FACEBOOK MEDIATED INTERACTIONS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AT SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

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DEDICATION

To my children Alexandria, Ian and Tai

ABSTRACT

Social media is increasingly replacing face-to-face interactions to become the preferred medium for interaction especially among the youth. Technology is thus altering the manner in which people interact with each other; with potential negative consequences on the development of communication and social skills. As online social networking consistently and continuously attracts more and more users, problems are also generated in equal measure. Studies have shown that excessive use of social network sites not only has a long-lasting effect on the psyche of students but also affects the physical, mental and social aspects of their lives. Drawing from the Social Penetration Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, this study aimed at understanding how mediated communication through Facebook is altering the nature of social interactions among university students and how this has influenced the formation of social relationships. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions: How has Facebook shaped interaction among university students in universities? How does Facebook mediated communication enhance/undermine social interactions among university students in universities? What affordances do university students in universities perceive in their use of Facebook as an interaction platform? The study utilized a qualitative approach to generate and analyze data. Twenty-two in-depth interviews and two focus group discussions were conducted among university students purposively picked from seven universities in Uasin Gishu County. The universities were conveniently selected. The interviews and focus group discussions were recorded, transcribed and analyzed thematically. The findings suggest that there is rapid use and expansion of social networking sites for interaction purposes among university students. Overreliance on Facebook-mediated interactions negatively alters the nature of social interactions among youths; consequently, affecting the formation of social relationships. Online interactions distract users from engaging in face-to-face interactions, weaken social bonds and cause conflicts among users and non-users. Nonetheless, interactions through Facebook have contributed to developing and enhancing social relationships in geographically dispersed locations. The study concludes that while Facebook-mediated interactions have contributed in the fusion of time and space, hence strengthening communication among individuals in geographically dispersed locations, it is equally undermining the development of social relationships and weakening social bonds among the youth. The study recommends a reconceptualization of the understanding of interactions and relationship formation in the light of contemporary trends in social network sites. Institutions and families should be sensitized on the need to engage young people with a view of enhancing the importance of face-to-face communication which cannot be replaced by online mediated interactions.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
FB	Facebook
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FTF	Face to Face communication
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
SIP	Social Information Processing
SM	Social Media
SMS	Short Message Service
SNS	Social Networking Sites
U&G	Uses and Gratification Theory
SN	Social Networking

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

The exchange of information between people and groups that takes place face-to-face or through computer-mediated channels like social media is referred to as interpersonal communication. It is a crucial aspect of communication that deals with the ways in which individuals share information and convey feelings to one another through spoken or nonverbal cues.

Generally speaking, despite the advancements brought about by social media, face-to-face interaction still plays a crucial role in human interactions. New patterns of interpersonal connections have emerged as a result of the improvement of relationships that were initially formed and solely relied on physical touch.

Social media usage has produced enormous advantages. Negative effects have also been noted, particularly in human interactions. According to the user and the characteristics of these platforms, it appears that many young people today are trapped using a variety of social media platforms to satisfy their various needs. Face-to-face interaction, which is still an important part of human connections, suffers as a result, losing both quality and significance. Online social networking is a popular trend today, especially, among teenagers and university students. This study examined the influence of Facebook on the social interactions and social relationships of users who are in universities.

Social media was a distant phenomenon before the invention of mobile phones, and face-to-face interaction remained the main method of interpersonal communication. One of the earliest technologies to have a big impact on international communication was the telegraph, which was invented before the cell phone. The telephone, in Sydney Aronson's opinion, was the first piece of contemporary technology that allowed for greater personal connections between individuals (Aronson, 2014).

The mobile phone had been improved and was starting to have an impact on communication by the turn of the 20th century. People may now readily interact because of technology advancements like the internet and cell phones. Mobile phones have become an increasingly necessary tool in people's daily lives as a result of their integration with the internet and other technology.

As new methods of information access and transmission are found and employed, people's ways of connecting and interacting have been evolving dramatically over time. Computer-mediated communication advancements have transformed widely used interaction techniques.

These revolutions have consequently affected our interactions with each other, how we present ourselves and our socio-cultural patterns. However, no matter the levels of innovation and technological sophistication, our primary needs of sharing meaning remain constant (Jensen & Trenholm, 2013).

Despite having a wide range of communication options because to the internet and technology, more people are still seen to favor social networking sites. Many people's

lives have been impacted by social networking sites (SNS), which have made it possible for people to network and engage on a worldwide scale. Laborie et al, (2015) noted that Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and podcasts are now increasingly prevalent on the internet. The majority of social media users are teenagers who are still in school. According to Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013), social media is without a doubt the most significant communication tool for students and has grown in acceptance and usability. (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013).

Many college students use their smartphones and computers to browse social networking sites, especially Facebook, and a large portion of them are Facebook users. To make sure they don't miss any opportunities to check their Facebook status, they multitask excessively. According to recent studies, teenagers use technology for around 10 hours per day, with social media playing a significant role in their everyday life. (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010).

With most subscribers, Facebook is currently the most popular social networking site. In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, the company's founder, introduced Facebook. Facebook was originally created by Mark Zuckerberg as a communication and support system for Harvard University students. Later, the registration period was opened up to anyone with an email address from one of Harvard's affiliated educational institutions. By 2006, all Facebook registration restrictions had been eliminated, and all services were provided without charge (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Facebook had 175 million subscribers in February 2009, and that number increased by 5 million each week. By 2011, Facebook had exceedingly grown and the number of its registered users globally had risen to more

than 750 million (Facebook Adverts, 2011). Currently, Facebook boasts over a billion users.

1.1.1   Context of the study

Human communication includes many levels, including group communication, interpersonal communication, public communication, and organizational communication, among others. This study falls under interpersonal communication category. This study focuses on how social media use affects interpersonal communication, relationship development, and how such relationships are affected by social media use.

Global innovations and advancement of computer technologies have had significant influence on various spheres of life such as communication. Ellison and Boyd (2013) argue that the revolution in computer technologies through the internet has transformed many aspects of modern society including social interactions.

Other social connections, which are primarily face-to-face encounters, are being replaced by the rapid development and use of the internet services, which are technology-mediated. Online communication has impacted interpersonal communication and interaction because users of online social networking regularly log on to talk and connect with other users.

Social media, which enables users to regularly communicate with other users and foster a sense of community, is a driver for the quick spread of online communication. Based on their unique traits, social media can be distinguished from one another.

These include: discussion forums such as; Reddit, Quora, digital social networks such as; Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; bookmarking and content curation networks such as; Pinterest, Flipboard, and Blogs; media sharing networks including; Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and publishing networks including; Word Press, Tumblr and Medium among others. According to Mahan et al, (2015) social network sites are the most widely adopted of all social media platforms (Mahan , Seo, Jordan, & Funk, 2015).

Erokzan believes that in order to become socially competent, one must successfully engage with others in a variety of social circumstances. He links being "communicatively skilled" with being "socially skilled." Being attentive to other people's attitudes and ideas, rules and social conventions is a sign of good interpersonal and communication abilities. Students that use social networking sites participate in a wide variety of communicative and creative activities that show the audience their attention, tone, style, topic matter, and writing process. These are vital abilities that can help one communicate better, but the most important question is whether they will enable pupils to interact with peers in person in real-world situations. (Erozkan, 2013).

Face-to-face communication involves body language, word choice, vocal variety, facial expression, stance, and listening abilities, all of which are essential to effective message. However, many of these components are absent from online social networking sites since they have been replaced with things like emojis, webcams for visual signals, and microphones for auditory cues, among other things.

Online social networking lacks the essential components of effective communication, such as instant feedback and response, which are typically only possible through face-to-face interaction.

According to Booth (2011), social media has resulted in the decay of interpersonal face-to-face communication. Social media allows users to communicate effectively and quickly but it takes a person away from reality by immersing users in the virtual world of interaction (Booth & Matic, 2011).

Research findings indicate that the emergence and use of social media are threatening the conventional style of communication which is essential for people to connect in the real world. Findings further emphasize that communication through internet technologies such as social networking sites may result in lower quality social interaction than would normally take place in the actual world.

Contrary reports on the influence of social media on interpersonal communication have been presented by a number of academics. An action research by Izar, et al. (2009) found that students' interpersonal communication skills can be enhanced through frequent communication and expression by participating in social networking sites. This is attributed to their propensity to interact with various people in a virtual manner, and as a result, it improves their communication. (Hesse-Biber & Griffin, 2013).

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) give an all-inclusive definition of social media: "social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated

content" (pg 210). Social media consists of different internet applications such as social networking sites, blogs, virtual game worlds and social worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media creates applications such as social networking sites that consist of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter among others. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007 pg. 21) social network is "web-based services that allow individuals to; construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system". For the purpose of this research the term social media was used broadly to encompass social network sites such as Facebook.

According to Boyd & Ellison (2007) social media incorporates a list of users with whom individuals share a connection, thereby allowing individuals to make visible their list of connections to others and to traverse their social networks. Similar to the other social media sites, Facebook contains a web page into which users enter personal information such as date of birth, gender, address, religious views, educational background and relationship status (D. M. Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Once users have finished building their profiles, they are instructed to find people who share their relationships by searching for Facebook members who are signed up, making friend requests, or asking their friends via email to join Facebook. The personal profiles of the two users as well as their whole social networks are made public with the successful fulfillment of friend requests.

This enables SNS users to navigate networks by clicking through friends' profiles, which quickly broadens one's social network across network members (Walther et al. 2008). This is how Facebook and other social media platforms are able to draw in millions of people from around the world.

Previous research on social media interrogated ways social media affects privacy and helps build and maintain social capital while other studies pointing to the relevance of social networking sites as personal networks with individuals' identity formation and signaling focus on impression management, users' profile authenticity and the negotiation of users' social relationships. Boyd & Heer (2006) Ellison et al (2007) and Donath, (2007) analyzed the reasons people use Facebook through the uses and gratification model. Among the reasons they found were for social interaction, professional advancement and entertainment (D. Boyd & Heer, 2006; Donath, 2007; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Only a handful of scholars have attempted to investigate the link between the usage of the internet and interpersonal communication with friends and family members (Shim, 2007).

1.1.2 Kenyan Context

Kenya has been greatly influenced by technological advances which play a significant role in the lives of many people. Mobile networks and the internet have made social media a preferred means of interpersonal interaction which enable people across the world to network, share, interact and come up with information.

In Africa, Kenya is ranked highly with 85.2 percent internet penetration and the highest number of Facebook users in East Africa (Internet world statistics, 2023). Portland (2014) describes Nairobi as the city that is most active within East Africa and the sixth in the continent when tweeting. Kenya has recently been considered as the leading nation that has embraced the adaptation of technology and again shows the same in terms of social media usage.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Social media is a virtual platform where people can interact with one another and build relationships irrespective of distance, place and time. Even though people use these platforms to exchange information and interact, there is an increased dependence on the platforms and this has raised concerns about the reduced use of face-to-face interactions which characterized how people always interacted. It is true that social media provides an easy and effective way for human interactions but it has been found to be the cause of conflicts, reduced learning and research capabilities among young people. Although social media provides awareness about recent happenings in the world, research has shown that 29 percent of untrustworthy sexual conduct was initiated on social networking sites (Bingenheimer, Asante, & Ahiadeke, 2015).

Previous studies have also revealed that overdependence on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp by young people has a negative influence on their interpersonal skills as well as their relationships, which are now limited to online chatting, video calling and text messaging among others (Kinyanzu, 2017).

