



The Role of School Leadership in Mitigating Undesirable Behavioral Changes Caused by The Use of social media Among Students in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract: This study explored the role of school leadership in mitigating undesirable behavioural changes caused by students' use of social media in public secondary schools in Ubungo Municipality, Dar es Salaam. Guided by Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the study employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design involving 72 participants, including heads of schools, teachers, and students. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and analysed thematically. The findings revealed that excessive and unregulated use of platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram contributed to behavioural challenges such as cyberbullying, academic distraction, inappropriate content sharing, and poor time management among students. School leaders mitigated these challenges through several strategies: counselling and psychosocial support, digital literacy and awareness campaigns, teachers' involvement and monitoring, parental engagement, reinforcement of positive behaviour, capacity building for teachers, and development and enforcement of digital behaviour policies. These interventions promoted responsible digital engagement, strengthened online self-regulation, and enhanced students' emotional and social well-being. The study concludes that effective and proactive school leadership is crucial in guiding students toward ethical and productive social media use. It recommends strengthening leadership capacity, digital citizenship education, parental-school collaboration, and continuous monitoring to foster safer and more responsible digital environments in Tanzanian secondary schools.

Keyword : School Leadership, Behavior Change and Undesirable Behaviour

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Introduction

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have become integral to the daily lives of secondary school students worldwide. These platforms provide various benefits, including communication, entertainment, education, and socialisation. However, excessive use of social media has raised concerns about its potential impact on students' behaviour, academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. In Tanzania, secondary students are increasingly exposed to social media, which may influence their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours (Akpan, 2018). Despite this growing usage, there is still a need for

more evidence regarding the role of social media in education, its importance, and its influence on behavioural change.

The introduction of social media in education has a long and significant history. In the United States, social media began influencing educational practices as early as the 1960s, with initiatives. The main driving force behind the adoption of social media in education has been technological advancement, aiming to enhance accessibility, flexibility, effectiveness, and inclusivity in learning. This historical perspective underscores how technology has continually shaped educational methods and how social media has become a modern tool in this evolution.

In Northern Africa, for example, the study done in Egypt by Mahmoud and Morsy (2018) on the influence of social media on secondary students noted that while social media provided access to educational content, excessive use had detrimental effects on students' mental health, contributing to stress and depression. Similarly, Sayed and Hassan (2017) in Tunisia observed that while students used social media for both academic and social purposes, overuse led to increased procrastination and decreased class participation. Al-Kandari et al. (2016) in Kuwait found that social media led to social isolation and disturbed sleep patterns, affecting both mental health and academic performance.

In West Africa, the research points to similar trends. For example, the study done by Akinmoladun et al. (2018) in Nigeria noted that excessive social media use led to distractions during study hours, resulting in poor academic performance. Tijani et al. (2019) in Ghana found that while students used social media for academic collaboration, it often led to increased absenteeism and lower attendance in school. Adebayo et al. (2020) in Sierra Leone highlighted how social media reduced face-to-face interactions, affecting students' social skills and emotional development.

Research in Central Africa similarly reveals a dual impact. Nkoumou and Ndong (2017) in Cameroon found that while social media facilitated communication, it often distracted students from their academic responsibilities, contributing to poor time management. Makani and Tchuengkam (2018) in Gabon discovered that social media led to increased anxiety and stress among students, especially due to exposure to cyberbullying and unrealistic portrayals of peers. Moundong et al. (2020) in the Central African Republic observed that social media led to addictive behaviours, affecting both students' academic performance and their social lives.

In East Africa, particularly in Tanzania, studies have explored the benefits and challenges associated with social media use among secondary students. Makundi and Osaki (2022) found that social media is widely used by secondary school students in Tanzania for both non-beneficial and academic activities. They concluded that while social media can foster a sense of belonging, it often distracts students from their studies. Similarly, Moshi et al. (2018) in Moshi Municipality found that social media influences students' learning behaviour by leading to wasted time, poor attendance,

and distractions during class. Mvungi and Otieno (2022) in Arusha City also noted that platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are primarily used for personal entertainment, indicating the need for better guidance on responsible social media use in schools.

