

Comparing Attractive and Unattractive Facebook Posts in Selected Companies/ Institutions in Mogadishu City, Somalia.

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ABSTRACT: This paper aimed at comparing attractive and unattractive Facebook posts among Mogadishu Facebook users. The political climate in Mogadishu motivated us to adopt an online computer-based monitoring of various posts posted by each of the three institutions that participated. In-depth interviews were administered to few accessible participants at Jamhuriya University who were knowledgeable about these companies' Facebook engagements. Desk review was adopted in order to obtain scholarly materials on social media posts and particularly Facebook. Key findings in this study indicate that video posts receive more comments and likes than other posts like photos for reasons valued by the respective customers. Facebook fans, mostly young people such as students and youth tend to enjoy action related posts than photos. Findings further reveal that Facebook interaction is at the peak during midyear for three months of June, July and August. This is attributed to the fact that this is usually summer time, the time when most Somalis in the diaspora come home for vacation perhaps largely attracted to various events taking place in the country. Findings also indicate that social media addicts in Mogadishu start commenting on Facebook as early as 4am in the morning, some of these are Facebook fans who find it hard to sleep again after 4am prayers. The study concludes that the use of social media especially Facebook is subtly gaining prominence and remains the most viable avenue for Somalis to interact freely; exchange social, political and economic ideas; and get updates on what is happening around the world and within in their societies.

Keywords:—Attractive, unattractive, Facebook, posts, Companies, Institutions, Mogadishu, Somalia.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on the study of attractive and unattractive Facebook posts among Facebook users in Mogadishu. Mogadishu is the capital city of the Federal Republic of Somalia. While it has been one of the world's most overburdened cities by armed conflict for more than two decades, it is a strategic business centre, attracting small and big businesses characterized by small and big entrepreneurs. It is also a destination for tourists due to its strategic importance to the Far East and interconnectedness advantage to the inland Africa. The interaction of people and exchange of goods and services is simplified by social media particularly Facebook. Mogadishu city hosts various public and private institutions as well as local and international agencies. It is a place full of fun but sometimes get disturbed by human induced-disasters. People of all walks of life that operate in Mogadishu are largely networked by Social media and particularly Facebook. Since business and social interaction are prioritized in this part of the world, most business owners and various social categories of people see Facebook as a great opportunity to promote their business, monitor customers/ clients, spread social awareness, recreational activities and other important services. Being a sensitive urban centre that encounters several uncertainties, we have continuously observed that some Facebook posts attract huge numbers of viewers while other posts are given less or no attention in Mogadishu area. Our curiosity to find out why some Facebook posts are painted with negativity over other posts is the reason why this study was conducted.

We have consulted some of the secondary sources to explore the contextual use of Facebook globally, regionally and nationally to explore the socio-economic engagement with users and various audiences. According to Mangal (2013), over 2 billion internet users log in more than 142,460,000,000 hours per month. With the current unprecedented popularity of Facebook among businesses and social interactions, the number of internet logins is likely to have tripled. Social media networks like twitter, Myspace, Instagram and Facebook are part of this interconnectedness.

Companies around the world find advertising advantage in Facebook mode of advertising with a wide range of users attracted to its lowest cost expenditure that boost business and non-business marketing (Lipiainen et., 2013 cited in Pasma, 2017). Statistics compiled in August 2013, unveil that more than one billion users identified with Facebook ... it included 15 billion business that were using social media platform to create brand pages (Koetsier, 2013 cited in Ng and Wang, 2013). The digitalization of the world continuously exposes the commercialization of Facebook as this eases exchange of goods and services. According to Ng and Wang, (2013), Facebook is the United States' top social media advertising company A related study by TBG Digital (2012) cited in Ng and Wang, (2013) also indicates that "many countries around the world are choosing Facebook as a link to promote their business campaign or brand, to communicate with stakeholders, attract their potential customers ... with major impacts on social commerce due to its popularity". World news and business initiatives are made attractively accessible at the cheapest internet costs. Latest scholarly work describes Facebook as a "touchstone for many, solidifying its place in the infrastructure of daily routines ... many people turn to it the first thing in the morning, and then again at lunch time and sometimes when they have downtime throughout the day" (Kantar, 2018). Its capacity to compress geographical space and convenience of accessibility in smart phones makes business really fun, and can meet the customer needs every time. The works of Aristotle are in fact realistic when they reveal how Facebook "contributes to audience engagement, facilitating the creation of communities for social and commercial ends" through publishing of games, broadcasters and companies, performers and artists in unprecedented numbers (Aristotle, 1991).