People frequently search for hints, signals, and indicators in interpersonal communication to help them understand what type of behavior is appropriate and should be displayed in the situation, as well as how to accurately decipher what other people are trying to say. Social media, on the other hand, is unable to provide these clues, and without them, it could be challenging for people to understand what the other person is actually saying. Employers have discovered ways to get beyond the constraints of face-to-face communication necessitated by events like job interviews and official meetings by doing such over video conferencing using tools like Skype. In as much as social media has tremendously improved human experience, it is slowly affecting the traditional face-to-face interaction in various ways especially in interpersonal relationships. There is no doubt that social media reduces the quality of human communication as not all aspects of human expressions like non-verbal cues can be effectively incorporated into social media interactions. As such, exchange of meaning may be incomplete, thus making communication haphazard and ineffective. Despite this, there has been drastic change in the way people communicate such that they prefer communicating over social media than face-to-face interaction. According to Keller (2013) 'we would preferably e-mail than meet or text than talk on the phone' (Keller, 2013). This study therefore looked at the influence of social media on face-to-face interactions among selected universities in Kenya.

As online social networking consistently and continuously attracts more and more users, problems are also generated in almost equal measure. People become slowly addicted and consequences are visible on the decline of face-to-face interpersonal interactions. People's habits including relationships, emotions, ideas, health and behavior are changing

slowly because of social media influences (Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017). University students today spend considerable amounts of their time on the internet and online social network sites as a way of connecting with their peers, showcasing their social lives, sharing information and reinventing their personalities, making social networking part of the daily life experience for many people. The problem that prompts this study is that social network sites have altered how people interact with each other. With social networking sites becoming the central facilitators of daily interactions among university students in universities, interpersonal face to face interactions are missing; consequently affecting social relationships among members of the society.

According to Boyd (2008) online social network communication creates an atmosphere of difference between face-to-face communication, as online technologies have altered the underlying design of social interaction and information distribution.

Kalra and Manani (2013) argue that excessive use of social network sites not only has a long-lasting effect on the psyche of students, but also affects the physical, mental and social aspects of their lives (Kalra & Manani, 2013).

New technological advances and the internet have negatively influenced the process of communication. As a result, no aspect of human life has been immensely influenced by the internet like how people communicate with one another. Relationships that were initially created and maintained through physical interactions have now been almost overtaken by online social networking, which is responsible for creating a new form of interpersonal relationship. The increased use of social network sites among university

students has increased physical distance among its users by lowering the rate of face-to-face interactions. With the decline in interpersonal interactions, human relationships are weakened and cannot be replaced by social media such as Facebook interactions (Hertlein & Van dyck, 2020).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess how Facebook-mediated interactions have its influenced and affected interpersonal face-to-face communication and social relationships among students at selected Kenyan universities.

1.4 Research Questions

To address its purposes, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How has Facebook reshaped face-to-face interaction among university students in universities in Kenya?
2. How does Facebook-mediated communication enhance or undermine social interactions among young students in universities in Kenya?
3. What affordances do university students in Kenyan universities perceive in their use of Facebook as an interaction platform?

1.5 Study Objectives

1. To assess how Facebook has reshaped face to face interaction among students at selected universities in Kenya.
2. To determine how Facebook-mediated communication has enhanced or undermined social interactions among students at selected universities in Kenya.

3. To assess the affordances university students perceive in their use of Facebook as interaction platform, at selected universities in Kenya.

1.6   Scope of the Study

There are six levels of human communication; intra-personal communication, group communication, interpersonal communication, public communication and organization communication. This study focused only on interpersonal communication and the utilization of social media for interaction.

This research targeted a university setting because this is where Facebook originated and has consequently spread to nearly every institution of higher learning globally. Investigating the influence and use of online social networking for interaction among university students in universities gave a picture of how users of social network sites were interacting among themselves and its consequence on relationships.

The study was conducted in both private and public universities within Eldoret town. At the time of the study, there were seven universities and university campuses within Eldoret town, Uasin Gishu County. Five were public and two were private. The seven included Moi University, University of Eldoret, University of Nairobi, Kisii University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Mt. Kenya University and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Gaba Campus. The study targeted undergraduate students. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who frequently used Facebook in their daily interactions.

1.7   Limitations of the Study

Being a qualitative study, the sample size was small and the study was conducted in the context of universities within Eldoret town only. However, this limitation was not a set back to the findings of the study as the sample was drawn from a good representation of universities in Kenya and because most University students in universities share similar characteristics, it is possible to generalize the results to a larger population.

1.8   Definition of Key Concepts

1.8.1   Social Media
According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) social media is the interaction between people, whereby information is created and shared in virtual communities via technology-based applications and sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google +, Skype and WhatsApp among others (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The popularity of social media has increased over the years and has had a significant economic influence by enabling the sharing of data, information and media products instantaneously. Internet usage, its ease of access and technological advances has led to the increase of social media use. Social media allows users to generate their content and build social relationships, thereby providing people with new communication co-ordination tools based on social characteristics of the use of technology.

Social media offers huge potential for what has been defined as "mass-self communication" indicating the production of knowledge that utilizes the capabilities of

large numbers of users for the solution of challenges or problems. People follow and monitor social media to discover trends, get competitive information and engage in conversations with other users. For instance, people mainly use Facebook to maintain contact and build personal relationships and as for Twitter, to stay up to date with the ever-changing news and trends.

Social media mainly focuses on personal relations, has news value and is also good at spreading news. Pew Research Centre claims that of the total adult users of social networking sites, 42 per cent use multiple platforms through Facebook.

In an article, 'The Quest for Identity in the 21st Century' by Susan Greenfield, an increasing number of people are exploring the worldwide web potential and, as a result, they have turned out to be active components of it (Greenfield, 2008).

1.8.2   Social Networking Sites

Social Networking Sites are web-based services that allow users to create public or semi-public personal profiles and exchange messages with other users in the same system (Ellison et al 2007). The SNS provide for web-based platforms for building social relations and networks among users through shares, activities and interests. Social Networking Sites create a means of interaction via the internet, which is now also accessible through mobile phones.

Most popular SNS include Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn and Twitter. The SNS allow users to build up their social networks by creating personal profiles. The personal profile created is like a user's personalized web page and contains profile information of the user

like religion, age, gender, interests, current location, marital status and other such information. The personal profile can be customized to include photos, video clips or music.

The definitions of social media and social networking sites prominently feature arguments that allow individuals to communicate with people in their networks, make their social networks visible. For the purposes of this study, social media and social networking sites are used interchangeably.

1.9   Summary

This chapter gives a background of social media use and its popularity among users. It sheds light on the influence of online social networking on user interactions in the contemporary world. The chapter also highlights the general objectives of the study, the problem statement, research questions, the scope and rationale of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter provides an exploration of theories that underpin the study and offers as an authoritative review of related studies used to inform the research. Related literature to the study was critically examined and relevant contents reviewed with the purpose of addressing identified gaps.

2.2   History of the Development of Communication

The earliest ways of sending messages over geographical distances were both visual and audio. In ancient Egypt, Greece and China, people used sound to relay messages during the day and beacon fires at night. Drums were used by various civilizations globally to broaden the human voice for communication purposes. The genesis of online networking was around 550 BC, when a concept similar to postal corporation was set up in Iran and people rode horses and horse-drawn wagons to convey mails and parcels. In the 18th and 19th century, gadgets such as the telegraph were invented; specifically, the telephone in 1876 and the radio in 1895, which reinvented the manner of disseminating messages over long distances. The need to express communication between institutions in urban settings, coupled with busy traffic led to further development of better techniques of telegram and letter transportation.

The 21st century led to the emergence of social media, which has grown at rapid speeds and includes the era of the Internet-relay-chats (IRC). Today, social media is quickly transforming into a culture. Social media has created a huge space from which people can speak with each other, consequently influencing the manner in which people keep in touch. Instant messaging has also resulted in the emergence of other means of communication where the standard and reaction time have greatly reduced.

2.2.1   The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Human Communication

Interpersonal communication refers to an interactive exchange of information between two or more individuals. It takes cognizance of verbal and non-verbal cues in achieving personal and social goals. According to Knapp (2002) interpersonal communication is regarded as "a mutual, continual process of sending, receiving and adapting both the spoken and unspoken messages between people in order to create and change the perceptions that exist in our minds". It is an important aspect of human communication due to the fact that human beings will always need to communicate and socialize for a peaceful co-existence (Knapp & Daly, 2011).

For interpersonal communication to occur there must be a minimum number of two and a maximum number of five people communications. If the number of people involved in communication exceeds five, then this form of communication is described as group communication. As such, in interpersonal communication, the number of people serves an indicator. Sevik (2013) found that interpersonal communication can be divided into three different types; namely: verbal, non-verbal and written.

Interpersonal communication helps people to become self-aware and become friends with other people. The role of interpersonal communication in human communication cannot be over-emphasized as this has been identified to be an influential factor in any meaningful human encounter. This is in the sense that humans generally relate better with each other and tend to achieve more when there is a meaningful exchange of ideas at the interpersonal level. As a matter of fact, other forms of human communication such as group and mass communication sometimes begin with the interpersonal aspects which are later expanded to other context (Sevik, 2013).

The development of new media on the communication platform has an impact on societal communication patterns, as shown by the history of communication. The pigeon-courier, one of the earliest methods of communication, was rendered obsolete by the development of the telegram. The advent of television, however, eclipsed the significance of the radio. Today's instantaneous internet-based interchange has altered interpersonal communication on a world-wide sacel (J. Wood, 2012).

A good example of modern internet-based interpersonal communication is social media chat, which is more likely to satisfy users due to its immediacy, convergence, and networking efficiency. During online interactions, people communicate whatever they think is important but this is not limited to social issues. Interpersonal communication on social media has become an important tool of self-expression and presentation, where individuals attempt to project a perfect life irrespective of reality. People strive to present created or edited pictures of themselves and their surroundings.

The affordability of smart-phones and advanced technological structures are catalyzing addictions to social media and the desire for self-gratification. This leads to peer pressure where people end up comparing themselves to others who seem happy on Facebook, thereby finding themselves and their lives miserable. However, this kind of portrayal of happiness is not possible in everybody's life and leads to a fake life that is filled with envy and jealousy by those that are left as spectators on social media. Despite the above argument, various researchers support the fact that too much use of the internet to seek information leads to a decrease in concentration span, creativity and originality of thought.

Nicholas Carr (2014) argues that while the internet enables our cognitive ability to scan and skim, it reduces our intellectual ability to concentrate and contemplate. He further argues that the internet gradually makes us incapable of long hours of intellectual focus. While social media is serving its function of interpersonal communication for social interaction by enabling faster and cheaper communication anywhere anytime, this very feature is becoming a threat to interpersonal communication (Carr, 2014).

Because of the virtual nature of communication, people have become obsessed and addicted to connecting all the time to update status on social media. Consequently, this leads to 'not communication' in the real world. Most frequent internet users are overwhelmed in their virtual communication that they hardly find time to engage in face-to-face conversations with family or those near their physical surroundings. The aspect of the internet over-communication is not only affecting the quantity and quality of

communication but it is also affecting the kind of diction and language people use in their informal and formal written communication.

Users are relocating from the actual world and live in a virtual one filled with false identities and intimate relationships, alienating others who don't care about social media or who are just uninterested in it. One example of how social media language is changing is the use of fictitious acronyms on Facebook to help people communicate with one another. These abbreviations eventually find their way into spoken English, however not everyone who is not a member of social media sites will be able to understand them.

2.2.2 Face-to-Face Interaction and Social Media usage among Youths

The notion of face-to-face interaction has drawn the attention of many scholars right from the earliest 20th century (Nardi & Whittaker, 2002). This form of interpersonal communication involves the use of verbal and non-verbal messages such as facial expressions, body movements and verbal cues between two or more people. It also pervades all other forms of communication because it is mostly used by many people. Sociologist Georg Simmel (1908) explained that the sensory organs of the body perform a crucial role in interaction while also discussing instances of human behavior such as an eye contact. Face-to-face interaction occurs when people who are in the same physical space exchange information, thoughts and feelings using eye contact, facial expressions, body movements or verbal messages. According to Acacio (2012) several components that differentiate face-to-face communication from other forms of communication include the fact that it facilitates the effectiveness of meaning in allowing individuals to reach a

conclusion faster when there is an issue. For example, a five-minute face-to face conversation would supersede a fifteen-minute e-mailing or texting and waiting for replies. Non-verbal communication is another factor that differentiates face-to-face communication from other forms of communication. This involves understanding, reacting and adapting to non-verbal messages such as symbols, body movements and posture. For instance, acts such as when a person repeatedly checks the wristwatch or yawns could signify tiredness or time to wrap things up. Face-to-face interaction offers personal touch or personal contact which helps to develop a feeling of warmth and appreciation. This can easily be expressed when people are together.

