalence of social media usage. On the other hand, Kariungi (2011) investigated the forms of school indiscipline that teachers and administrators associated with parents' laxity. The researcher noted that use of abusive language, aggressiveness and acts of violence were the main forms of violence that teachers associated with parent's laxity. The above research however did not consider role of social media usage hence findings may not be reflective of the current research.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

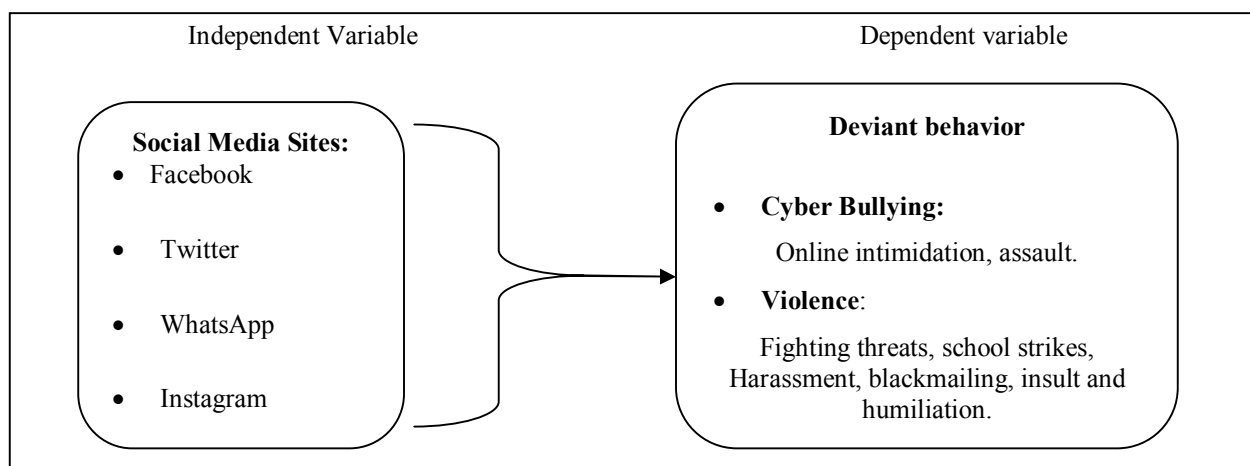


Figure 1

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The research will adopt a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey allowed for examination of the research phenomena without manipulation hence was appropriate for describing the characteristics of the target group in reference to the research problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This type of design also allowed for presentation of the findings use visual aids such as graphs, charts and tables that aid the readers in understanding the data distribution.

3.2. Study Location

The study was carried out in Langata Sub-County within Nairobi County. The Sub-County comprises of Karen, Mugumoini, Nairobi West, South C and Nyayo Highrise Wards. It is an area with glaring contrast in living standards, ranging from the plush homes of Karen and Langata, middle-income areas like Nairobi West, Nyayo Highrise, and South C to the sprawling Kibra informal settlements, which are characterized by poor living standards. The sub-county is basically a residential region although there are a number of businesses including offices for various businesses. This Sub-County has 41 secondary schools. The secondary schools in the Sub-County range from public to high cost private ones offering either Kenyan or the British curriculum.

3.3. Target Population

The population of the research refers to all members of a real set of people who the researcher wishes to include in generating the results of the study (Simons & Hellen., 2009). The study population of this study was secondary school students in Nairobi County, Langata Sub-County. Population will be drawn from both Private and Public secondary schools in the Sub-county. Further, the research targeted teachers within the selected institutions to give their views on the subject of the study.

In Kibra constituency there are 22 secondary schools with 5819 students and 285 teachers. Langata constituency has 19 secondary schools with 3638 students and 243 teachers. In total Langata Sub-County has 41 secondary schools with a total of 9,457 students and 528 teachers (Education Office, Langata Sub-County, 2016).

3.4. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Mugenda (2008) posits that sampling is the scientific process of selecting a representative unit from the target population. An optimum sample is the one that fulfills the requirement of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility, (Kothari, 2004). Such a sample should be between range of 10-30% of the study population.

Out of the 41 schools in Kibra and Langata Constituencies, 4 public and 8 private secondary schools were sampled to participate in the study giving a sample size of 12 schools. This included 2 public and 4 private secondary schools from Kibra constituency and 2 public and 4 private ones from Langata constituency. Out of the 5 public secondary schools 4 participated in the main study while the remaining one were used for pilot study because there are very few public secondary schools in the Sub-County. There 36 private secondary schools in this Sub-County. Using simple random sampling, a sample of 4 (21%) schools out of 19 in Kibra and 4 (24%) out of 17 in Langata constituencies were selected making a total 8 schools. This sample is satisfactory because Mugenda (2008) states that a sample size between 10% and 30% is statistically significant for a social research. In total 336 students, and 48 teachers participated in the study.