The Balancing Act (2014) recognizes Sub-Saharan African overwhelming growth of social media platform where by countries like Angola's 50% of its 1 million internet users were using Facebook in 2012 to meet or access promotional offers. The mainstream media coverage such as newspapers, radio and TVs are no longer too expensive for the poor people on the continent who utilize Facebook to easily access latest news and events in host African countries. Mayer-Schonberger and Cukier, (2013), highlights that 10 million new photographs are uploaded on Facebook every hour; including female and male teenagers, men and women as a means of attracting socio-political and economic engagements. There is no doubt Facebook has become part of life although the reverse is true for China who banned Facebook blaming it for spreading "malicious or ill-informed gossip" (Miller, 2010). Banning Facebook in China however, may not mean that Chinese in Diaspora do not use Facebook for various purposes. Profit making with Chinese businesses might require them to utilize any cheaper means of directly interacting with potential customers. Young people, the business world, politicians and the religious, insurgents and terrorist groups cannot live without it. Besides, relationships and friendships have largely been made on Facebook.

On the other hand, Facebook posts and those posted on various other social media such as twitter, Instagram and YouTube are viewed with serious controversies that are worth mentioning in this research paper. For example, a research conducted by Think Digital First, (2017) underline that most users who spend more than two hours networking on Facebook, twitter and Instagram suffer poor mental health. Not only that, Africa's worst dictators and their political opponents more often try to employ social media especially Facebook, twitter and Whatsapp in order to meet their political needs as in the case of Bennin and Burkina Faso (Iwata, 2015). The aggressive nature of some or many users influence emotional views that come with mixed reactions on various Facebook posts as well.

Mogadishu city of Somalia has active participants in the use of Facebook to run most businesses and deliver services to target clients. It has a place in the rest of the world utilizing social media in the current "momentum or broad international customer adoption where Facebook hosts a range of social applications ... as a market leader in social media since April 2008" (Treadaway and Smith, 2010 cited in Di, 2014). The growing phenomenon of Facebook demonstrates advantages and drawbacks. There is a shared belief among most scholars on how Facebook is being used as a vehicle to promoting business performances as well as social

cultural interconnectedness. Facebook has also been labelled as number one promoter of indecent traditions and images. The Muslim inhabitants of Mogadishu might perceive the strange Western cultures that tolerate half-clothed women images dominating social media, particularly Facebook. A lot of people in Mogadishu might view such posts as dehumanizing the Muslim women. While there could be other reasons why Facebook posts receive mixed reactions in which case some are ignored by the target populace, incidences of image presentation as well as the possible inappropriateness of the shared content may not be excluded from the causes. There could also be some truth related to the security risks where Facebook audience fear of being identified by some untrusted ideological practitioners.

Somalia, being country where people highly regard clans with high esteem, Mogadishu is dominated by competing clans, collaboration of citizens on a number of issues is often undermined. Freedoms of expression may not be respected for most Facebook users. Therefore, getting people attracted to certain Facebook posts could imply safeguarding one's clan's own interests that side-lines the other (Gass et al., (2012) cited in LandInfo, 2016). While businesses are booming and institutions built exceedingly in Mogadishu, there are government restrictions on freedom of informed journalism through media law that could victimize over most of the content they share (BBC, 2016; All Africa, 2016; NUSOJ, 2015; UN Human Rights Council, 2015 cited in LandInfo, 2016). Restricting the scope of journalism in a clan-based Federal government could raise questions over free reactions to various Facebook posts in the context of Somalia.

Uses and Gratification Theory

This study is underpinned by Use and Gratification Theory (Katz and Blumler, 1974 cited in Ezumah, 2013). Newer technologies are believed to simplify the application of such a theory whose characteristics include; interactivity, demassification, and asynchronicity (Ruggiero 2000 cited in Ezumah). He defines "Interactivity ... as the users' ability to switch as well as regulate contents and other forms of exchanges during a mutual activity with others; ... demassification as "the ability of the media user to select from a wide menu" and asynchronicity as the users' ability to access media messages at any time as opposed to one particular time" (Ruggiero, 2000 cited in Ezumah, 2013).