Social media can be employed for both serious and trivial issues. For example, people can use social media to watch videos as well as engage in business activities. Social media can also be used to organize campaigns whether political or non-political, create awareness, engage in social interaction, marketing and healthcare activities. Oyesomi, and Okorie (2014) describe social media as an innovative pattern of building friendships with different sites introducing opportunities for people to improve their social networks (Oyesomi, Oyero, & Okorie, 2014).

According to Sponcil and Gitimu (2013) 'students in higher institutions of learning are the main consumers of social media.' Social media is becoming popular and widely used amid criticisms, as a result of the fact that it has changed the way people communicate, interact, investigate and socialize (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2013). Young people have grown up getting familiar with various types of social media. Kaplan and Hanlein (2010) observe that young people are easily becoming digital literate and succeeding in the

digital environment where adults are just naturalized people. The ability to interact and stay connected with their loved ones influences people to use social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

In spite of this trend, researchers have observed that face-to-face communication remains an essential part of the social system. Regardless of the introduction of numerous innovative information and communication technologies, face-to-face communication remains the most commonly used and general form of communication among people. Several theorists recommend face-to-face communication because it engages more human senses than computer-mediated communication, where communication occurs over one's computer or phone screen (Nardi & Whittaker, 2002).

Duncan and Fiske also affirmed in their study that face-to- face interaction is the preferred means particularly for resolving problems and contentious issues (Duncan & Fiske, 2015).

Aisar, Mohd and Nur (2015) examined awareness and usage of social media among mass communication students of Kano State Polytechnic using a mixed method approach. They found a high level of awareness (98.2%) ease of access to the internet and regular use of mobile phones for social networking while a few (37.8%) reported and shared news or information on social media. The qualitative findings reveal that social networks are used for academic purposes, self-expression and establishing global friendship (Musa, Azmi, & Ismail, 2015).

Kassim, Mohd and Baharuddin (2015) found that students have positive perceptions of the use of social media with a mean score of 4.01. The respondents also agreed that social media increases the connectivity of friends and encourages information sharing among friends (Ariff, Kassim, & Baharuddin, 2015).

Jepngetich (2016) studied the use and influence of social media on face-to-face communication on the educational development of college students in Eldoret town using the mixed method approach. The study established that social networking sites are beneficial to the academic development of college students, while noting that social media does not to a great extent threaten face to face communication (Jepngetich, 2016).

Nelson (2012) interrogated the effects of technology on interpersonal relationships among Rowan University students between the ages 18 and 25 years. The study was aimed at determining how young adults are communicating with each other and to understand what is driving them to communicate using different methods of communication.

The researcher concluded that what communicators are trying to disseminate determines how they communicate the message just as the urgency of a message influences the choice of the medium. Respondents affirmed that different mediums affect the clarity and persuasiveness of the message just as relationships are affected by how communication occurs. However, majority of the students felt that technology has both positive and negative effects while some felt it connects people more and provides communicators with a place to hide (Nelson, 2012).

2.2.3 Genesis of Online Communities

Six degrees.com was the first service for online communities that emerged in the mid-90s and attempted to identify and map a set of real relationships between real people using their real names (Kirkpatrick, 2011) thus creating users' personal profiles based on real interests and biographic information. Social media began in early 2000 at Silicon Valley, with Friendster representing a breakthrough as the first social network for consumers. It offered a platform and tools for users to create personal profiles, upload pictures and connect with other friends registered on the platform. Friendster was followed by Myspace and Facebook that started competing for dominance and capturing the largest number of users.

Myspace was the first social media to attract mainstream media attention when News Corporation acquired it for $580 million. This evident popularity of social media propelled the growth of Facebook and YouTube, which indicated a 'shift in the organization of online communities' and introduced a new organizational framework for virtual communities organized around personal networks (D. M. Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Facebook was introduced to the public in 2004 and quickly gained more users than the social media pioneer Friendster and Myspace that were mainly focused on music. In the third quarter of 2012, the number of active Facebook users had surpassed one billion, making it the first social network to ever reach such numbers in record time.

According to Facebook's rapidly growing statistics, as of the second quarter of 2018, Facebook had 2.23 billion monthly active users. The average user had 155 friends and

spent an hour a day on the site.

Facebook has created a personalized profile page for each user, the Newsfeed that displays real-time social data of the users' activities (e.g., create, connect, like, tag, etc.) and their friends, clustering them into social graphs showing all the connections linking users to people, preferences, activities and shared interest groups.

2.2.4   Communication through Facebook

Communication is an integral component for Facebook to function. Without a means of communicating, there would be no interactivity, participation and social networking. Facebook immensely relies on people's regular communication for generation of content on the platform. The platform provides for several communication tools in order to encourage users to remain active consumers of its services.

'The sharing of meaning through the interchange of information' is how Castells (2002) defines communication (p. 54). He distinguishes between "interpersonal communication" and "societal communication" when describing the communication process. The sender and the recipient of the message engage in interpersonal communication, which frequently enables a response. Castells continues by stating that societal communication is the classic type of broadcast communication, which is directed at everyone and only flows in one way. This includes television and radio. However, in the recent past, it has allowed recipients a means of response. Communication on Facebook therefore incorporates many communication formats that allow users to communicate on a one-to-one basis through instant chat service and email; on a one-to-many broadcast basis through the creation of wall posts and individual profiles, access to which can be

restricted to selected users; on a many-to-one basis as users register their details with Facebook; and on a mass self-communication basis by enabling users to broadcast communication widely by making it available to everyone on the site (Castells, 2002).

Communication through Facebook has a variety of forms and is not confined to written texts only. Today, Facebook allows users to communicate even better through uploading of self-created videos, uploading links to content such as YouTube videos and creating and uploading photo albums. These actions illustrate Thompson's claim that 'individuals are constantly engaged in the activity of expressing themselves in symbolic forms. Thompson's argument that self-expression is an activity that never ends is a reflection of Facebook's nature, as users are given an opportunity and are able to continually update their personal profiles, express themselves and communicate their preferences in various ways to continually display revised versions of their self-identity (Ambrozas, 1997).

Through Facebook communication, users can simultaneously inform a wide array of friends about personal events such as status change from single to married, anniversaries and birthdays free of charge and receive response immediately the friends receive the messages. This therefore, renders temporal and spatial boundaries irrelevant. People mainly use Facebook to maintain contact and build personal relationships and Twitter as a way of staying updated with the ever-changing news and trends.

2.3   Situating the Study in the Field of Communication Studies

Communication is a fundamental need in people's lives and a source of social capital. It plays a role in outlining people's roles and boundaries in the society. People co-operate

with each other as a desire to survive. As such, the main source of the connections is communication. In the 21st century, there is a challenge of over communication which is developing a new kind of social order that strengthens mass communication and weakens interpersonal communication. Social media is transforming the contours of social interaction. Emotions and experiences like love, friendship, family bonding, intimacy and language are finding various platforms of expression (Bala, 2014). Bala, further emphasizes that the new medium always invades the traditional methods. Scholars have argued that too much reliance on social media in seeking information reduces creativity and originality of thought and that the quality and quantity of communication, language, diction and grammar are also affected. Further, youths are trying hard to showcase themselves by posting statuses and edited photos in an effort to brand themselves or build certain images about themselves in the virtual world. These images may however be totally different from their realities. Persons that are not registered on social media or lack interest in it may feel alienated which may cause a digital divide.

2.3.1   Human Communication

Human communication is composed of both intra-personal and interpersonal communication. Intra-personal communication being communication you have with yourself, while interpersonal communication occurs during interaction with others. Interpersonal communication can be face-to-face as well as through electronic channels (DeVito, 2019).

According to DeVito (2019) human communication has some principles that must be

observed for effective communication. The first principle is the process of adjustment. This reflects on inter-cultural communication, when one has to differentiate cultural background with different signals and meanings. Here, the process of adjustment is to reduce the gap by making communication successful. Communication is ambiguous as messages can be interpreted in different ways. The most common ambiguity created is on grammar which can be counteracted by the use of native language to reduce it. Another principle is that communication involves content and relationships dimension.

There are several stages in interpersonal relationships in human communication. Relationships normally start from the contact stage. This is the stage of getting to know someone physically, with the qualities of friendliness, warmth and dynamics. This initial part creates perception to a person. On the contrary, relationships on the online platform begin without a physical evaluation. On online platforms, perception is formed through online signals and meaning.

The second phase of interpersonal relationship in human communication is involvement where a sense of mutuality and being connected is developed. This phase allows the relationship to grow and may also happen through social media. It allows users of social media to know each other in-depth and the contents being shared and posted are assumed to be genuine. This study will generally focus on the ways different types of communication shared and language on Facebook are used, as well as how they influence interpersonal communication. However, it will not analyze the authenticity of contents shared.

The third phase of interpersonal relationships is intimacy; this involves interpersonal commitment and social bonding. Individual's bond and may wish to display their relationships publicly through Facebook.

The final phase in interpersonal relationships would be either repairing the relationship, deteriorating with dissatisfaction or dissolution with separations. In all the stages of interpersonal relationships in human communication, individuals need to take cautious steps at every stage for social unity. The first characteristic of an interpersonal relationship is its context. Context refers to the setting and the social-psychological environment where relationship that takes place. This is reflective of a social media scenario where acceptance of relationships can take place through messages and requests posted on Facebook pages.

Time is another aspect of partnerships; the more time spent together, the more a connection develops in terms of commitment, interdependence, and trust. This is now notable and spreading like wildfire. It is impossible to determine objectively if such factors have a harmful or good impact on social cohesion in the social arena. This study set out to find out what effects social media platforms have on how people communicate and how those effects might change over time. Trust is the final component in a connection. A lack of commitment and trust may be brought on by deception.

Communication in interpersonal relationships has been influenced by technology with its advantages and disadvantages. There are times when the one-on-one communication between human beings falls through the cracks and technology can take control

(Sorensen, 2010). Reviewed literature has shown that social networking such as Facebook has changed the ways of communication. The concern is that the influence of technology can be a hindrance to interpersonal relationships but to McQuillen (2003) the entry of the internet has made the world smaller in terms of global interaction but wider in terms of one-on-one relationships. According to Madianou and Miller (2013) the profound transformation in its usage of increasingly converged communication technologies has implications in the ways interpersonal communication is enacted and experienced (Madianou & Miller, 2013).

Referring to Mustafa and Hamzah (2011) internet technology is being adopted rapidly and is increasingly used by the majority of people. Internet is being used for more than just information processing. It is now used as means of communication in social interaction (Mustafa & Hamzah, 2011). Today, interactions may take place in the virtual world without having a face-to-face conversation at the same place and same time. More and more people use social media to meet their psychological and social needs and internet is the place to meet, interact and form social relationships. This view has affected the pattern of behavior with the advancement of technologies. The use of SNS is designed to connect people with friends, family and other strong ties, as well as to efficiently keep in touch with a larger set of acquaintances and new ties (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

As per the arguments of Gross and Acquisti (2005) SNS has drastically increased over the years. Recent, services such as Facebook, Tribe and Friendster allow millions of users to create online profiles and engage in sharing information with a vast network of friends.

This is particularly useful when users around the globe are not able to meet friends face-to-face level due to hectic lifestyles. This would similarly apply to university students who travel globally to seek higher education or those who are separated from their friends through exchange and mobility programs. This implies the need for looking at the behavioral change when social media is widely used in people's daily life (Gross & Acquisti, 2005).