3.5. Data Collection

The researcher personally collected the data from the target respondents where possible drop and pick method will be utilized. The questionnaires were personally administered to the sample respondents by the researcher. This method makes the data collection simpler and the researcher is able to facilitate accuracy in the data collection as the method entails a personal appeal.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. It was first classified into sub-themes then edited and cleaned to reduce ambiguity. The cleaned data will then be coded and analyzed using SPSS 22 programme. The data shall be analyzed using descriptive statistics which were based on mean scores, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages of the responses then presented inform of tables, charts and bar graphs.

4. Results

4.1. Response Rate

Findings of the research showed a 88% (n=42) response rate among teachers as indicated by the figure 1 below; according to Bailey (2000), a response rate of 50% is sufficient and a response rate more than 70% is very good.

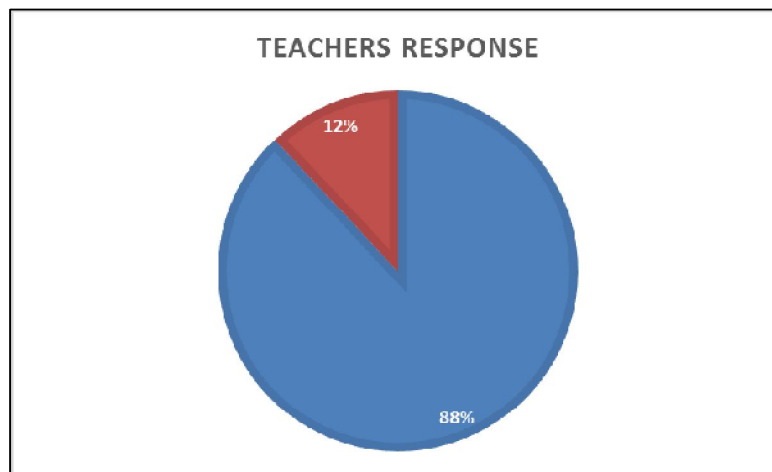


Figure 2

4.2. Social Media and Cyber Bullying

Statements on Cyber Bullying	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Majority of cyber bullies are mostly secondary school students.	6	14.2	13	31	13	31	10	23.8
Cyber bullying is increasingly becoming popular especially because perpetrators go unpunished.	1	2.4	4	9.5	26	61.9	11	26.2
Cyber bullying tendencies among secondary school students extend to their day to day social activities.	2	4.8	3	7.1	28	66.7	9	21.4
Cyber bullying is increasingly becoming fashionable for most secondary school students.	2	4.8	4	9.5	8	19	28	66.7
Over usage of the social media has led to a decline in academic performance among secondary school students as most time is spent on the social media rather than on books.	1	2.4	6	14.3	12	28.6	23	54.7
Usage of social media among secondary school students during class time reduces student concentration leading to poor academic performance.	5	11.9	4	9.5	16	38.1	17	40.5
The usage of social media has eroded the students writing skills i.e. has led to usage of sheng/internet slang in formal writings.	2	4.8	10	23.8	19	45.2	11	26.2
To acquire drugs on the streets.	5	11.9	9	21.4	23	54.8	5	11.9
Get involved in gang activities.	13	31	9	21.4	9	21.4	11	26.2
Engage in manual labor to facilitate the expenses for using the social media.	12	28.6	12	28.6	10	23.7	8	19.1

Table 1: Social media and cyber bullying

In regard to majority of cyber bullies are mostly secondary school students, the majority of the respondents 31% disagreed, 31% agreed while only 14.3% strongly disagreed. In regard to Cyber bullying is increasingly becoming popular especially because perpetrators go unpunished the majority of the respondents 61.9% of the respondents agreed, 26.2% of the respondents strongly agreed. In regard to cyber bullying tendencies among secondary school students extend to their day to day social activities the majority of the respondent's 66.7% agreed, 21.4% strongly agreed.

In regard to cyber bullying is increasingly becoming fashionable for most secondary school students, the majority of the respondents 66.7% strongly agreed, 19% agreed and 4.8% strongly disagreed. In regard to over usage of the social media has led to a decline in academic performance among secondary school students as most time is spent on the social media rather than on books the majority of the respondents 54.7% strongly agreed, 28.6% agreed while only 14.3% disagreed. Concerning Usage of social media among secondary school students during class time reduces student concentration leading to poor academic performance, the majority of the respondents 40.5% strongly agreed, 38.1% agreed, 11.9% strongly disagreed while only 9.5% of the respondents disagreed. In regard to the usage of social media has eroded the students writing skills i.e. has led to usage of sheng/internet slang in formal writings the majority of the respondent's 45.2% agreed, 23.8% of the respondents disagreed while only 4.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Results also showed that in regard to social media usage has increased truancy as students seek to acquire drugs on the streets the majority of the respondents 54.8% agreed, 11.9% strongly disagreed, 21.4% disagreed; in regard to involvement in gang activities 26.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, 21.4% agreed, 21.4% disagreed. In regard to engage in manual labor to facilitate expenses for using social media the majority of the respondents 28.6% strongly disagreed and 23.8% agreed. These findings are in line with Njoroge (2013) who noted that there are increasing incidences of cyber bullying among students.