While the technical characteristics of Uses and Gratification Theory unveil their technological advantages, it does not address the shortfalls associated with a popular social media such as Facebook. For example it does not highlight the cultural-religious sensitivities associated with the content accessed, regulated and shared/posted on such media. This theory does not regulate the emotional experiences of the social media/Facebook users. Before exposing the flexibility of Uses and Gratification Theory, Katz and Blumer should have accompanied it with contextual applications to make it fit Clan-based competing societies that are also threatened by geopolitics and multicultural identities. For any content posted on Facebook to receive positive or attention, demassification requires transparent, accountable and morally acceptable presentation in Mogadishu. Much as scholarly evidence unveil that most social media users depend on "Facebook more for Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) by chatting/messaging and blogging ..." (Hwang et al., 2012); there is reliable truth that when the same Facebook users feel insecure, they may resort to supplementary communication tools such as "face-to-face or telephone activity" (Young, 2011 cited in Egan, 2013). With the multicultural conflicts that could be visible in the interaction between Facebook Islamic Clan-based users plus the assumed terror activities that make daily headlines as well as the often diaspora imported or western cultures, some Facebook posts may be denied attention once they are pointed to misrepresent the local values and social norms. Therefore, we recommend that the content individuals and companies'/institutions' Facebook posts could necessitate that users consider the sensitivities involved in interconnecting with contextual diversities.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One recent study done by Kantar Media (2018) illustrates that some Facebook users find it "clustered with time wasting posts and superficial content that is of little interest ..." Similarly, there are concerns by most users in Mogadishu whose Facebook posts are given less or no attention. It is most likely that such posts do not always meet their intended purpose. A lot of people are continuously losing faith in some Facebook content due to their power to harm individuals' privacy or their public space. While it is true that some companies and

people make fortune from interacting with their customers and target markets cheaply, others are not comfortable with negative feedbacks which are publicly shared. The presence of Facebook as social media in Mogadishu to market or advertise or spread awareness of goods and services is not enough. Rather, the content posted on it should be appealing to the needs of customers. Other people's content may not be attractive to users or customers for individual safety due to the perceived political or socio-economic sensitivity. The necessity of increased awareness and best practice posts in this country are indisputable and therefore, failure to recognize this association means that improved or attractive use will continue to be ignored. This could irreversibly harm businesses, institutions and individuals.

The point of departure in this study was to examine the nature of content posted on Facebook as well as its effects on various categories of users/beneficiaries. This study also intended to address the transparency needs of Facebook content that could be suitable in winning the attention of users in city (Mogadishu) characterized by sensitive and complex emergencies.

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research design and study area

This was a qualitative case study research design. It was conducted in three prominent institutions' Facebook pages, namely: Jamhuriya University of Science and Technology, Goobjoog News Portal and GoolFM Radio Broadcast to find out why some Facebook posts are more liked than others. These institutions/companies were selected because they have a long history of posting content in various social media but mostly Facebook

It took two months of observing Facebook posts; particularly the videos, photos as well as the comments and views by Facebook fans. Data was collected using computer based monitoring of posts and in-depth interviews between April and May, 2019. In-depth interviews were administered to the few accessible fans but largely engaged in online Facebook-fans interactions. We have also learnt from scholarly giants that "numerous studies of online social networking have been carried out with many using Facebook as a ready source of data" (Egan, 2013).

Participant Observation

Much of our data was based on online observation of the type of posts that were given high or low attention or views and comments. We also focused on post engagement by time, type and month and were able to discover significant variation that we entered into excel for interpretation and analysis. Our participant observations were linked to our purposive follow up of these companies and or institutions which have been operating in Mogadishu for the last five years. We observed that Jamhuriya University Facebook page had around 181,375 fans, Goobjoog had 285,898 fans and Goolfm had 296,592 fans as of 21-May-2019. Although Facebook fans were growing in numbers every day, the posts did not increase in the two months we engaged the three companies' Facebook pages.

In-depth Interview

Interviewing is a highly valued method of data collection due to its two features: "it flows naturally and is rich in detail" (Dornyei, 2007 cited in Alshenqeeti, 2014). The insecurity situation did not allow us interact freely with various companies and most of their Facebook fans. We engaged very few participants through interviews at anonymous places. For example, we got little chance to interview some fans for Jamhuriya University Facebook page.

We relied mostly on online observation due to the fear of political insecurity existing in Mogadishu. As we navigated the Facebook pages of the three companies/ institutions, we noticed that certain comments, likes and posts fitted in the realm of interactivity. It would be realistic to categorize them as virtual in-depth interviews. Our capturing of Facebook first-hand data has also been backed by published evidence in which researchers recommended that "... use emails and messengers to accomplish the same goals" (Adhabi and Anozie, 2017). In our case, however, the data and information we were looking for was readily available on the Facebook pages of our study areas. We had anticipated that these two methods could enable us obtain reliable.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Rate and Type of Posts by the Three Study Areas

There is a correlation between previous studies and the gathered primary data. Huge presence of on Facebook was real in the studied areas. To engage with immediate customers/ clients, these institutions/ companies published posts frequently on their official pages. For instance, Jamhuriya University page publishes 344 posts in each year – close to an average of one post per day.