In Southern Africa, studies have shown that social media plays a complex role in shaping students' behaviours. Kafwafwa and Chibwana (2017) in Malawi observed that excessive social media use led to distractions from academic work, contributing to poor academic performance. Similarly, Chirwa et al. (2019) in Zambia found that social media contributed to procrastination, leading to reduced academic success. Mathebe et al. (2020) in Botswana also noted the rise in mental health issues, such as stress and anxiety, associated with social media use among students.

In Tanzania, social media has become a significant part of students' lives, with both positive and negative effects. Research indicates that while social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram provide students with a sense of belonging and opportunities for academic collaboration, they also contribute to distractions and social challenges. A study done by Makundi and Osaki (2022) found that social media is used for both academic and non-academic purposes, and while it enhances academic interaction, it also promotes time-wasting activities. Conversely, Moshi et al. (2018) reported that social media has a negative impact on learning behaviours, with students spending more time on platforms like Facebook, leading to poor class attendance and lower academic engagement. Furthermore, Mvungi and Otieno (2022) emphasised that social media is mainly used for entertainment purposes, with limited academic benefits, highlighting the need for more structured guidance on responsible usage. The influence of social media platforms on students' behaviour is particularly crucial in Tanzania because secondary school students are increasingly exposed to these platforms. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how social media platforms influence students' social, emotional, and academic behaviours among students in public secondary schools in the Tanzanian context.

In Ubungo Municipality, the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram among secondary school students is widespread. Many students rely on these platforms primarily for chatting, sharing information, and watching videos. Social media has also become a tool for informal learning, as students often use visual aids, drawings, and multimedia content to depict authentic and realistic scenarios related to their studies. Despite these benefits, excessive use of social media sometimes distracts students from academic responsibilities and may influence their behaviour and time management. This situation highlights the need to understand how social media affects students' learning patterns and overall educational outcomes in Ubungo Municipality

Literature Review

1. Theoretical Review

This study employed Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) which explains that individuals learn behaviours by observing, imitating, and modelling others, making it highly relevant for understanding how students are influenced by social media. The theory highlights four key processes attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation which collectively determine how behaviours seen on platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp are internalised and expressed in real life. Students selectively focus on appealing or relatable models, store observed behaviours through repeated exposure, reproduce them depending on their skills and confidence, and continue engaging in them based on reinforcement such as likes or peer approval. Although SLT effectively shows how external factors shape behaviour and guides educators in promoting positive role models, it has limitations in accounting for individual differences and deeper emotional processes. Overall, the theory offers a strong framework for analysing how social media shapes students' behaviour and supports strategies for encouraging responsible digital engagement.

2. Empirical Literature Review

a. The Role of School Leadership in Mitigating Undesirable Behavioural Changes Caused by Social Media Use Among Students in Public Secondary Schools

In the United States, Neiroukh et al. (2024) explored the use of the social media messaging platform by public secondary school principals for organisational communication and student behaviour management. This qualitative study, conducted across multiple U.S. school districts, highlighted how school leaders have adapted to using a digital communication platform in a post-pandemic world. The study found that while social media was being used initially to improve teacher-student communication, its unrestricted usage among students raised concerns about student behaviours such as cyberbullying, cheating, and disruption of class time. Consequently, school leaders adopted anti-bullying and digital conduct policies, monitored group interactions, and collaborated with parents regarding digital behaviour management. Principal leaders modelled appropriate communication, sent reminders to student groups regarding school rules and academic expectations, and social media was used to send school-wide information reminders. As noted in the study, 21st-century leadership in a digital world requires school principals to demonstrate proactive approaches, digital literacy, and collaboration. However, the study did not adequately address how school leadership could use social media to promote positive behaviour change and digital citizenship. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to further examine how leadership strategies can be structured to reduce negative consequences while promoting responsible digital engagement in the American public classroom using social media.