4.3. Social Media and Violence

Statements on Violence	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Through social media sites such as World star hip hop fight compilations are widely shared thus promoting violent behavior among secondary school students such as assault of their minors in school.	4	9.5	12	28.7	20	47.6	6	14.2
Formation of gangs in secondary schools.	5	11.9	8	19	23	54.9	6	14.2
Involvement in school strikes.	6	14.3	9	21.5	19	45.2	8	19
Fighting.	5	11.9	5	11.9	27	64.3	5	11.9
Molesting others.	4	9.5	6	14.2	23	54.8	9	21.5
Rebelling against authority.	3	7.1	3	7.1	20	47.6	16	38.2
Burning school property	7	16.7	3	7.1	20	47.6	12	28.6
School strikes	7	16.7	5	11.9	18	42.9	12	28.5

Table 2: Social media and violence

Results from the study presented in table above show that with regard to social media sites such as World star hip hop fight compilations are widely shared thus promoting violent behavior among secondary school students such as assault of their minors in school, the majority of the respondents 47.6% agreed, 9.5% strongly disagreed, 7.1% of the respondents agreed. In regard to increased sharing of violent videos on social media promotes antisocial behavior among the viewer's such as formation of gangs in secondary schools the majority of the respondents 54.8% agreed, 11.9% strongly disagreed, 19% of the respondents disagreed. Further the research results showed that increased sharing of violent videos online on social media promotes involvement in school strikes the majority of the respondents 45.2% agreed, 21.4% disagreed while only 11.9% of the respondents strongly agreed. In regard to playing violent video games online and in social media sites creates a culture of violent behavior the majority of respondent's 64.3% agreed it fuels fighting, 54.8% agreed it increases molestation of others, 47.6% agreed it increases rebellion against authority, 47.6% agreed it contributes to burning of school property while only 42.9% agreed it contributed to strikes.

5. Discussion

5.1. Social Media Usage

The research findings further confirm that the majority of the secondary school students have access to social media. In terms of usage WhatsApp 90.5% among Form One students and 98% among Form Three students and Facebook 39.3% and 54% among Form Ones and Form Three students respectively) were among the most highly utilized by students. The results also suggest that Twitter usage is low among teenagers. According to personal usage of social media within schools' analysis, Form Ones often used twitter at 3% and Form Threes students at 22.5%. These findings are in line with Social Bakers (2015) who indicated the high levels of penetration of Facebook within the country as the preferred social networking site.

5.2. Social Media and Violence

The findings of this study indicate that increased exposure and prevalence in usage of social media seems to influence secondary school students' behavior both positively and negatively. The behaviors which were highly influenced by social media were; aggressiveness, molestation and other forms of violent acts such as destruction of school property and ignorance towards authority, among others. As a result of this influence, the study established that students in school are ever punished due to behavioral cases such as violence seen in aggressive behaviors, participating in school strikes and riots as a result of low rate of monitoring of usage of social media sites as well as the anonymity with which they utilize the sites.

5.3. Social Media and Cyberbullying

Findings in the study showed that usage of social media sites has increased cyber bullying cases among the students. Findings showed that cyber bullying is increasingly becoming popular among the students since the perpetrators went unpunished due to lack of adequate information to apprehend them due to usage of pseudo names online. More so findings showed that use of social media among students during class time has led to a reduction in academic performance as a result of poor concentration.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Conclusion

There is need for students to be advised on how to utilize these sites in the right way and avoid being lured into negative behaviours. Further the research established that social media use contributes significantly to the growing trends of cyber bullying due to poor punishment mechanisms being put in place. Further findings indicate that the guidance and counselling departments need to do more to reduce cases of violent acts among students such as fighting stealing and molesting of the younger students. The institution should promote awareness on the negative effects of cyber bullying as well as the harmful effects of violence as well as educate the children on how best to utilize the social media sites without a negative consequence.

6.2. Recommendation

The research recommends that school administrators and policy makers should be more involved in monitoring and guiding students on their engagements in social networks. More so, institutions should leverage on the affinity of social networks to students and set up accounts that students can interact through. Using such accounts the school management can be able to guide students on behavioral changes as well as check on any deviant cases. The researcher also recommends that guidance and counselling departments as well as parents should engage the young students especially girls on behavioral modification that can help them avoid being lured into the negative sexual practices that are emerging locally.

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