The other two company pages publish several posts a day. Goobjoog news page registered 6,496 posts in a year – close to an average of 18 posts a day. Lastly, Goolfm published 9197 posts in a calendar year – more than an average of 25 posts per day. This makes Goolfm the page with the most posts among the three Facebook pages we researched. In all the three companies, we observed all kinds of contents in the pages such as; photos, videos, links, and events among others in indifferent numbers during our recent data collection. The entertainment demonstrated on Facebook on daily basis motivates a largely interactive environment that is done through clicking likes, making comments and sharing contents openly with all the virtual users. Although some of the content may not be appreciated by a larger audience, it is very hard to interpret the reaction of the cybernetic community who hardly demonstrate their emotional state on Facebook or Social media.

When they were asked why they like or dislike certain Facebook posts, they said some posts are so entertaining than others and that videos reflect the real life. Some fans of Joobjoog and Coolfm radio broadcast who at the same time are students of Jamhuriya University told us that their posts are published anytime in the morning, noon, afternoon and in the night. Other Jamhuriya Facebook fans agreed that their posts are published in afternoons and evenings. These fans were asked their opinion on why various Facebook posts of the three selected companies stay static with almost same numbers of fans and they said ...

You see, when these posts are published on Facebook pages, we view or comment on them usually in the first three days when they are still fresh. After this time they become common to everyone. We can only check them once in a while even if we may not make any comments or show our views.

Jamhuriya University Facebook Page

This is one of the biggest institutions of higher learning existing in Mogadishu that is largely visible on Facebook. This institution was selected because one of the researchers had spent over five years navigating online. Like any of the two other studied companies, we focused on Facebook post engagement by; type, time and month. Figure 1 illustrates post engagement by type at Jamhuriya University Facebook page.

Post Engagement by Type

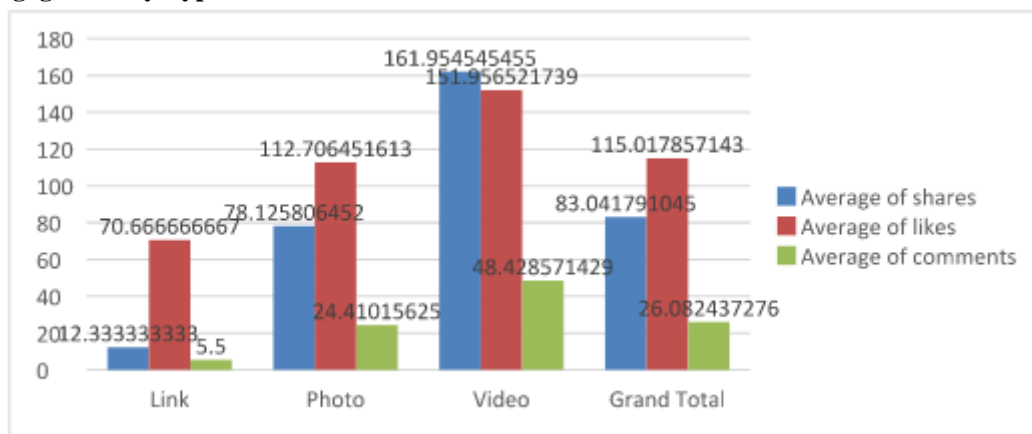


Figure 1: Engagement by Type

It was discovered that Jamhuriya Facebook fans shared and liked more videos at an average rate of 162 and 152 times respectively. This was followed by an average likes of photos at 113 times and very few comments. Videos could be highly shared and liked due to their entertainment power. Most Facebook fans, mostly young people such as students and youths tend to enjoy action posts than un-action ones. Photos too are largely attractive to the eyes and depending on what they represent or their obvious or various meanings to different

people or age groups. Videos receive more comments than photos and likes for reasons valued by the respective customers.

Post Engagement by Time

Study findings indicate that the Facebook fans of Jamhuriya University post the largest video and photo content at 10PM than any other time. This is a time when most students and other fans are free or have returned from busy work and are relaxing as they interact with latest events on social various social medias particularly Facebook. It was further found out that majority of the fans are likely to be sleeping late due to Facebook attractions. In addition, photo sharing and posting takes the second position with the highest engagement at 2PM and majority fans are relaxing after lunch time. Liking the links is lower at most of the time except at 10PM when most of the fans are probably socializing in the night with each other on Facebook.