Schmid and Behnke (2023) studied how educational leaders cope with behavioural issues connected to social media usage among secondary school learners in Germany. Their research utilised a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews with public elementary and secondary school teachers and school leaders in two provinces of Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia. The findings suggest that social media was widely used by students for academic organising, but also contributed to other behavioural issues such as cyberbullying, distraction in class, and sharing inappropriate content. Educational leaders addressed these behavioural issues with the implementation of a digital behaviour policy, the organisation of a “social media awareness workshop”, and by involving parents in monitoring their children's use. Additionally, social media was used as a constructive way to demonstrate positive use of the messaging application, as well as for another more educational purpose, to share school information, helping learners distinguish between social and academic social media usage. Overall, there was a call for effective educational leaders in the digital educational context to have clear expectations, emotional intelligence, and involvement in the students' online behaviour. However, the research did not investigate how leadership could use the strategies and approaches they've employed to promote digital citizenship, social norms, or self-regulation over time. Therefore, the goal of this study is to understand how leaders have disciplined students' negative behaviour and increased their ability to balance social media use in public secondary schools.

A study conducted by Sharma and Singh (2023) in India aimed to understand the way school leaders tackle behavioural issues linked to social media use among secondary school-aged students. The study took place in public schools in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh and utilised a mixed methods approach through survey and interview data from principals and teachers. The findings indicated that while social media was regularly used for academic coordination, such as sharing homework, school examinations, and class schedules, other behavioural issues arose, including distraction, cyberbullying, and misuse of group chats. School leaders responded to challenges by developing digital behaviour policies, running awareness sessions about responsible social media use, and engaging parents to support reviewing student engagement online. Principals also utilised social media to engage with students and parents, to help underline school values and expectations. The authors argue that effective school leadership navigating the digital frontier requires a proactive posture, digital literacy, and collaboration with all stakeholders. While the authors give hints that a leadership approach would support positive online conduct, they do not fully explore how leadership strategies could also support longer-term digital responsibility and emotional regulation. Therefore, the current study seeks to understand how a structured leadership approach can reduce inappropriate behaviour and promote responsible social media use within public secondary schools.

In Ghana, Asare and Boateng (2023) explored how school leadership reacted to the behavioural difficulties associated with secondary school students' use of social media. The authors employed a qualitative research design in public secondary schools in the Ashanti and Greater Accra regions to obtain interview data from headteachers and members of the disciplinary committee. The findings suggested that while social media was used by students to effectively plan group assignments and to share learning resources with each other, it also served as a source of behavioural issues such as academic dishonesty, cyberbullying, and distractions during lessons. School leaders responded to the issues by implementing digital behaviour policies, arranging educational programs that would sensitise the school community about responsible use of social media, and engaging parents in monitoring students' online behaviours. School administrators also used social media to communicate with both students and parents to support school rules and promote positive behaviours. Furthermore, the authors stated that good school leadership in the digital era involves high levels of engagement with the school community, emotional intelligence and a collaborative attitude with school stakeholders. However, the authors noted that the study did not fully consider the leadership approaches that can serve as a means of cultivating students' and school communities' behaviours that would promote ethical and responsible digital behaviour in the long term. Therefore, this study aims to investigate leadership approaches that can mitigate harmful behaviour while supporting responsible use of social media in public secondary schools in Ghana.

In Tanzania, Mwalongo (2021) looked at what school leaders do when students misbehave while using social media in a public secondary school setting. The research was conducted in both the Dar es Salaam region and the Morogoro region through qualitative data collection methods. Headteachers and classroom teachers were interviewed for the study. The findings indicated that students used social media to organise group assignments and access resources; however, negative behavioural issues were prevalent and noticeably affected concentration, such as bullying, sending inappropriate content, and posting during class. School leaders attempted to deal with these challenges by implementing a digital behaviour code of conduct, conducting awareness sessions about appropriate and responsible use of social media, and involving parents in monitoring students' online behaviour and participation. School leaders also utilised social media to communicate with students and parents, directly reinforcing school policies and rules, and encouraging positive conduct within schools. The author suggested that proactive school leaders might promote appropriate and responsible interactions with technology while collaborating with all stakeholders to support best practices engaging students digitally. Yet the study did not sufficiently investigate how leadership practices can cultivate long-term digital responsibility and ethical conduct online. As such, this study aims to ascertain how leadership

approaches to mitigate negative behaviours and promote responsible media use in Tanzanian public secondary schools.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative research approach and a case study design to explore how social media influences students' behavioural changes in public secondary schools in Ubungo Municipality, Dar es Salaam. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather rich, detailed data on students', teachers', and parents' perceptions, while the case study design allowed an in-depth investigation of social media use within a real-life school setting. Ubungo Municipality was selected due to its high social media usage among adolescents and reported behavioural challenges linked to online activities. The study targeted 464 individuals and sampled 72 participants using purposive, snowball, and quota sampling techniques. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, which provided diverse and credible insights. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability strategies. Data collection involved obtaining official permissions and conducting interviews and FGDs in schools, while thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns related to social media's impact on behaviour. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity were strictly observed to protect participants and uphold research integrity.