A counter-argument was raised by Tyler on whether the internet is changing social life or staying the same. Tyler posits that the basic nature of people's relationships with others may have changed less because of the internet than is often suggested. Tyler argues that rather than people turning to the internet as a way of hiding from real life, those that are lonely and socially anxious turn to the internet as a means of forming close and meaningful relations with others. He further states that the internet offers features that enable users to have added efficiencies in their communications. It is used together with other channels like telephone and mail communications. According to Tyler, when relations have been developed to a certain level, users will strive to bring the relationship to the real life. It is also mentioned that 'whether the internet is, in fact, a social-leveling technology or not depends not upon the technology itself, but upon the political and social framework within which it is implemented' (Tyler, 2002,pg. 195). In support of Tyler's idea, DeAndrea et al indicated that people use social network sites to interact with friends, family and acquaintances. According to them, these basic motives, manifested through communication, are not vanquished because social interaction occurs online (DeAndrea, Ellison, LaRose, Steinfield, & Fiore, 2012).

Social network is a community structure based on individuals or organizations connected through the internet by specific types of interdependencies such as friendship, family, common interests, dislikes, acquaintances or prestige. Arguments arise on social media's pros and cons. This research deliberately focused on and investigated whether Facebook interactions are useful for the development of meaningful and intimate social relationships among its users.

2.3.2 Computer-Mediated Communication

Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) is a relatively new phenomena, yet it provides a distinctive platform for interaction that could soon replace or enhance face-to-face (FTF) interactions. In a survey using a global sample, nearly 94% of the participants (including 91% from the U.S., Canada, and Australia) had established at least one personally engaged online relationship.

Among the scholars, the jury is still out on whether or not individuals develop meaningful relationships on the internet as compared to FTF interactions. Some scholars argue that online networking has liberated interaction patterns from the traditional constraints and boundaries like time and place. CMC has had negative consequences in terms of building personal relationships compared to FTF interactions, which has an abundance of verbal and nonverbal clues (Baker, 2002).

Some scholars have argued about the disadvantages of CMC. Among the barriers in CMC is a high degree of uncertainty about interactions due to limited cues. According to

Parks and Adelman (1983) CMC as compared to FTF, results in greater uncertainty making it almost impossible to identify behavioral norms, rules governing relationships and interpretations of certain behaviors displayed in interactions. This weakness and gaps displayed by CMC could be catalysts to discouraging the development of intimate interaction, thereby establishing poor relationships (Parks & Adelman, 1983).

It is difficult for attraction to occur in a CMC setting because interpersonal attraction typically assumes frequent interaction, physical presence and access to a wide range of social information. Kim (2011) argues that the text-based nature of CMC and its lack of socio-emotional cues may facilitate aggressive behavior and as a result, people may forge fewer socio-emotional bonds. CMC brings a challenge of lack of interaction history and shared norms, which consequently poses a challenge to the development of close relationships on the online networking platforms. This line of thought is further given weight by Kim (2011) who asserts that CMC users tend to engage in more verbal aggression, inappropriate self-disclosure and conflict-inducing behavior than FTF interaction partners. For example, 'flaming' refers to abrasive or even abusive behavior that is common in CMC and that poses a threat to online relationship development (Kim, Kwon, & Cho, 2011).

On the other hand, several academics have addressed the pessimistic beliefs regarding the formation of relationships on CMC. New ideas and actual evidence have also called into doubt the negative premise. Walther et al (2008) proposed the Social Information Processing (SIP) on CMC that offers an alternative argument that weaknesses of CMC due to reduced cues and channel deficiency could be overcome over time if interactions

occur frequently and are sustained for a prolonged time. The proponents of the theory state despite few nonverbal cues being present in CMC, given enough time for frequent message exchanges and self-disclosure, intimate relationship development can occur just as it does in FTF interactions.

According to Walther et al (2008) users of CMC may not only become intimate over time but even become 'hyperpersonal,' thereby creating a greater sense of intimacy than FTF partners can. Walther further argues that the equivalent of non-verbal symbols for example emoticons on Facebook and other visual signs can contribute to the success of relationship-development over time (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008).

In her investigation of German college students, Utz (2000) found support for the principles of the Social Information Processing (SIP) theory. Internet users who participated in the study reported making friends online and expressing their emotions through paralanguage. According to the study, spending time online for communication facilitates the connection between creating online acquaintances and the use of paralinguistic expressions. This indicates that regular online communication should be able to compensate for the lack of physical affection displays and result in a deep, meaningful connection. (Utz, 2000).

2.4   Review of Relevant Theories

Two communication theories are relevant to this study. These include the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Social Penetration Theory.

2.4.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and Gratifications theory, also called the Needs and Gratifications Theory, is a model that focuses on why people use certain media rather than the others. Uses and Gratifications Theory was propounded by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumlerin 1974 (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974).

In the genesis of mass communication, mass media vehicles were used and the concern was if mass media would give the masses what they desired. Media owners determined what products to give to the masses and presented the same to the people. In this process, the masses were passive. In light of the new developments, individuals who used mass media became selective and started solving problems in their social environment through the media. Today, with the increase of media channels and tools, the options and number of choices increase and users get the opportunity to choose media channels according to their needs and wants.

Individuals choose what to satisfy their needs with and consult different sources. One of these sources is social media. According to Uses and Gratification theory, the selectivity of an audience carries a barrier, making the media effect limited. Individuals themselves decide what they should be thinking about instead of what the masses should think about the media. The media acts as a virtual bulletin board because people use it for different requirements and reasons. According to the theory, majority of people behave according to their free will and expect media gratifications such as relaxation, entertainment, problem-solving and avoiding boredom.

One of the tenets of the Uses and Gratifications theory is that audiences are active, and seek to find out the mass media that satisfy their gratifications. The internet has enabled users to find and also have more options from which they can select websites that satisfy their specific needs. It also allows audiences to be in more control of the media. Uwem et.al (2013), assert that while using the new media, people are actively combining several motives to fulfill their yearnings and aspirations, properly referred to as gratifications. This also happens when they are using social media (Akpan, Akwaowo, & Senam, 2013). Today, individual needs that the traditional media tries to satisfy can be satisfied even more effectively through social media. Unlike television where people can communicate with others visually, the internet is capable of creating a much more interactive forum. Without having to leave the comfort of their homes, people can engage in any kind of social interaction and communication by logging in to the internet via various gadgets like smart-phones, computers and Ipads.

With the desire to satisfy personal needs, people appeal to every possible media channel and can get what they want. The increased usage of the internet and social media has established a different channel where people can use and get satisfaction via these sources. A digital library has been created by the internet, especially social media sites. This has allowed people to get access to any content from different mass media channels. The use of social media by university students has led to an effect on their interactivity and has served different purposes associated with the use of social media messages in their interpersonal communication.

However, on the flip side, users of social media become the address of positive and negative effects of these media channels. Users who develop social relationships on the internet have to focus on computers physically and mentally and may isolate themselves from the real world. When users connect to the internet, they feel relaxed because they focus on the virtual world and forget about problems in the physical world.

The uses and gratifications approach is therefore a good way to find out the influences of social media on social relationship formation. From a uses and gratifications perspective, social networking sites have a wide range of information material and therefore those who utilize their services and resources should be able to satisfy a wide array of needs (Akpan et al., 2013). Uses and gratification approach will enable an understanding of what gratification the users seek during their online interactions, whether those gratifications are obtained, what effects of the gratification obtained have on the users' interpersonal communication style, messages exchanged during online interactivity and the purpose of the messages users share online in their interpersonal communication.

2.4.2   Social Penetration Theory

The proponents of social penetration theory, Altman and Taylor (1973) describe the development of interpersonal relationships that refers to the interchange process of behaviors between two or more parties who are in the process of developing a relationship. The theory is also known as Onion Theory, meaning that like onions, personalities have layers from outside to the inner core.

Outside layers being what others perceive and the inner layers meaning private and internal. The argument here is that as relationships develop, the deeper one goes to the actual personalities. Interpersonal intimacy is a slow process that requires lasting relationships to be consistent, continual and have mutual vulnerability through breadth and depth of self-disclosure. The scholars in this theory maintain that interpersonal relationships evolve in some gradual and predictable fashion. In connection to this emerging and predictable interpersonal relationship, interpersonal communication is the baseline.

Social Penetration Theorists believe that self-disclosure is the primary way that superficial relationships progress to intimate relationships. A counter-argument to the idea is that although self-disclosure can lead to more intimate relationships, it can have an influence of leaving some participants vulnerable. The ultimate creation of an intimate relationship is self-disclosure which can take place more satisfactorily through face-to-face interpersonal communication. This is contrary to an argument by Ledbetter (2011), that people are more likely to disclose more personal information on social networking sites than they would in face-to-face communication because the level of control is higher (Ledbetter et al., 2011). Computer-mediated communication has quickened the intimacy process because computers allow individual communication to be more open and that engages personal characteristics.

Many studies have focused on face-to-face interactions aspects but not many have addressed how people disclose information over social networking sites. On Facebook,

for example, users can set their privacy level (self-disclosure) (McCarthy, 2009). Further, people self-disclose and develop intimate relationships by creating closed groups, messaging, updating statuses (thoughts and feelings) and hobbies. This theory sought to provide guidance on whether genuine and lasting relationships can be developed through social media or through face-to-face communication without mediation.

It is important to note that in self-disclosure, face to face interaction is important because each member is greatly influenced by non-verbal communication cues. This theory further guided the study by addressing concerns such as, self-disclosure, which cannot take place fully through social media. Face-to-face interactions are a slow process in disclosing personal thoughts, feelings and emotions to others, while the virtual world allows users to share and disclose personal information immediately. People with poor social skills may prefer to express themselves on Facebook, consequently avoiding face-to-face communication, which is harmful to interpersonal communication.

2.4.3   Developing Complimentary Theoretical Approach

From the social media perspective, the two theories; Uses and Gratification Theory and Social Penetration Theory complement each other in that the users choose the platform for interpersonal interaction that suits their specific needs.

In the case of social penetration theory, some users choose to disclose more on social media than through face-to-face interactions as they are shy in personality. In this way, such relationships are argued to grow deeper. Some users prefer to use SM for interaction

simply because they like and enjoy using the platform and can consequently develop negative or positive relationships.

2.5   Review of Recent Previous Research

This study delved into a review of several recent studies on social media; those on Facebook, CMC and related SNS. From the study, eight main research themes are evident on social media and these include: self-expression, construction of impressions, effects on the users, friendship, privacy, use, Facebook and politics, social capital and the merging of social spheres.

This research focused on the influence of online social networking on the interaction of university students, which is close to the themes of self-expression, effects on users and social capital. The influence of social media on interaction and relationships was discussed under the following categories: how individuals are initiating and maintaining relationships online, communication style and willingness, social influence and interaction, personality and recognition.

The major recent research on the themes and stated categories were investigated, focus being laid on who did the study, what the study was about, where it was done, methods and participants, scope and key findings and recommendations for further research. The focus on the review of recent literature guided the present study and also shed light on gaps in other research work conducted in similar studies on social media.

A study was done by Ashwarya & Vinod (2017) on the influence of social media on

interpersonal communication among the youngsters in Kochi, India (Ashwarya & Vinod, 2017). An online survey was done among youngsters (aged 20-30) in Kochi to examine the influence of social media on interpersonal communication. The findings of the study indicated that the majority (51 per cent) among the 100 respondents declared that they use social media to avoid boredom, check their social media accounts whenever new notifications appeared, no matter whether they are having their meal or are engaged in their busy schedules.

Forty-one per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that even though social media has many positive aspects, it affects the way they converse with each other face-to-face. The study concluded that social media has turned to be a necessity in our lives and as technology advances, people are bound to run along. In addition, people rely on weak connections through social media that cannot be rated as pastimes as users constantly try to find time for chatting even at very critical and busy moments. The study concluded that while users are chatting online, there is time for one to construct and refine what he or she says and to communicate instantly. Thus, users prefer it over face-to-face communication where users have to be real, which affects the way users want to showcase themselves to the world.