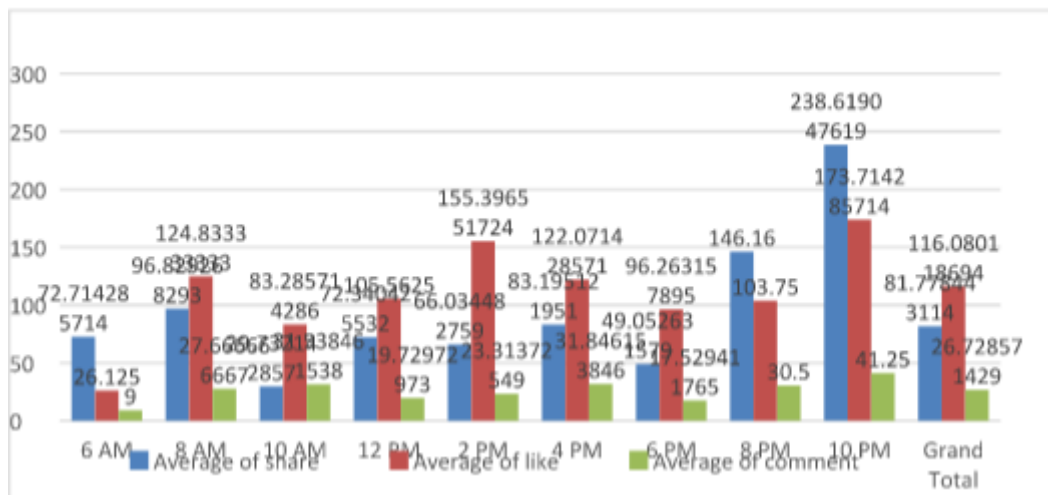


Figure 2: Engagement by Time.

Post Engagement by Month

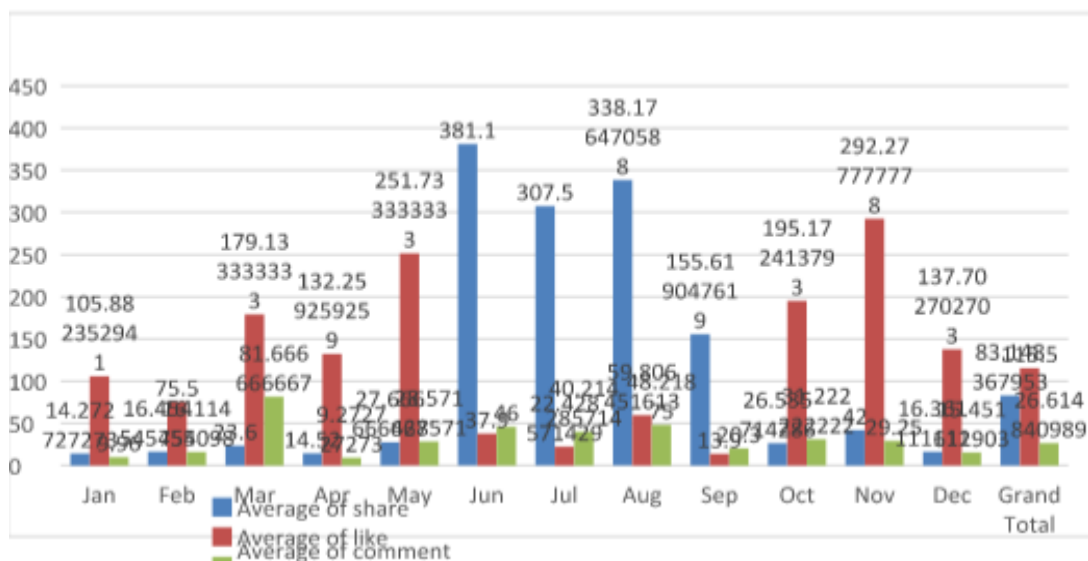


Figure 3: Engagement by Month

Figure 3 illustrates that Jamhuriya University’s largest number of video posts and fans show up in the months of June, July and August at 381, 308 and 338 times respectively. Huge numbers of videos could be shared in Mogadishu during these months because this is usually summer time. Summer time attracts Somali in diaspora coming home for vacation who might be largely attracted to the university social media events and activities. There could be a huge mix of target customers interacting freely on Facebook since they do not require physical

movements of fans to interact with each other even in critical time of existing insecurity in that city. More photos are posted (292) in November, May, October and March. In all the months, very few comments are made on the links due to reasons that were not clear to the researchers. Facebook fans all over Mogadishu and around the world invest more time in watching posted videos and pictures than commenting on them.

Goolfm Radio Broadcasts

Goolfm is a radio situated in Mogadishu that is devoted entirely to discussion and broadcasting of sports events, primarily football. Sports activities tend to draw more fans to the host company’s Facebook page as wider audiences are attracted to sports.