Findings and Discussion

The Role of School Leadership in Mitigating Undesirable Behavioral Changes Caused by The Use of social media Among Students in Public Secondary Schools

This objective examined the function of school leadership to address and reduce movement in students' undesirable behaviours as a result of using social media in public secondary schools will be highlighted. The inquiry examined the ways school heads and other school leaders approached managing the negative impacts the students' use of social media had on discipline, academic performance, and social behaviour. Included in the data collection were interviews with heads of school and teachers, but also focus groups with students, to be able to answer questions around leadership practices, policy enforcement, and support structures that encourage responsible use of social media. The findings indicate effective leadership can impact students' behaviours and assist in ensuring students use social media as a support to, or not disrupt their educational experience. The findings have been presented below:

Counselling and Psychosocial Support

The study uncovered that psychosocial guidance and counselling are necessary in helping school leaders reverse detrimental behaviour changes resulting from the

use of social media among students in public secondary schools in Ubungo. Social media is used frequently for education and social purposes by students, but usage without monitoring is known to lead to cyberbullying, academic distraction, and the sharing of unsuitable materials. Mwalongo (2021) indicated that Tanzanian school principals resolved these issues by providing responsible use of social media awareness training as well as digital behaviour codes of conduct. These were typically supported with counselling and psychosocial support to help students regulate their online engagements in a responsible manner. Similarly, Neiroukh et al. (2024) in America and Sharma and Singh (2023) in India also highlighted that schools must address emotional and behavioural issues connected with social media use through targeted support and counselling by school officials.

Guidance and psychosocial support provide students with the skills of online self-regulation, coping with peer pressure, and social interaction online safely. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) can be applied here, as students learn by observing and emulating good digital behaviour exemplified by school leaders in counselling sessions and guidance. Through these processes, students are taught online etiquette, develop self-regulation, and acquire conflict resolution and proper communication techniques. In interviews, one Ubungo headteacher emphasised the use of counselling to avert anti-social conduct associated with the use of social media:

"We have weekly counselling sessions to guide the students on how to use social media responsibly. We advise them on the dangers of cyberbullying, keeping things confidential, and balancing school work and social media. It makes the students reflect on what they do and makes them make better decisions online." (Teacher from school D, August 2025).

This statement indicates that counselling is a preventive measure to prevent the misuse of social media and promote healthy digital use. Similarly, during a group discussion, one of the students reflected on the guidance given:

"Seldom, whenever someone from our class abuses abusing media or puts something objectionable, the school counsellor warns them. They explain to them why it is inappropriate, and we learn to use social media responsibly. I think these sessions genuinely help us conduct ourselves well online." (Student, Group Discussion, August 2025).

This means that counselling and psychosocial care provide a platform for change direction, reflection, and behavioural improvement that imposes ethical and responsible internet utilisation among students. In addition, literature indicates that school leaders involve parents in the support system whereby monitoring and

mentoring extend beyond the school gates (Asare & Boateng, 2023; Schmid & Behnke, 2023). By virtue of the co-option of counselling, psychosocial support, and parental engagement, leaders can create an integrative platform for tackling undesired behaviour as well as promoting safe use of social media. In conclusion, counselling and psychosocial support are essential strategies by which Ubungo school management challenges negative behavioural adjustments as a result of social media. These strategies adhere to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), whereby students acquire knowledge through observing directed behaviour, receiving feedback, and imitating healthy behaviours. By integrating counselling sessions, awareness campaigns, and parental involvement, the school management can develop responsible online behaviour, emotional well-being, and social health among public secondary school students.