The study was restricted to Facebook friends and therefore recommendations are that the study should be extended to a wider respondent base, according to the population of youngsters in Kochi. It further recommends that research should also target youngsters who do not frequently check or use social media sites.

A similar study was conducted by Archana & Verma (2014) in Jaipur, India, on the influence of social networking sites on social interaction among college students. Among other issues, the study argued that interpersonal interaction and communication have been getting replaced slowly by online communication. A sample of 100 college students using social media and aged between 17 and 23 years was selected through purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using a tool that consisted of 64 items to test the effects of social networking sites on college students. The findings of the study indicated that a significant correlation was found between the use of social networking sites and their social relationships. No difference was found in the use of social networking sites among the young men and women. Sixty-five per cent of students felt that social media helps them to maintain a relationship with their friends while 33 percent agreed that social networking sites help them to maintain regular contact with their parents and teachers.

The study concluded that the popularity of face to face has slowly been replaced by online communication and that social media had altered the concept of sociability among students. The study recommended that students need to educate themselves about the use of social media and the risks associated with it, to help them understand and navigate the technologies (Archana & Verma, 2014).

In a research titled 'Social Capital as Facebook; Differentiating Uses and Users,' Burke and Marlow (2011) examine how Facebook affects social capital depending upon; contrasting one-on-one communication, broadcast to a wider audience, types of site

activities, the individual difference among users, passive consumption of social news including social communication skills and self-esteem. In the study, a survey was conducted among 415 Facebook users to observe how different uses of social media influence different types of users' social capital. The study revealed that receiving messages from friends is associated with an increase in bridging social capital (Burke et al., 2011). The study demonstrated that college students are motivated by social information-seeking, using social media to learn about people they have met offline and expressive information-sharing to bridge social capital.

Research work titled 'Influence of Social Networks on Interpersonal Communication of the Students University College Irbid Girls: Facebook as a Model' was conducted in Jordan. The methodology of the study was a descriptive analytical approach (E. Mustafa & Hamzah, 2017). The study population consisted of all students of Irbid University College enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2012/2013. Ten per cent of the total number of 3000 undergraduate students was selected to respond to 300 questionnaires. A sample was selected of the students who used social media, particularly Facebook. Questionnaires consisted of two parts: the first part included the independent variables such as age, specialty, place of residence and income while the second part included the effects of social networks on the students, containing 69 items.

The finding of the study indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between the use of Facebook and the number of hours used and the interpersonal communication of the students. Another finding was that Facebook affected the behavior

of students of the University College Irbid girls because it reduced their desire for interpersonal communication with others. There was no statistically significant difference related to the influence of the use of Facebook on the interpersonal communication of the students due to their monthly income, specialization and academic level.

The study recommended that young people must be cautioned on Facebook use and the negative effects it may have on family relationships and between the students. The study further recommended awareness and preventive measures of the effects of Facebook on social relationships for young people. It recommended further studies to be done on different age groups to determine the extent Facebook influences young people, so as to develop the right policies in the use of Facebook.

Another study focusing on the roles of SNS influence on interpersonal communication skills was conducted in 2014. The study was conducted by Uygarer (2014) at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus and was titled 'Role of SNS on Tertiary Students' Interpersonal Communication Skills and Attachment Needs.' The SNS investigated in this study were Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter. Comparative research design and in-house questionnaire were used for the completion of the study (Özad & Uygarer, 2014).

The scope of the study involved 540 under-graduate students from all faculties and schools in North Cyprus and 15 interviews conducted among Masters Students. The results of the study showed that SNS develop interpersonal communication and help to positively maintain affiliation. Students from third world countries claimed that SNS help

them to develop their interpersonal communication skills and fulfill their needs of affiliation.

Kumar and Verma (2016) investigated the influence of SNS on the social interaction of college students. They discovered that SNS and their influences on social relationships were strongly significant (r=0.85) and there was no significant relationship between SNS and gender. A counter discovery was made by a study on the influence of SNS on youths in India. The study revealed that majority of young people have access to and spend most of their time on SNS. The study revealed that usage of SNS has several negative influences on its users including negatively affecting social norms and values of users and generating health problems such as backache, headache, and laziness (Lalnunpuii & Verma, 2016).

Sevik (2013) researched 'The Influence of Facebook on Interpersonal Communication'. This study was conducted in the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of the Eastern Mediterranean University, among 200 students. Data was collected through questionnaires that consisted of 66 questions. Thirty-seven of the questions were demographics and related to users' habits, 29 of them were designed according to a five-point Likert scale and sought to measure the students' attitudes towards the use of Facebook, and the effects of Facebook on inter-personal communication.

The findings of the study indicated that participants did not feel the need to engage in face-to-face communication when they used Facebook. Although this was the case, the results of the current study also suggested that face to face communication habits were

still not vanished (Sevik, 2013).

Neelamalar and Chitra (2009) carried out a study to identify and assess issues regarding youth behavior and networking usage and how these influenced social interactions. Chitra found out that majority of youths in India are already members of more than one SNS and they get to use the SNS for reasons such as maintaining existing contacts, interacting with strangers, reinventing personalities, sharing knowledge and opinion as well as ideas. Ellison and Boyd (2013) investigated sociality through SNS. They acknowledged drastic changes in social spheres since the inception of SNS. The study revealed that SNS have opened up new avenues and possibilities for analyzing human interaction (Neelamalar & Chitra, 2009).

A study on college freshmen and online social networking sites was conducted in 2007 by Higher Educational Research and Institute. The study found out that 94 per cent of first-year students spent time on online Social Networking Sites per week. Most of the users of SNS use it as an alternative way to socialize with their peers. This study was supported by a finding by Khan (2012) who explored the influence of social networking websites on students. The study emphasized factors that have influences on students such as age, education, social influence and gender (Khan, 2012).

The study concluded that students aged between 15 and 25 years mostly use SNS for entertainment while some use them due to social influence. Bicen (2014) surveyed university students' reasons for using SNS in their daily lives. It was found out that students use SNS mostly for instant communication with their friends and not for

educational purposes, finding new friends and to be members of groups (Bicen, 2015).

Similarly, a study by Asilo et al (2016) was done to assess the influence of SNS on the interpersonal relationships of students. The researchers in the study found out that using SNS helped students to develop a strong interpersonal relationship with friends, family and colleagues among others. Most of the users of SNS use it for an hour or two a day (Asilo, Manlapig, & Rementilla, 2016).

A study by Othman, Ngah and Fariha (2017) titled: 'The uses of social media on Student's Communication and Self Concepts among TATIUC Students' was carried out to examine how the TATI University College (TATIUC) students used social media and the relations with their communications and self-concepts. The study was carried out at TATI University College, Malaysia in the year 2016. A qualitative approach was used in the study by the use of questionnaires. The sample of the study constituted 200 TATIUC active students out of 2000. The findings of the study indicated that students perceived social media as the main communication medium. About 81 per cent of the respondents indicated that they felt they were missing out if they did not use social media network. The findings showed negative effects of self- esteem. The study concluded that students were exposed to various types of social media that exist with WhatsApp and Facebook being the popular ones used by college students (Othman, Apandi, & Ngah, 2016).

It further concluded that these social media platforms influenced student's self-concept. The study recommended future research work in areas that include students' academic performance and social network site usage habits.

Langat (2015) in a study titled: 'Media Networking and its Influence on Interpersonal Face-to-Face Oral Communication at Family level: A Qualitative Study of Selected Families in Eldoret Town, Kenya', carried out a qualitative survey on the influence of social media networking on interpersonal face-to-face communication with a purpose of investigating if the huge entry of social media has compromised interpersonal communication at a face-to-face level at the family level. He sought to find recommendations that could be made to mitigate the identified challenges. In the quest of investigation, Face-Negotiation Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Social Penetration Theory, and Uses and gratification theory were analyzed (Langat, 2015).

The study took to a qualitative approach where face-to-face interviews and focus-group discussions were utilized to obtain information from 15 married men, 15 married women, 15 female youths and 15 male youths who had completed form four and had personal smart-phones. The results revealed that social networking engagement had negatively influenced the family dyadic communication hence badly affecting family relationships and interaction. The study concluded that social networking is cost-effective, instantaneous and bridges distances by bringing people from diverse parts of the world closer to each other. However, the negative influences outweigh its benefits.

The negative aspects of social media included addiction, overexposure of individuals due to poor self-disclosure communication skills, breakdown of interpersonal communication skills, poor listening skills and inability to resolve conflicts. The study recommended that in the family setting, discipline must be upheld. For instance, when interpersonal face-to-

face is taking place, everybody should listen keenly and contribute to the conversation and during this period communication gadgets should be switched off or in silent mode. It also recommended that guidance and counseling sessions should always be done in institutions of learning and churches to prevent users from becoming victims of social networking which can lead to cyberbullying and creation of false relationships. It suggested that matters of social media should be integrated into the education curriculum so that awareness is created at all levels. The study also recommended that studies examining the influence of social networking on organizational ethics and professionalism, effects of social media on time management and job efficiency should be done.

A study by Burke, Kraut and Marlow (2011) examined how Facebook affects social capital depending on: contrasting one-on-one communication, broadcast to a wider audience, types of site activities, the individual difference among users, passive consumption of social news including social communication skills and self-esteem. The study revealed that receiving messages from friends is associated with an increase in bridging social capital. The study revealed that college students are motivated by social information-seeking, using social media to learn about people they have met thereby bridging social capital (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011).

Lukindo (2016) seems to support the argument by Burke, Kraut and Marlow in his study: 'The Influence of Social Networking Sites on Students' Social Interaction. 'He explored the influence of SNS on students' social interaction at Northeast Normal University in

China. His findings revealed that there are significant differences in the number of years one has engaged with SNS, the number of friends one has and the number of hours that one spends using SNSs (Lukindo, 2016). The study also revealed a positive correlation between SNS time use and social connectedness, which is similar to Burke et al (2011) argument that SM use is good for bridging social capital.

Contrary to many claims that CMC negatively influences Face to Face communication, Baym (2015) in her book 'Personal Connections in the Digital Age' that digital communications enhance relationships. She argues further that, the more you communicate with people using devices, the more likely you are to communicate with those people face to face. She agrees that new technologies may raise the fear that human interactions can be lessened, but that we eventually adapt and maintain our human connections.

An Investigation in the Framework of uses and Gratification Theory.' Their research purposed to determine users' need of using SNS in particular, for interpersonal communication purposes.

The research sought to evaluate the usage of SNS by people and their usage of the same for interpersonal communication purposes in terms of uses and gratification (Temel, Aysen and Özmelek Taş 2018). A striking revelation of the study was that interpersonal communication has shifted to online from face-to-face communication. Users are finding online interactions as effective and necessary, with the aim of persisting or continuing their communication with both their near and far friends.

A study by Barkhuus and Tashiro (2010) aimed at observing the integration of Facebook into students' social practices. The findings of the study showed that Facebook was used to support real-life interactions and not as an exception, but as a normal continuation of communication through the online network. They showed that Facebook was used for casual online interactions that led to causal offline interactions. Finally, the findings revealed that Facebook supported communication between strangers and engages notions of friendship and conviviality (Barkhuus and Tashiro, 2010).

Ellison and Lampe (2007) examined the relationship between the use of Facebook and the formation and maintenance of social capital. Facebook was seen to play significant roles in maintaining and bridging social capital. Facebook was also found to interact with measures of psychological well-being, suggesting that it could assist users who were experiencing low self-esteem. In line with the arguments of Ellison and Lampe (2007) Botou, and Lampe (2018) examined the perception of teenagers about social networks and investigated whether FB had an influence on teenagers' self-esteem (Botou and Lampe, 2007).

The study showed that self-esteem is not connected with the frequency of students' use Facebook or the level of acceptance or popularity of the users. The study concluded that teenagers primarily seek recognition and establishing relationships with their peers through social networks like FB. The study shows that the more teenagers use SNS to communicate, the less they use it for self-promotion. Finally, it appeared that Facebook contributed to the establishment of relationships, particularly with the opposite sex.

