

Abstract

This paper explores the association between WhatsApp use and spousal abuse among married women in Kwale County, Kenya. A mixed-methods correlational design was employed, combining survey data from 263 respondents with insights from key informant semi-structured interviews. Independent variables included duration of WhatsApp use, hours spent daily, number of messages exchanged, group membership, and purposeful use (work/family). Dependent variables measured physical injuries, spousal threats, and control of phone/social media. Results indicate that while general duration of WhatsApp use is not significantly associated with physical injuries, purposeful use and group membership are strongly correlated with threats and controlling behaviours. Qualitative findings suggest that women's visibility and economic use of WhatsApp sometimes provoke jealousy and conflict. The study recommends digital-safety interventions, privacy awareness campaigns, and training for community leaders on recognising the role of social media platforms in spousal abuse.