Post Engagement by Type

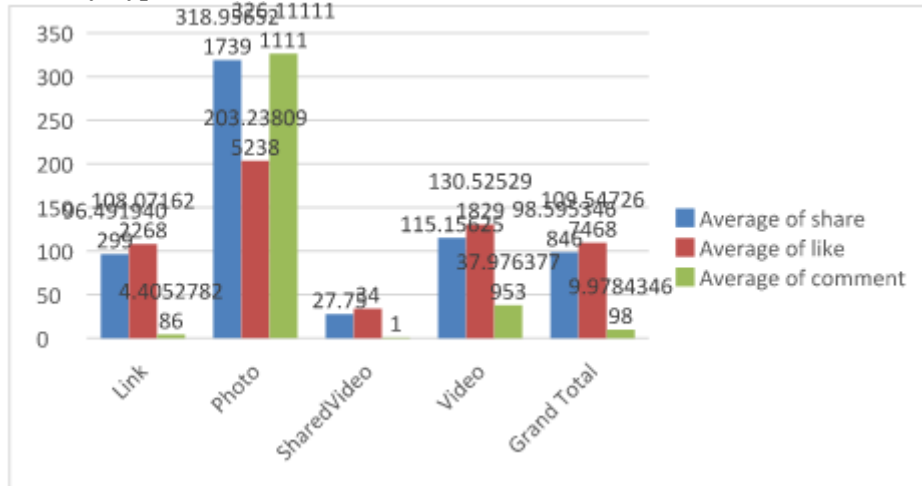


Figure 4: Engagement by Type

Radio broadcasts usually have various fans that are following them on the shared news. Although they present live sports and other news physically in the radio station, they post less of the videos than photos. Photos are given more attention than the links and videos they share. For instance, 319 photos were found to be shared in a single day. These photos were liked by 203 fans with the highest number of comments marked 326 in average number as illustrated in figure 4.

Post Engagement by Time

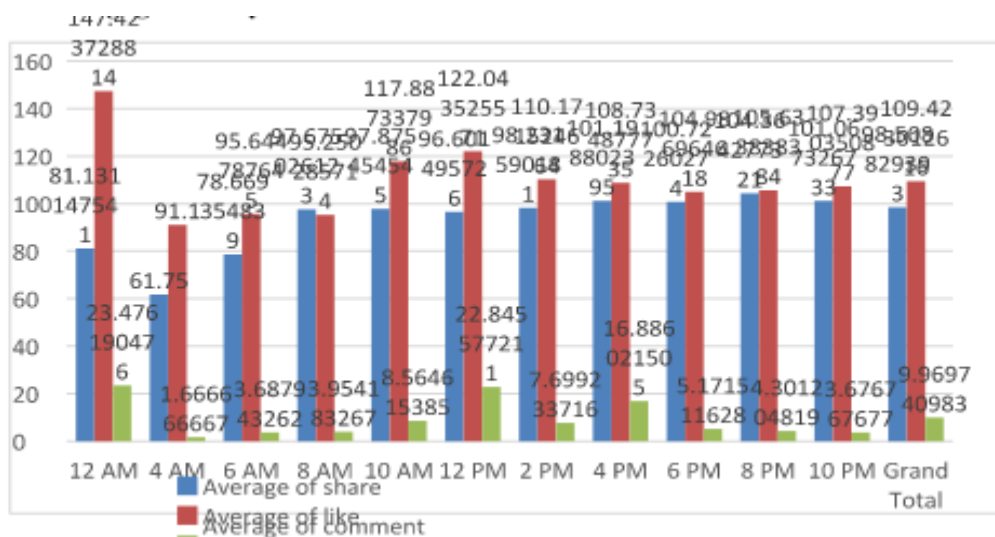


Figure 5: engagement by time

Goolfm Radio Broadcasts posted on its Facebook page was found to be one of the ways of attracting customers. Just listening to the news on radio was found to be less attractive than visual content. Figure 5 illustrates the highest average Facebook content likes appearing at 12AM followed by 12PM and 2-4PM. The rest of the day, this radio station registers likes above average. Its average content shares are also increasingly attractive to the fans from 4AM to 10PM. Such shares were motivated by the fact that when Muslims wake up at 4AM for early Morning Prayer, it is hard for most of them to sleep again except to spend the rest of their early morning time on social media especially Facebook. According to the daily interactions with Jamhuriya Facebook fans, it was observed that young people were always face booking most of the time. This could be rising the likelihood that more Facebook fans of Goolfm never miss viewing, liking and sharing their preferred posted content broadcasted on the Facebook page any time except when they are asleep.