Ellison and Lampe (2007) further argued that online interactions do not remove people from their offline world but may indeed be used to support relationships and keep people in contact. Tang-Mui and Chan-Eang read from the same script as Ellison and Lampe. According to the present researchers, social media like FB is playing the role of building relationships with friends and family members though it has some constraints when abused. The scholars argue that when interactions are growing in the online community, they also simultaneously flourish with interpersonal communications. The study perceives FB as a good communication tool that can bring closeness among users. Through the use of FB, relationships and communication among users may be improved and enhanced to the level of a united society. Family groups are active on new media and strong interactions take place. However, interpersonal face to face communication is still popular. Respondents stated that new media do not create any gaps in a relationship; instead it bridges the gap. The study also noted that new media and the internet are seen as an advantage to execute negotiation skills.

Arleena et al, (2013) in a study titled: 'An Investigation into Facebook and its Relationship with Interpersonal Skills' investigated whether there existed association between an individual's involvement on Facebook, and their tendency to exhibit interpersonal skills necessary for social interactions. The study revealed that links between Facebook use and interpersonal skills are concerning for university students who have not had the opportunity to gain social skills in a real-world setting. This study was supported by a research conducted by Hooker (2016) titled: 'The Relationship Between Digital Technology and the Interpersonal Communication Skills of Generation Y.' The

study indicated that members of Generation Y often fear intimacy and awkwardness because they lack interpersonal communication skills, choosing to hide behind digital technology instead of engaging in interpersonal communication.

The study revealed that millennials spend significant amounts of time using SNS and less and less time interacting face to face. This results in a decline in interpersonal skills. Hooker concludes that how Generation Y uses digital technology is an indicator of how they see the world and their values, which in turn affects how they interact with people (Hooker, 2016).

A study by Singh and Laxmi (2015) aimed at analyzing SNS to find out their influence on social and personal life. The study concluded that the most popular SNS was Facebook followed by Twitter and LinkedIn. The top four reasons for using SNS are for social engagement, direct communication, instant messaging and relationship building. The growth of social networking sites shows a significant change in the social and personal behavior of internet users (Singh & Laxmi, 2015).

In 'Digital belongings: The Intersections of Social Cohesion, Connectivity and Digital Media,' the researchers investigated how young university students use social media and the extent to which digital interaction and networking influence social participation and social cohesion. The researcher suggests that social media is having a significant influence on how people 'are social.'

Allen, et al, (2014) examined how social media use affects social connectedness. Among other issues, the researchers argued that online tools create a paradox for social

connectedness. On one hand, they elevate the ease with which individuals may form and create online groups and communities but on the other, they can create a source of alienation. Other scholars also take a neutral stand on the influences of social media on user-interaction patterns (Allen, Ryan, Gray, McInerney, & Waters, 2014). Pavica (2010) attempted to identify patterns of self-discourse between face-to-face and Facebook friends' interactions. The researcher claims that the process of relationship-development in terms of the relationship between social attraction, self-disclosure, predictability and trust were similar in both Facebook and face-to-face relationships (Sheldon, 2010).

2.6   Rationale of the Study Based on Literature Review

In this literature review, several topics have been addressed by recent research on Facebook. However, from the review of studies, it is clear that gaps abound in the knowledge of different settings, countries and demographic groups. Based on the review of recent related literature, it is apparent that previous researches have different findings when it comes to the influence that social media have on people's communication skills, whereby both positive and negative influences are found. However, up to date, there are few studies conducted in the Kenyan context pertaining to the subject thus providing basis for this study to fill the gap and to determine the answer within the context of a university setting.

Most of the reviews and studies are based in the USA and some other countries outside Africa. Facebook has billions of users worldwide yet very few studies have been conducted in African institutions higher learning. Research on Facebook should demonstrate the influence of Facebook on students in institutions of higher learning in

Africa. It is also apparent that many convenient samples have been used from students in the same year of study in a particular university yet a diversion to gather respondents randomly from any year of study could help strengthen the generalization of the research finding.

2.7   Summary

There is a clear relationship between the study and literature review. Reviewed literature presents conflicting perspectives on online interactions; including a debate on whether online interactions are as intimate and close as offline interactions. Earlier perspectives that dominated the 1990s argued that people cannot develop close relationships in an online setting. However, contemporary approaches including Social Penetration Theory suggest that online relationships may be comparable to offline relationships but the key element is time. The above theory will be used to guide the study and not as a basis for carrying out the research. Recent related research has been critically reviewed and it has led to the identification of gaps in previous literature thus justifying this study. It demonstrates that there is a need to investigate the influence of online social network on users' interactions in a wider setting and on varied demographic groups.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology. It starts with the philosophical stance of the study followed by discussions of the qualitative research approach, research design and research methods used. It also describes the sampling frame, data generation techniques, processes and data analysis. The chapter also contains the ethical considerations that were adhered to as well as the conclusion for the chapter.

3.2   Philosophical Paradigm

This study was anchored on the constructivist philosophical paradigm. The ontology relating to constructivism is the view that there exists an objective world to be observed but we can only understand the world through language and interpretation. There is no objective truth to be observed in social relations. Truth is rather an inter-subjective construction created and negotiated through interactions between people. Epistemologically, this study will be grounded on the constructivist research paradigm.

The central idea of constructivism is that human culture and decisions exert profound and often unnoticed influence (Mallon, 2007). Unlike the positivists who claim that there is an objective truth and claim subjectivism is a purely social construction, constructivists place themselves in the middle.

In constructivism, the truth about the object cannot be discovered. We can only strive to interpret the meaning of the object in ways that are useful to ourselves and others.

Constructivists are less concerned with the object itself and more interested in the time and place-specific conventions and practices of individuals and groups that influence our perceptions of the object (Mascolo, 2009). This position is located in the middle between the positivist view that objective facts can be uncovered and the post-modern view that the entire world is a social construction.

The study was approached with an open mind seeking to answer predetermined research questions which had no affirmative or negative answers. Methodologies within the constructivist paradigm are directed at the analysis of narrative using various qualitative research methods which rely heavily upon the interpretation of the researcher: 'There is no burden of proof. There is only the world to experience and understand'. This is in contrast to the positivist paradigm which applies the quantitative methodologies and concludes research by proving or disapproving a hypothesis or theory. This study investigated Facebook-mediated interaction among university students in Kenyan universities. Facebook was originally launched in a university setting and still has a majority of its users within universities globally.

3.3   Research Approach

This study was conducted using the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach positions the researcher, rather than technical processes, as the principal instrument in the process of data collection and analysis which is in contrast with the positivist paradigm.

According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) qualitative methods are defined as the techniques associated with the gathering, analysis, interpretation and presentation of

narrative information. Data collected qualitatively is textually descriptive and produces a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases. This provides a more in-depth understanding of the cases and situations studied, but reduces generalizability (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This differs from the quantitative approach methods which rely on the processing of large amounts of data which provides for a broad, generalizable set of findings presented succinctly.

Quantitative research methods produce clear numerical analysis of expansive research populations, the results of which can then be applied to a large number of people. Qualitative research methods produce a deep level of information about smaller cases and groups of people and result in a deeper understanding of the research population. The results, however, cannot be applied on a larger scale to obtain an understanding of the influence of Facebook on the interaction patterns of university students at universities in Kenya.

3.4 Case Study Design

A case study is an in-depth study of one person, group or event. In a case study, nearly every aspect of the subject's life and history is analyzed to seek patterns and causes of behavior. Case studies can be used in various fields including; Psychology, Medicine, Education, Anthropology, Political Science and Social Work.

The purpose of a case study is to learn as much as possible about an individual or group so that the information can be generalized to many others. Unfortunately, case studies

tend to be highly subjective as it is sometimes difficult to generalise results to a larger population.

Case study can also be defined as an empirical research method used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon focusing on the dynamics of the case within its real-life context (Yin, 2003). Case studies could be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. Case study is an ideal method when the research aims to find answers to 'how' and 'when' questions. This study sought to answer the following;

1) How has Facebook reshaped interaction among university students in universities?

2) How does Facebook-mediated communication enhance or undermine social interactions among university students in universities?

3) What affordances do university students in universities perceive in their use of Facebook as an interaction platform?

All the above questions are in line with the case study design method. A case study is also ideal to use when studying contemporary events such as trends in the use of social network sites, which is central in the present study. Case study method recommends triangulation of data by giving the researcher an opportunity to collect data using different techniques. This study triangulated data by use of in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions; all under a single case of Facebook use by university students in universities within Eldoret town, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

3.5   Sampling

The study was conducted in universities within Eldoret town, Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya. Eldoret town was selected as it hosted many public and private universities. Uasin Gishu County is home to five public universities and three private universities. The names of the universities and number of students enrolled are detailed in the table below:

Table 3.1 Enrollment of university students in universities in Eldoret town

S/No	Name of University	Number of Students Enrolled
1.	Moi University	35,000
2.	University of Nairobi	600
3.	University of Eldoret	20,000
4.	Kisii University	1,700
5.	Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology	1,300
6.	Mt. Kenya University	2,500
7.	Catholic University of Eastern Africa	1,700

Moi University (35,000), University of Nairobi(600), University of Eldoret (20,000), Kisii University campus (1,700)and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology campus (1,300), Mt. Kenya University campus (2,500)and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) campus (1,700).

Since the universities and university campuses were closely located and within a fairly busy Eldoret town, students interacted on the social media platform and were available

for participation. This research targeted university students from universities within Eldoret town. Second and third year students were purposively selected to participate in the study. First year students were left out from the study because they were new to the institutions and may not have networked well, while the fourth years were busy preparing for completion of their studies in the universities.

The study used purposive sampling so as to select students who used Facebook for their daily interactions. The snow-balling technique was used to recruit study participants for in-depth interviews. After the first participant was interviewed, they referred the researcher to the next participant. This was done until the saturation point was reached. The saturation point was reached when no new information was coming from the study participants. The total population of the study was 40 respondents. The study used two focus-group discussions (FGD). FGD 1 had ten participants while FGD 2 had eight participants. The study also used in-depth interviews where 22 participants who frequently used FB were purposively selected for participation.

3.6 Data Generation Techniques and Processes

The study used focus-group discussions and in-depth interviews to generate data.

3.6.1 Focus-Group Discussions

Focus-group discussions are a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards a concept or idea (Patton, 1990). Responses in a focus-group are spoken, open-ended, relatively broad and

qualitative. They are also useful because one can observe non-verbal communication in group interactions.

To achieve rigor in data collection, the study conducted two focus FGDs with ten and nine participants respectively. FGD was used for the triangulation of data that helped in the collaboration of rich information. FGDs were also used to capture group dynamics and group identity, which were core to this study. FGDs are good for time-saving and an efficient way of collecting data simultaneously from the target population, without having to conduct individual interviews. The FGDs allowed the study to examine the participants in a more natural setting than in a one-to-one interview.

3.6.2   In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are purposeful discussions aimed at gathering information on a specific issue of a research question. Regarding the nature of this study, where intentions were to investigate social media mediated interactions among university students in universities, the study utilized open-ended questions which normally leave room for the interviewees to answer in detail.

Social media is connecting people and is consequently reshaping the nature of interactions in a different way to face-to-face and real-world interactions. The study intended to investigate the influence social media has on the interaction patterns of its users; are the influences of social media negative or of benefit to the interactions of its users. Interviews were carried out to allow the participants to share their thoughts,

feelings and experiences concerning social media use and its influences on interactions. The study utilized in-depth interviews where 22 participants from the seven universities in Uasin Gishu, who frequently used FB, were purposively selected for participation.

3.7   Data Analysis

The qualitative data for this study consisted of text obtained from transcripts of audio tapes, memos and field notes of interviews, observations, pictures and stories of personal lived experiences. This involved coding and categorization into predetermined and emerging themes through focusing on questions, time periods, events, cases and groups. This analysis therefore, was thematic. Data connection for cause-effect relationships, data corroboration and interpretation was done to create meanings and a final report made.

