

**EVALUATION OF WHATSAPP GROUPS AS A PLATFORM FOR
SHARING INFORMATION TOWARDS SAFETY OF RESIDENTS**

IN KIKUYU SUB COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented in any other institution for consideration of any certification. It has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged and any information borrowed from other sources has been specifically accredited and references cited in accordance with the anti-plagiarism regulations.

Signature..... : Date 04/05/2018

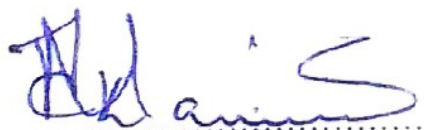
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Supervisor's Declaration:

This research project has been submitted for appraisal with my approval as the University's supervisor.

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ABSTRACT

Innovation and technology has greatly impacted on the way everything is being done in today's world from farming to organizations' management. Development in communication technology have enabled users to access information faster and create interaction groups where they can send each other unlimited text messages, images, video and audio media messages without even verifying its accuracy. As people embrace the use of these technologies to share information, it is worth noting that any misleading information towards safety of people in any society can lead to wastage of resources in terms of personnel, time and equipment. Therefore, there is need to ensure its authenticity and relevance to the recipients given the high rate of trending fake news throughout the world today. WhatsApp has been greatly embraced as a tool for dealing with security matters. The study was thus guided by the fact that communities' formation of security WhatsApp watch groups to share information towards their security had become ubiquitous. This was despite the fact that though the use has a great potential in security management, there are dozens of false alerts and misinformation habitually shared through these groups. With national security being a very sensitive issue towards determination of any region's development, there is need to have a researched vis-à-vis anecdotal evidence on the medium's application for security management. This study therefore sought to evaluate existing community WhatsApp's groups in Kikuyu Sub County, Kiambu County as their platform for sharing security information. A case study was carried out in Kinoo and Muthiga Mlika Usalama WhatsApp groups. Social presence theory guided this study based on a descriptive case study design. Research tools used were questionnaires and focused interviews. Using purposive sampling, a total of 131 participants who are members of the said community WhatsApp groups made of 121 civilians and 10 area security managers participated in the study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics by use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software. Qualitative data was analyzed using inferential statistics. Data was presented in form of pie-charts, graphs and frequency distribution tables. The study revealed that respondents rated WhatsApp as a good source of information noting that it can be adopted as a medium for sharing security information. However, challenges like fear of victimization by criminals, lack of a good policy framework in operationalization of the platform towards safety of residents and infrastructural hurdles like lack requisite resources for being socially present were noted. The study identified WhatsApp application as a great source of information towards security management in any area. The researcher recommends quick operationalization of a properly laid down policy framework coupled with ardent sensitization of social media users on the guidelines and existing laws in the usage of these platforms as information sharing tools in the community towards enhanced safety of the people and their resources.