Post Engagement by Month

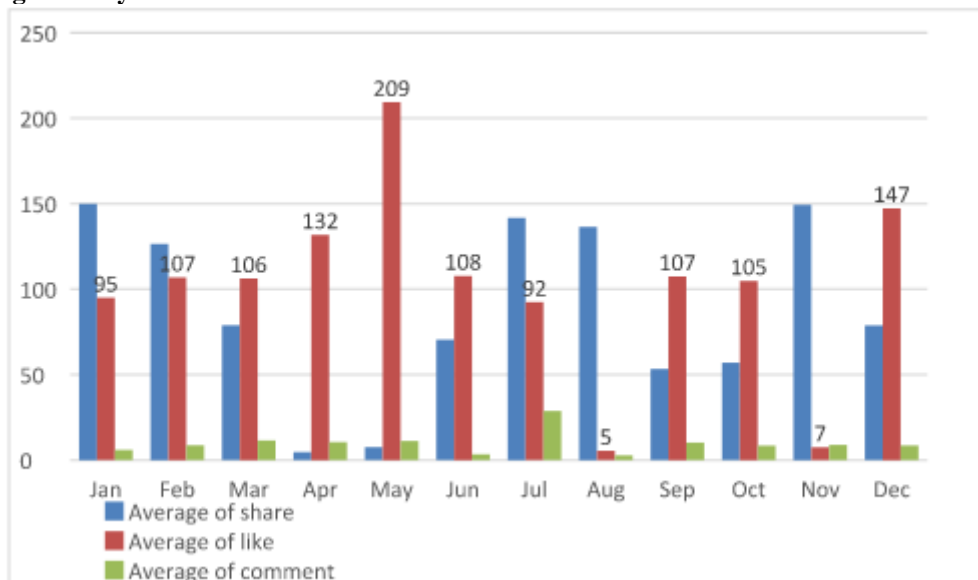


Figure 6: engagement by month

The months of January and November demonstrate the highest (95) average share of Facebook content at Gool Fm Radio Broadcast. These are followed by July, August and February and while the rest of the months illustrate lower content shares. It was revealed that most of this Radio customers preferred to like the content in May with 209 likes, followed by December at 147 likes, then in April at 132 compared to the rest of the months. The uniqueness about the likes was that August and November register the lowest likes at 5 and 7 times respectively. With the exception of July, it appears most people in Mogadishu do not take much of their time commenting on the Facebook content. Findings of this nature could be due to variety of entertaining and attractive content as was revealed through in-depth interviews at Jamhuriya University and Gool fm Radio Broadcast Facebook page.

Goobjood News Portal

Various News Portals share their news on Facebook to attract wider audiences. Goobjood News is an independent privately owned news portal based in Mogadishu. According to figure 7, the Facebook page of this news portal shows a competitive increase in the average content share and likes from January to April with a slow decrease from May to August. September to December was marked by rise and falls in the content shared and liked. While other two studied organisations showed small numbers of comments, Goobjood News Portal demonstrate reasonable number of comments throughout the year even though less of its fans may be keen at giving and receiving feedback to and from the shared content on this Facebook page. It is very likely that this News Portal attracts the educated elite but also posts different entertaining content. More and more people might prefer to identify with Private News Portal due to their capacity to share original and authentic content with respectful service delivery, which may not be the case with public and other institutions.