Data connections and relationships were established through the process of constant comparative analysis of incidents and concepts according to focus. Data corroboration was achieved through further data collection on events and activities that deviate widely from normal.

Meanings were analyzed through conceptualization, articulation of concepts through description and classification, and analysis of relationships through the connections established between them. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim.Focus Group Discussions transcripts were assigned to four groups of two coders each. Coders were the same trained individuals who facilitated and transcribed the FGDs. Each group member independently hand-coded their assigned transcript by reviewing each line, phrase and paragraph to identify the initial key themes. Subsequently, each coding group met

separately and then with all other groups for review and merging of independently analysed and coded transcripts into a final document. This stage was succeeded by a joint review of each of the groups' finalised transcripts by the entire team.

In this validation process, codes and themes were examined for content within the context of the document and thematically in relation to the overall interview guide. The resultant data was combined into one matrix to develop visual charts of the words and phrases that represented the themes discovered during analysis. In order to protect the privacy of the respondents and organizations, names of persons and institutions were deleted in the final report.

Qualitative data analysis can be described as the process of making sense from research participants' opinions or views of situations, corresponding patterns, themes, categories, and regular similarities. The study employed qualitative analysis, which means to reduce, sort, analyze, categorize. The key steps for analysis and data processing are to reduce to definitive statements and sort, codify, classify or categorize in form of theoretical concepts, analyse concepts and compare with the outcomes of the textual review, then drawing conclusions. The study carried out a thorough text analysis in form of qualitative data processing and then developed and assigned themes that created meaning, insights and patterns.

The study focused on tenets and processes of thematic data analysis that include; transcription, organization of data into retrievable sections, coding and organizing data into themes and sub-themes.

3.7.1 Transcription

For proper transcription to take place, sessions were voice-recorded as writing down everything would not be possible. Data from the FGD and interviews was transcribed verbatim as soon as possible to ensure recall of interview and FGD discussions. For proper recall and interpretation of transcription, the audio recordings were listened to again and compared to the verbatim transcriptions.

Non-verbal cues and gestures were noted as they too communicate meaning. Transcription notation symbols, comments and taking of field notes were used to capture non-transcribable text to gain as much of the complete picture as possible.

3.7.2 Data Organization

After texts were transcribed and thoroughly read to obtain a comprehensive impression of the content, the next stage was thematic data analysis. Data was organized in manageable and retrievable sections. This stage involved cleaning and winnowing of data.

3.7.3 Re-familiarizing Data

The ultimate goal as a researcher is to form a general idea of what the data is saying. At this stage, attempts were made to re-familiarize with the data by re-reading notes, making notes and memos where they were needed. This step led to coding.

3.7.4 Coding

Codes are names or labels assigned to specific units or segments of related meaning identified within the field notes and transcripts corroborates that coding is a way of

indexing or categorizing the text to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it. A code in qualitative inquiry is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns summative, salient, essence-capturing, and or evocative attributes for a portion of language based on visual data.

There are several levels of coding in qualitative data analysis. This study utilized open coding to analyze the qualitative data. In the study, as progress was made with analysis, further sub-themes and sub-categories were included to identify meaning, connections, relationships and trends that helped develop codes.

3.8   Trustworthiness of the Study

The created knowledge as an outcome of research should be trustful and add value to the area of the research. This study strove to be as truthful and honest as possible. Four key factors were focused on to achieve trustworthiness in this research: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

3.8.1   Transferability

Transferability is defined as the extent to which research findings can be generalized to other cases or contexts (Lincoln and Guba's 1985). It is possible to generalize qualitative data to other situations with similar circumstances if rigor is demonstrated. This research strove to achieve transferability by utilizing purposive sampling to get participants. This allowed for detailed description which assisted to achieve transferability by giving in-depth details of the phenomenon under study.

The study achieved triangulation in the research by using focus group discussions and individual interviews as the use of different methods compensates for their limitations while exploiting their respective benefits.

3.8.2   Dependability

Dependability refers to the criterion of rigor related to the consistency of a finding. This is the extent to which the research procedure is clear enough to enable other scholars to replicate the study to obtain similar results. To achieve dependability, this study adhered to clear and well explained methodological procedures. This study endeavored to achieve consistency throughout the thesis, starting from the research design, methods of data generation and data analysis that were all consistent with the constructivist stance of this study.

3.8.3   Confirmability

The term confirmability relates to how neutral the research is and to what extent the researcher influences the finding. Conformability refers to the extent to which the data and interpretations of the study are grounded in events rather than the personal constructions. The nature of this study being qualitative and underpinned in the constructionist paradigm, personal interaction with the study was unavoidable. Due to the above challenge, the study aimed at remaining focused on being objective on all aspects of the research process.

3.8.4 Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) credibility refers to the truthfulness of the data. A key way to ensuring truthfulness is by collecting data over an extended period. The nature of this study required time when locating and creating rapport with the various target groups. Another way of achieving credibility is by ensuring prolonged engagements with participants of the study. Credibility is achieved by collecting data personally as a researcher. In this study, credibility was achieved by ensuring that each participant was accorded personal attention and interviewed individually while exercising patience. With the help of research assistants to capture information, FGDs were also conducted in person. Another way of ensuring credibility is the use of multiple data collection methods to gain deep insight into issues at hand in the study. This study utilised personal interviews and FGDs to set a clear perspective about the influence of FB on the interaction of university students in universities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Frequent consultation with supervisors and also performing peer debriefing with colleagues in the planning and data gathering phase in the study was carried out and attained while addressing all levels of the research.

3.8.5 Validity

Construct validity means that the initiators of a study have to establish correct operational measures for the concept that has to be studied. The researcher paid attention to focus on three research questions based on the purpose of this study. By doing this, the purpose was possible to fulfill in a more precise way than would have been possible with only one

broad research question. Moreover, the researcher developed the questions for the interview in a way that they were precise enough in order to obtain answers for the respective research questions.

Additionally, it was ensured that the interview contained clearly understood questions carefully selected from the theoretical material to establish a solid framework for the analysis. It was also crucial to ensure the utilization adequate literature. As such, the selection of theoretical material carefully took place with regard to its sources. Further, different views of a theoretical issue were compared in collecting data.

3.8.6 Reliability

The reliability of a study can be described as ensuring that the same findings and conclusions can be achieved when the study is repeated in the same way by a later investigator over and over again. Errors and biases in a study have to be minimized. A crucial aspect is the documentation of the procedure in order to be able to repeat a study.

While the theories used in this study have been applied and verified throughout the years, social media research is quite new and more research is necessary. In addition, social media is a rapidly changing and evolving phenomenon.

3.9   Ethical Considerations

A consent letter was received from Moi University for fieldwork and a clearance from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Prior permission was sought from target participants and whose privacy was assured. This is because participants needed to be comfortable to share their beliefs and feelings about the

topic. For this reason, responses were anonymous and identities were not disclosed. The study adhered to voluntary participation and participants were informed that their decision and participation would have no influence on their academic standing in the university. Finally, extra caution was taken to avoid any kind of plagiarism in the thesis.

3.10   Summary

This study subscribed to the relativist ontology and the epistemology of the study was constructivism; that there exists an objective world to be observed but we can only understand the world through language and interpretation. There is no objective truth to the observed in social relation.

The chapter sheds light on the research approach, design and research methods that were used as the guiding research methodology in this study. The chapter demonstrates the sampling procedures and data generation techniques that include personal interviews and FDGs. The steps of thematic data analysis are also explained. The process involves transcription, organized data, re-familiarizing data, coding and categorizing data into themes and patterns. The chapter finally details the trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERACTION PATTERNS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter the findings and discussions of research questions will be presented.

The first research question presents findings and discussions on how Facebook reshapes interaction patterns among university students in universities. The findings were presented under themes; Copy, Non-Originality and Trending, Casual Ties or Relationships, Confidentiality and Privacy Online and Agenda Setting for Interactions among other themes.

There were 40 respondents involved in the study. In the in-depth interviews, 22 respondents participated among whom 11 were female and 11 were male. Two FGDs which had 19 respondents; 10 females and 8 males were conducted. FGD respondents were spread from all the universities sampled for the study and from the second and third years of study.

4.2   Modernity and Trending Social Culture

According to some respondents, Facebook is the ideal place for users to adopt and copy new trends locally and internationally. It is through Facebook that users are changing their lives by adapting to what seems fashionable and what is trending.

Majority of the respondents claimed that university students in universities were no longer themselves or original; they disliked their present states and wanted to ape what was popular in the social media sites.

> Interactions are changing. First, we copy some people then we are no longer original, we copy how people carry themselves, we are skewed in our judgments because of what we see online, what celebrities make us think is correct and not through our conscious minds and not through critical thinking **(RS 1)**

Some respondents argued that the desire of university students to always be trendy had made the users to become tired and weak as users of FB have become isolated and tired to even think of talking to each other because they are overwhelmed online.

> It is not uncommon for a lecture room full of university students not to sport at least a good number lost in their phones so often on Facebook checking what's trending, who has posted what. Both men and women want to know about the socialites they follow what they have in store in terms of fashion etc. The bottom-line is Facebook has robbed the beauty and essence of originality among us in the universities. **(RS 4)**

> People are very fake in the virtual world and this does in no way help social interactions or rather meaningful social capital among young people. People are unable to meet and interact, we hear cases of suicide in the universities because there is no platform for students to vent out what is hurting them be it relationships going soar or hitting the rocks with academic matters. **(RS 13)**

Respondents One, Four and Thirteen are all concerned that FB encourages users to fake their lives and this faking affects the levels of social interactions in their respective arguments. There seemed to be a clear agreement that when social ties are torn apart, then individuals suffer from many dangers such as suicide, suspicion, skewed judgments, depression and lack of the ability to think critically.

4.3   Development of Rapid Casual Relationships

Facebook is highly regarded for the creation and initiation of wider than ever opportunities to create friendships. However, according to majority of the respondents the relationships on FB may be higher in number but shorter in the periods they last and weaker in nature. FB and SM are credited for creating opportunities for interactions but the interactions are too superficial. University students are connecting more than ever before in history but the downside is that these interactions are not adding up in being quality in nature as users can still be very lonely while claiming to have thousands of online friends. University students have realized the dangers that can occur as a result of online interactions and they now fear to expose relationships on FB since any person with a sinister motive can work with an intention to harm other users.

> When I was in first year, we had a portal for students, a place where those who we elected would keep us informed, but mostly this site has negatively worked in building relationships. This site would be a place of small talk politics and romance in campus. The down side of such sites is that where users had a misunderstanding there was a downfall or things could not work out those involved in the turmoil would disseminate their troubles online to everyone. This becomes a place of shame, abuses and laughter for the haters. In the campus portal, incidences of posted nude photos of students were common and this has really destroyed possibilities of healthy relationships in campus. **(RS 14)**

> For me it has definitely worsened relationships among us in campus, FB is a place to expose someone, it focuses on the bad side of someone, it hides the good parts of individual and only dwells on the negative. **(RS 4)**

Some respondents claimed that FB interactions were the current and trending way of communicating. Because of FB, people are able to socialize more than ever before in history. Human ties have become stronger and people are living in better communities as they are able to socialize and solve their problems together. Some university students

claimed that they were now connected with long lost friends whom they would have otherwise never met if there was no FB. Social media in that case has reshaped interactions globally and in most positive of ways.

> I interact a lot with my peers, I talk to lots of opposite sex friends, we flirt a lot, I actually enjoy flirting and making new friends, FB has enabled me be known and I get good receptions when I meet my online friends for the first time. I am able to even make friends in the diaspora which makes me a global person. **(RS 4)**

Some university students believe that there are authentic relationships that emerge from Facebook. Authentic in that they lead to healthy and productive relationships or outcomes that are either long lasting or short-term depending on the reason of establishment. On the contrary, there are also illegal relationships that emerge from Facebook.