Digital Literacy and Awareness Campaigns

The study revealed that sensitisation and digital literacy campaigns are some of the key strategies that have been employed by school managers in mitigating negative behaviour change caused by social media use among students in public secondary schools in Ubungo. Despite the fact that social media is used by learners for socialisation and learning collaboration, its excessive use can lead to cyberbullying, distraction, cheating, and exposure to obscene content (Mwalongo, 2021). To counter these, school leaders initiated digital literacy programs and awareness campaigns to educate students on social media responsibility, internet safety, and ethical digital citizenship.

Tanzanian school leaders have, in the words of Mwalongo (2021), put in place well-schemed programs that educate students on social media appropriate usage, in addition to reinforcing school policies through messaging, group discussions, and workshops. Similarly, Asare and Boateng (2023) and Sharma and Singh (2023) pointed out that awareness campaigns provide students with knowledge to help distinguish between academic and non-academic social media activities, thereby allowing them to manage their behaviour themselves and limit distractions. Awareness campaigns usually involve interactive sessions where students are taught about privacy settings, how to avoid cyberbullying, internet etiquette, and how to balance online engagement and academic study. Utilisation of digital literacy and awareness campaigns also aligns with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), 1977, which emphasises learning through observation, modelling, and reinforcement in a social context. By observing school leaders, counsellors, and peers model responsible usage of social media, students learn by imitating good practices. Awareness campaigns reinforce such practice by providing knowledge, guidance, and tips that enable students to transfer these skills into real-life digital interaction. During an interview, one headteacher in Ubungo explained the impact of digital literacy campaigns:

“We hold regular awareness campaigns to educate students on the proper use of social media. We discuss cyberbullying, privacy, and time management online. The campaigns sensitise students to the consequences of their online actions and encourage responsible online behaviour”. (Head Teacher, August 2025).

The statement suggests that preemptive strategies, such as awareness initiatives, could be helpful in educating students about accountability with social media. Educating students around cyberbullying, privacy, and time management can potentially help reduce some of the dangers of using social media, cultivate online safety, and provide students with support to improve their balance of online activity and academia. During a group discussion, one student shared their experience:

“Through the digital awareness sessions, we now understand how to enable privacy features, avoid unsuitable content, and use social media for educational purposes. We also understand how to guide peers who might be using the platform negatively”. (Student, Group Discussion, August 2025).

These claims demonstrate that digital literacy campaigns provide students with practical skills and foster a culture of responsible use of social media. They also encourage peer support as students are likely to guide one another in the exercise of digital safety practices learned from the campaigns. Furthermore, (Neiroukh et al., 2024; Schmid & Behnke, 2023; Sharma & Singh, 2023) accentuate that school leadership must integrate awareness campaigns as part of a multifaceted strategy that includes parental engagement and continuous monitoring to ensure long-term change in behaviour. Awareness campaigns not only reduce negative conduct but also enhance students' confidence, online safety, and readiness to engage responsibly in digital learning environments. Finally, digital literacy and sensitisation programs are a proactive measure by Ubungo school administrators in precluding undesired behaviour change that is linked to social media use. As guided by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), through these programs, students can learn good behaviour through observation, modelling, and reinforcement, so that they exhibit ethical, responsible, and productive digital habits and balance online activity with learning.

Teachers' Involvement and Monitoring

The study affirmed that the presence and observation of teachers play an important role in the process of how school leadership dampens undesirable behaviours associated with the use of social media among secondary school students in Ubungo. Despite social media being a place of academic engagement and socialisation, unregulated usage can lead to cyberbullying, distraction, abuse of content, and classroom attention loss (Mwalongo, 2021). In turn, school administrators

actively engage teachers to monitor pupils' online activities, guide correct usage, and enforce policies within the school. Mwalongo (2021) elaborated that Tanzanian school administrators train teachers to monitor digital interactions, establish discussions regarding using social media responsibly, and provide ongoing feedback to pupils. Similarly, Asare and Boateng (2023), Sharma and Singh (2023), and Schmid and Behnke (2023) convey the reality that teachers' involvement increases control over behaviour through management of students' conformity to digital codes of conduct, proper participation in academic communities, and online etiquette. Teachers act as buffers by modelling correct use, keeping an eye on students' conduct, and sending cases for handling more intensively. The teacher involvement process lies well within Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), 1977, which suggests that learning takes place by observing, copying, and reinforcement. With teacher supervision and direction, students observe good behaviour on the internet, learn about punishment for abuse, and imitate responsible behaviours. Teachers also reinforce with praise of good behaviour and reprimand of ill action, and hence create a structured environment for proper moral use of the web. In interviews, one Ubungu headteacher explained why the teachers must be engaged:

"We ensure teachers are actively monitoring social media groups and guiding students on how to use them properly. Teachers remind students of school rules, discipline poor behaviour, and help students balance study work with social media." (Head Teacher, August 2025).