Post Engagement by Month

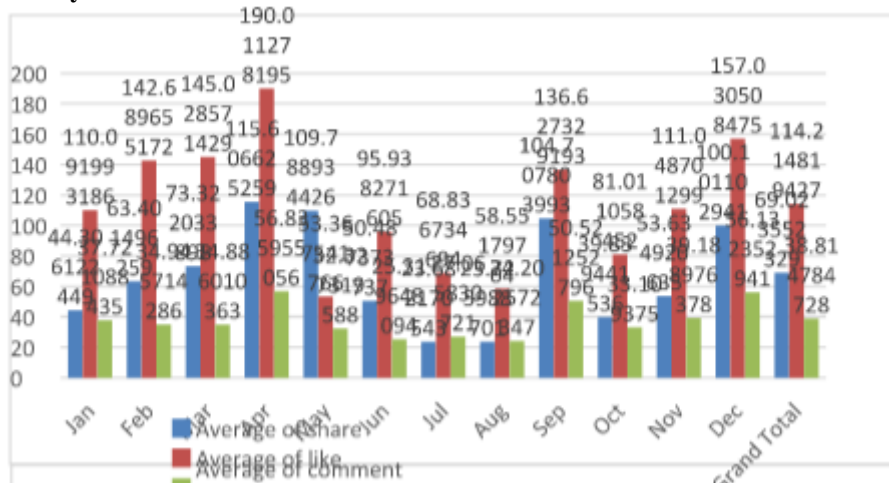


Figure 7: Engagement by Month

Post Engagement by Type

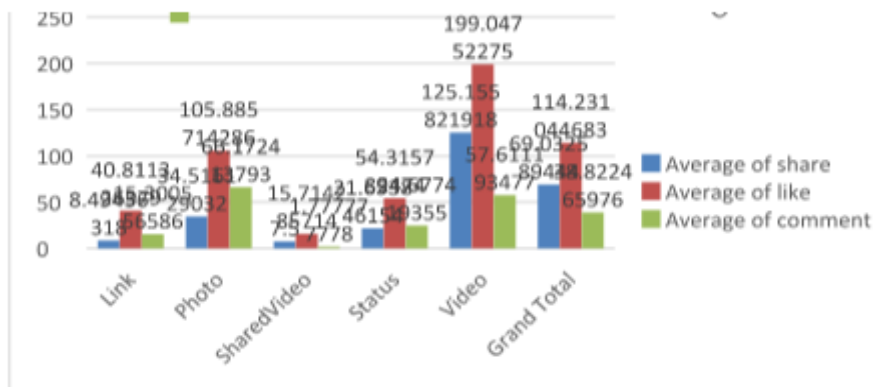


Figure 8: Engagement by Type

In all the organisations studied, photos and videos posted tend to attract more customers although variations exist in the numbers of posts. Figure 8 shows that video and photos are more liked as represented by (199 and 106) likes respectively compared to the link, shared video and status. However, it was observed that more videos are shared amongst customers than photos and links, though with higher average comments on photos followed by videos at the expense of all other content. Therefore the customers of Goobjoood News Portal are likely to be busier and likely to concentrate on watching posted videos and photos than links and commenting on them.

Post Engagement by Time

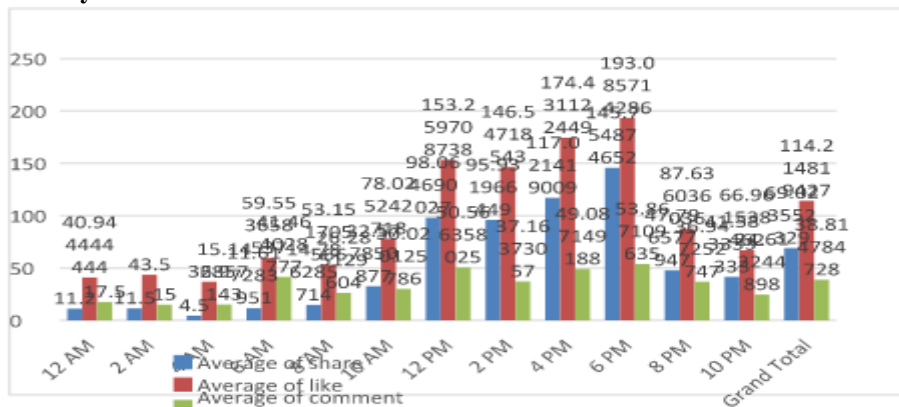


Figure 9: Engagement by Time

Figure 9 illustrates post engagement by time at Goobjood News Portal. Morning hours are marked by fewer content shares and likes to the posted material. This discovery might imply that the customers of this News Portal are busy with work in homes, offices, at school, running businesses and institutions. More Facebook content and likes are observed from 12-6PM when most people have retired from work although participation rates decrease late in the night (8-10PM) when time for sleeping comes. Much as there is a rise and fall in the average comments with lower intensity, the engagement with Goobjood News by time, is higher than in all other studied areas.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the use of social media especially Facebook remains the most viable avenue for Somalis to interact freely; exchange social, political and economic ideas; and get updates on what is happening around the world and within in their societies. It is worth noting that Facebook is subtly gaining prominence as far as marketing products and businesses in Mogadishu is concerned because it is easy to access huge numbers of clients on online community.

Facebook is the most dominant social media platform that attracts and interconnects people from all parts of the world. A very sensitive security situation like the one of Mogadishu necessitates that people share their views and ideas with each other as one way of recovering from the likely painful memories but also do business in more reliable, trustworthy but entertaining environment. Social media enables everyone who accesses internet to engage in sharing videos, photos, links and comments. The essence of sharing such content has been interpreted by Use and Gratification Theory as it enables customers; to interact or regulate and switch the content in any form at any time of the day they want.

Interacting or engaging with various Facebook pages of several companies/ organisations/ institutions implies that fans like to make independent choices of what they like to watch on social media or share with the virtual community without fear. The full time fans' engagement with Facebook content from the three studied institution/ organisations is an indicative that the world is so small that access to content on every social media has been simplified by the heavily advancing technology so long as potential fans can afford to own a smart phone or computer and access to internet. There may be cases of lack of transparency and accountability in Mogadishu but this perspective cannot be underestimated. The availability of different News Portals, Radio Broadcasts and Academic Institutions could attract more and variety of Facebook fans if they post Facebook content that meets the needs of the immediate customers not only in Mogadishu but the rest of the world. The presence of different news portals and radio broadcasts also implies that government in Mogadishu could be truly on the right path to open sharing of ideas for peaceful co-existence.

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