The statement implies that active teacher supervision of social media groups can enhance students' responsible use of social media. By monitoring interactions, enforcing school rules, and guiding students on balancing academic work with online activities, teachers help prevent misuse, reduce distractions, and promote a healthy digital environment that supports learning and discipline. Similarly, in a group interview, one student mentioned teacher monitoring:

Sometimes our teachers become a part of our social media class groups. They tell us how to use the app for studies and warn us about posting inappropriate material. Their presence makes me more responsible for what we post and how we act online. (Student, Group Discussion, August 2025).

The above answers indicate that teacher interaction improves students' awareness about ethical online behaviour, imposes compliance with digital regulations, and provides prompt corrective guidance. Besides, effective monitoring by educators encourages collaboration between school administration, students, and

parents. By observing online behaviour, educators identify students who need to be counselled or further supported to facilitate timely and effective interventions. This is supplemented by digital literacy programs and sensitisation campaigns to offer an integrated framework of social media management. In short, teacher intervention and monitoring are primary steps for school administrators in Ubungo to avoid unwanted alteration of undesirable conduct brought about by social media usage. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), responsible behaviour online is acquired by learners as a result of observation, modelling, and reinforcement. Proactive involvement on the part of teachers stimulates ethical use of social media, minimises distraction and abuse, and optimises development of digital citizenship and responsible online engagement among secondary school students.

Parental Engagement

The study found parent engagement to be a significant strategy by school management to check against undesired behaviour associated with social media among public secondary students in Ubungo. If left unchecked, use of social media may lead to cyberbullying, distraction, sharing of offensive content, and cheating (Mwalongo, 2021). Consequently, parents are engaged by school managers to keep track of their children's online activity, keep track of ethical online behaviour, and uphold school regulations in the household. Mwalongo (2021) reported that Tanzanian secondary school leaders share information about the risks and benefits of social media with parents. They encourage parents to keep their children under their watchful eyes, attend digital sensitivity training, and collaborate with teachers and school administrators to ensure responsible usage. Similarly, Asare and Boateng (2023), Sharma and Singh (2023), and Schmid and Behnke (2023) found that parental involvement adds the strength of school policy by providing a good home environment where students are reminded and moral online practices are promoted. Parental engagement accords with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), 1977, which emphasises learning through observation, mimicry, and social reinforcement. Since parents actively guide the learning of social media use, learners observe and replicate good practices, learn about abuse implications, and develop digital etiquette. Parental reinforcement of positive conduct complements teacher teaching and school administration intervention in ensuring an effective learning process that cuts across the institution. In interviews, one of Ubungo's headteachers emphasised the importance of working with parents:

"We engage parents by making them aware of the children's use of social media and the risks involved. We invite them to monitor, discuss good online behaviour at home, and support our online policies. This partnership reduces misuse and promotes responsible usage". (Head Teacher, August 2025).

This suggests that students can learn to use social media responsibly when parents are monitoring them and providing advice. When a partnership is established between the school and parents, it is assumed that students will be more informed about safe use of the Internet, aware of the risks of misuse and find a healthy balance between the use of social media and their academic responsibilities. Similarly, in a focus group discussion, one student noted:

“Sometimes my parents go through our social media groups and talk to me about what we can or cannot able to share or talk about. If they collaborate with our teachers, we are even more careful using the platform”. (Student, Group Discussion, August 2025).

These claims demonstrate that parental involvement helps students develop self-regulation, responsibility, and knowledge with regard to internet behaviour. It ensures that changes implemented by school administration are reinforced at home, creating a uniform system of responsibility. In conclusion, parental engagement is an important school leadership initiative to prevent undesirable behavioural changes that accompany the use of social media. Underpinned by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), appropriate digital conduct is acquired by learners through observation, reinforcement, and imitation, supported by both home and school environments. When executed well, parental engagement improves ethical online conduct, reduces risky behaviour, and encourages appropriate, balanced use of social media among secondary school learners.

Positive Behaviour Reinforcement

The study identified that reinforcement of good behaviour is an essential method applied by school managers to stem undesirable behaviour in the use of social media by students in public secondary schools in Ubungo. Despite the potential of social media for cooperation and social interaction towards learning, misuse can lead to cyberbullying, distraction, and academic misconduct (Mwalongo, 2021). School managers respond by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour online, encouraging students to model good and positive use of the platform.

Mwalongo (2021) noted that headteachers implement strategies such as praising students who utilise social media in a positive manner to facilitate school work, granting verbal praise, and publicly promoting good online conduct. This is consistent with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), 1977, that learning occurs as a result of observation, imitation, and reinforcement. By recognising and rewarding good social media use, school administrators set examples of good conduct that can be observed and emulated by the students. In interviews, one headteacher explained:

“We always praise students who use social media responsibly for their learning, for instance, when they use it to share study resources or to help fellow students. This inspires others to do so and creates a culture of responsible usage of social media”. (Head Teacher, August 2025).

This implies that praising responsible behaviour inspires other students to follow the same good behaviour, creating a culture of ethical use of social media. As observed by Neiroukh et al. (2024), support for good online behaviour encourages replication of appropriate digital behaviour by students. Similarly, during a group discussion, a student stated:

“When the teacher acknowledges students who share useful notes or help other students in social media groups, we are encouraged to do the same. We are noticed and motivated to use social media properly.” (Student, Group Discussion, August 2025).

Students' intention and motivation towards practising good online behaviour increase when positive behaviours are reinforced and acknowledged. In addition, Sharma and Singh (2023) argue that acknowledgement of students for good digital behaviour strengthens intrinsic motivation and leads to reinforcement of better behaviour. Positive reinforcement further affects peers because students observe and learn from other pupils who set examples for good use of social media. Such modelling enhances digital etiquette, academic engagement, and social responsibility. Public reinforcement of good behaviour by schools creates peer role models, encouraging collective adherence to ethical online conduct. In summary, reinforcement of good behaviour is a vital strategy for Ubungo school administration to address undesirable behaviour related to social media usage. Grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), students learn positive digital practices through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Identification and rewarding of moral behaviour initiates peer modelling, intrinsic motivation, and school norms preservation, ensuring good and productive social media use by secondary school students.

Capacity Building for Teachers and Staff

The study concluded that capacity building among staff and teachers is a significant strategy employed by school leaders in addressing unwanted behaviour arising from the use of social media among public secondary schools in Ubungo. Teachers and staff play a significant role in monitoring online communication, guiding proper online behaviour, and enforcing school rules. Lack of education and training on online platforms may not enable teachers to monitor, correct, or guide learners on the appropriate use of social media (Mwalongo, 2021). Capacity building is equipping

teachers with the skills, approaches, and digital literacy to actively regulate learners' online practices.

Mwalongo (2021) noted that headteachers conduct training workshops and sessions to raise teachers' social media, online safety, and behaviour management knowledge. Similarly, Asare and Boateng (2023) noted that capacity development improves the ability of teachers to supervise social media groups, integrate digital behaviour policies, and collaborate with parents to promote responsible digital behaviour. By upgrading teachers' knowledge and capability, school leaders create a conducive climate for learners to learn digital responsibility. In interviews, one respondent stressed:

"We train our teachers frequently on handling social media groups, identifying abuse, and directing students on safe online usage. Consequently, when teachers are trained, they can better assist students and implement school regulations effectively, ensuring a safer digital environment." (Head Teacher, August 2025).

This shows that training teachers increases their capacity to monitor, direct, and correct students' online usage, leading to responsible social media use. Schmid and Behnke (2023) uphold capacity building to ensure that teachers are well-suited to address behavioural problems related to the application of social media, improving compliance of students with digital behaviour policies. Similarly, in a group discussion, a teacher noted:

"After learning about social media management and digital safety training, we feel more confident in guiding the students. Consequently, we can now effectively handle improper posting, advise on privacy concerns, and encourage prudent usage, which ultimately promotes a safer online environment." (Teacher, Group Discussion, August 2025).

It suggests that capacity building increases confidence and competency among teachers to apply ethical online behaviour among students. Sharma and Singh (2023) affirm that the professional growth of teachers enhances digital surveillance skills, leading to better supervision of students and control over their behaviour. Furthermore, capacity building aligns with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), 1977, as trained teachers are digital role models of ethical behaviour. Students acquire knowledge through observations of teachers' teaching, mimicking their practices, and conforming to ethical online practices. Furthermore, capacity development for teachers and staff is an elementary strategy for school administration in Ubungo to reverse undesirable behavioural changes caused by the use of social media. Provision of training, workshops, and professional development enhances teachers' ability to monitor, guide, and set examples of responsible online behaviour.

Supported by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), the strategy ensures that students adopt positive digital practices, support school policies, and engage in responsible, productive use of social media.

Policy Development and Enforcement

The study established that policy development and execution are the main approaches employed by school administration in an attempt to address undesirable behaviour owing to the use of social media by students in public secondary schools in Ubungu. While social media provides avenues for academic collaboration and personal communication, its uncontrolled use can result in cyberbullying, school distraction, posting of inappropriate content, and reduced participation in class (Mwalongo, 2021). To address these issues, school officials develop formal digital behaviour policies and enact regulations that guide moral, responsible, and productive use of social media by students.

Mwalongo (2021) reported that Tanzanian school officials implement digital behaviour codes of conduct, outlining appropriate and inappropriate behaviour on social media, along with punishments for misuse. Similarly, Sharma and Singh (2023) and Asare and Boateng (2023) emphasised that open policies provide a framework of rules that the teachers, students, and parents need to follow so that there is uniformity in promoting responsible behaviour when on the internet. Policies often include guidelines on privacy, good communication, educational usage, cyberbullying prevention, and social manners so that there is clarity and activity. During interviews, a headteacher in Ubungu stated:

"We have developed a policy on digital behaviour that defines how students are to use social media. The policy has rules governing respectful communication, privacy, and academic teamwork. We enforce these rules strictly to promote the right use of the platform" (Head Teacher, August 2025).

This implies that institutional policies provide students with clear guidelines, and it is easier for them to understand desired actions and comply with school rules. Neiroukh et al. (2024) highlight that clearly defined digital policies bring uniformity and accountability, hence inhibiting unwanted online behaviour among students. Similarly, in a group discussion, a student explained as follows:

"We know what is allowed and what is not allowed on social media because our school has rules. Teachers remind us often, and if someone breaks them, there are repercussions. That motivates us to use social media responsibly." (Student, Group Discussion, August 2025).

This means that policy enforcement makes students more sensitive to consequences, encouraging self-governance and ethical online conduct respect. Schmid and Behnke (2023) argue that frequent enforcement of policy for online behaviour enhances responsible use and reduces episodes of cyberbullying and distractions. Policy implementation and policy-making also follow Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), 1977, since learners learn from the consequences of their actions and emulate behaviour after following rules and comments by educators and the school authorities. Bandura (1977) argues that observing rules, modelled behaviour, and reward lead to internalising positive customs and obedience to social norms. All in all, policy development and implementation are a critical school leadership approach in Ubungo to undo undesirable alterations in conduct linked with the application of social media. Good rules, proper communication of expectations, and enforcing consequences ensure safe digital conduct. As postulated by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), observation and reinforcement will lead to learning among students, including ethical conduct in the online world, self-regulation, and adherence to school norms.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that school leadership in Ubungo Municipality plays a pivotal role in mitigating undesirable behavioural changes among secondary school students caused by social media use. While social media offers opportunities for learning and collaboration, its misuse can lead to cyberbullying, absenteeism, reduced academic focus, and exposure to harmful content. Effective leadership addresses these challenges through counselling, awareness programs, teacher involvement, parental engagement, policy enforcement, and capacity-building initiatives, guided by Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes modelling positive behaviour. By promoting ethical and responsible digital habits, school leaders create supportive environments that safeguard students' social, emotional, and academic development. The study recommends enhancing counselling services, implementing digital literacy programs, strengthening teacher and parental involvement, using positive reinforcement, building staff capacity, enforcing clear digital behaviour policies, and integrating digital citizenship into school curricula to ensure responsible and safe social media use among students.

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