> Some relationships have positive influences but some advance negative effects on the participants and are against the expectations of the society. They include; relationships that advance drug trafficking, illegal smuggling, robbery with violence, gangs also form on Facebook and lure innocent users extorting cash from them in pretense that they offer certain services. The case of imposters is also forming ground for illegal relationship that university students can come together and indulge in. **(RS 3)**

The third respondent believed that there were healthy relationships on FB. However, just like the other respondents pointed out, RS 3 was of the view that FB has its negative effects which include illegal relationships that advance vices such as drug trafficking, violence, terrorism and tribalism.

Evidently, there is change in the manner that interactions and friendships are viewed through SM like Facebook. Online people value interactions in a whole new way that is different from how friendship and interactions were carried out in the past. People express love by tagging each other, sending emojis and not really being there for those

they love, this was captured emotionally by a respondent.

> Nowadays FB love is shown in a different way. We show love by posting photos and not buying flowers, tagging in posts is a new form of love. When you fail to tag a loved one, you are not showing love. This has reshaped the whole purpose of interaction for meaningful friendships. On birthdays we send emojis and electronic flowers to replace that much needed and appreciated phone call and consequently making life easier but breaking relationships. **(RS 6)**

The aspect that FB allows anyone to post their opinions without fear is working towards damaging some otherwise good relationships. Facebook has the power to destroy relationships as people are courageous to say anything because they are not in close proximity to those they attack online. Those ones that post online are sometimes unable to express themselves offline and avoid interactions. Facebook is accused of initiating relationships quickly but is not capable of maintaining the relationships.

> It has really reshaped how people interact. Initially, people would take time to know each other, visit each other but today students just engage directly on FB. **(RS 4)**

The nature of FB allows for users to fake identities, post anything they wish without fear of being known and again attack anyone. Since majority of FB users are university students in universities, Facebook has allowed for students to be vulnerable to stalkers who have bad motives. Facebook is the one-stop shop to reach anyone who an online attacker may wish to get to.

> In my opinion, the online social networks are full of malice with selfish people who may not mean well, what majority of people are after is to fulfill their own needs and not yours. People who make request seek to fulfill a particular need which many not be in your favor. **(RS 4)**

> I have witnessed relationship terminating because of FB friendships and companionships, I have seen students extorted, used, killed and raped because they had dared nurture a relationship through FB. **(RS 12)**

This fact then makes students suspicious of online friend requests, especially accepting friend requests from unknown people or people with strange names. Some people have names such as Lucifer and this sends a wrong impression to other online users who consequently decide to privatize their accounts closing the opportunity to make friends with some genuine online users of FB.

> Today there are many fake profiles or accounts on FB, or just people with real profiles but posting all the fake stuff there, so how can a relationship begin on a fake account? Nowhere! Who is real anymore on FB? However, FB is good for client and businessman relationship because you can get so many clients and develop long term relationships after assisting each other make some bucks and partner for customers. **(RS 10)**

Respondent 10 narrated the fact about fake profiles on FB. She bitterly expressed her disgust about unreal people or unreal profiles on these accounts. She vehemently dismissed any productive online friendships but only approved business interactions that can develop truly genuine friendships.

> If we talk about peer relationships, I think FB has helped to maintain peer relationships as I know people I went with to high school and luckily through FB we are still able to maintain contact and talk to each other. I also believe that romantic relationships do start and last through social media and online stuff is dangerous. They say internet never forgets, what you post will be exposed in clarity and in detail, watch people you engage, insults, groups you get in and relationships you develop. **(RS 9)**

Respondent 9 believed that FB does not have much influence although it has helped maintain peer relationships. Just like majority of the respondents, the respondent believed that FB has negative influences and results. Respondent Sixteen below advocated for FB, saying that it indeed reshapes interactions positively by its innovative features that allow

users to have unique abilities to interact in a friendly and timely manner.

> Today with the provision of the online status that shows whether the persons you want to engage with are actually online, has enabled easy communication among not only the university students. The environment on Facebook is a less formal one and people communicate at almost equal levels as though they were peers. It has also reduced the world into a small community where students from across the world converge and share their concern. Networked relationship has been a possibility thanks to Facebook. **(RS 16)**

Focus-Group Discussions conducted seemed to support the responses from the in-depth interviews like one of the respondents from the FGD had to say:

> Relationships that are developed online are reshaping our methods and longevity of relationships; we have very superficial relationships thanks to FB. FB has contributed to some of the social relationships that are virtual but fake, the other social relationships that are virtual are when you take a photo and over edit it, when the photo is viewed it is liked by many online, perhaps your name and what you do is all not real including the photos online. (Rs **1, FGD 1, 1)**

On the basis of triangulation, this is evident that FB relationships are not real and most of them are there to benefit the interested parties.

Laziness in interactions is also evident from frequent FB users, because FB users have gotten too lazy with themselves, even in personal grooming, where users only look smart and well-dressed when taking photos for posting, but are too lazy to groom themselves while not posting or sharing images and videos online.

Users of FB and majority being university students in universities no longer go out to meet up with their peers as they love remaining indoors so they can chat away and even send and share videos. University students in universities no longer meet up for group discussions as these class groups are attended online nowadays. In other words, classes

are even being skipped.

> Some students have gone to an extent of forming academic group discussion forums where some students won't be attending classes but will be following aggressively what is being discussed by other students. One does not have to necessarily attend classes; in fact, this inculcates laziness and a sense of irresponsibility amongst university students. **(RS 8)**

> Peer pressure made me join FB as such as it was difficult then because we used to use cyber since smart phones were not out then. I believe FB, social media and the internet has made people lazy. Most students are on FB and they are on group chats. Students exchange ideas through FB and FB messenger. This feature make them too lazy that they care less for proper interaction. This has killed the togetherness because there are no more physical interactions among even students belonging to class groups. The drive to do work is not there, the drive to meet up is no longer there because FB has made everything easy causing even laziness of interactions. The only positive thing I can say about FB is that you get to talk to anybody anytime in the world. **(RS 14)**

> I use for PR, in as much as Facebook and the new technologies is a blessing to the new generations. It has been a conduit of creating a lazy population that spends many hours weekly on the platform **(RS 16)**

Respondent 16 used FB as a Public Relations tool and believed it has made communication easy. Despite this positivity, he believes FB has the capability of making people lazy. Respondent 14 joined FB as a means of interaction due to peer pressure and thought FB has made people lazy, killed face-to-face interactions, which has led to lack of sharing of ideas and therefore causing lack of originality. He also believed it has affected interaction patterns among students. Majority of his views of FB were negative. The only thing positive he thought about FB was the ability to communicate to anyone at any time.

4.4   Diminishing Confidentiality and Privacy

Today on SMS, privacy and confidentiality is not a possibility. This may be by choice or by force. Users sometimes are prompted by FB features and peer pressure to share their private matters including feelings, with a global audience. Some users who want to remain private are exposed by online friends to a global audience with just the click of a button and their privacy is gone and then they end up being victims of public criticism.

> There is no privacy in interactions anymore. Everything is spread out to the public for public critics, public entertainment and scrutiny. People show up their private matters including moods and feelings. Infact the post page on FB instructs to say what one is feeling. For me, feelings and emotions are private matters and therefore its use has really affected interactions in that emotions that would be shared by loved ones alone is now shared with the whole world who can even dictate without consequence for one to commit suicide even on the most of trivial matters. **(FGD 2,5)**

It is almost impossible to hide one's identity on FB and these are some of the things that lead to cyber-crimes and scary enough, meetings that lead to crimes like rape, murder and many unresolved crimes because the perpetrator used fake identity on social media. One respondent from an FGD confessed of having a fake identity:

> I am concerned with cyber security. There is some offline information and the online identity, in the online identity we struggle to maintain an image. This makes people adjust interaction methods most of the time. When I used FB back then, my FB account was very active while I was in high school. You know back then, I had full friends, my account was actually full. I used fake identities on FB. I had a first name Chris Brian. **(RS 4, FGD 1)**

4.5   Emergence of Online Business Marketing

Respondent 10 was a youth leader in the university and used FB in all his communications for the youth forums. The respondent expressed confidence in the use of FB for businesses and youth forums and claimed it to be the best way to reach out to

majority of his constituents. He further asserted that FB had enabled him reach other youths in the East African Community, which had gotten him fame as he had been noted as the top conversationalist.

> When in the university, I involve myself in many youth leadership programmes. One of them was the social inter-university FB challenge whereby we were proposing the East Africa integration and I would post every day on FB the benefits of the integration that would include: common market, monitory union, the ultimate political federation, so I used it as a platform to engage the youths and I was a top conversationalist on the platform and I got so many friends across East Africa and who today we talk and have made advances in life. **(RS 10)**

> I am able to get into platform to get good deals. I also look for job adverts. I have interests in modeling and I find myself modeling and through my own modeling, agencies have been able to notice and use me. **(RS 17)**

> FB is a beautiful platform, it has enabled us interact, know so many people and also get some opportunities in life. It also has a wider view. It has however fueled some very mischievous behavior to thrive therein, thing like drug abuse, human trafficking, pornography and dating sites. **(RS 6)**

Respondent 17 used FB for business purposes and had gotten good deals in the past. According to her, FB is a place to find jobs and networks. RS 6 further supported the idea that FB opens up opportunities for people but also noted that if not used wisely FB can be a source of vices such as pornography, drug abuse and human trafficking.

> Facebook has revolutionized over the years and changed from just being a platform that connects the world and build human interactions to being a multi-functional platform that supports businesses, reaching out to people concerning social dilemmas, platforms for activism, advertising and building communities with people who share in the same beliefs, value systems, opinions, passions among others. **(RS 13)**

Like respondents 10, 6 and 17, Respondent 13 emphasized that FB is a good tool for business interactions which unites human beings. She had all good things to say about FB and called FB a 'multi- functional platform' that can help to reach out to people

concerning social dilemmas, activism, advertising and building communities with people who share in the same beliefs, value systems, opinions and passions.

Many users in the FGDs were of the same opinion and below is what some had to say:

> I have more friends on FB than Instagram. I just put-up things we do in our company and what we do. This is like business for me. When I also want to do online shopping go to FB as more products are there, I also go there for gossip and get entertained by gossip. I have an opportunity to get different perspectives from different people and I grow just a little bit by learning some things online. **(RS 4, FGD 1, 4)**

> I only go online for professional reasons. I follow few people and most of them have meaning and content so what I get there is just what matters for me. Normally, I would see less notifications, posts and comments as most of my FB friends only communicate and interact on professional grounds. **(RS 3, FGD 1, 4)**

> I am into interior design, so I join sites that showcase interior design and also for groups of people or groups purposefully designed and engage in interior designing **(Respondent 2 FGD 1)**

Today, majority of political campaigns, manifestos and agendas are disseminated on SM and especially FB. This is in both the public and learning institutions, including universities. Interactions are now different in universities because before, student leaders would go to lecture halls or halls of residence to sell their manifestos. They would hold public Barazas and Kamkunjis (public rallies) to address their supporters' questions. These modes of interaction in campus politics have changed because of FB. Today, potential leaders work in their halls with a few political advisers who then create FB pages and prepare political rhetoric to sell to the students. The campaigns are no longer mostly held in physical public spaces and students interact less or meet up their leaders. Sometimes, political campaigns in the past were places for fun and bonding. Nowadays however, leaders or candidates create online groups where students engage online, killing

the 'fun' that used to be associated with campaign interactions.

> In the university leaderships, potential leadership candidates would start recruiting supporters from the FB platform, such that by the time the candidates would physically go to meet their constituents, they were already known and have an influence. **(RS 3)**

4.6   Reconfiguration of the Public Sphere

FB has reshaped interactions among university students in many ways as it gives a unique opportunity for anyone registered to the network and people who are naturally socially anxious to express themselves. Some people are unable to speak in gatherings or small groups because of stage fright, but FB has allowed them to express themselves even on live video clips, messages and through emojis. According to respondents of this study, such people compensate for their weakness in SM including FB where they are very loud and controversial. Facebook has therefore helped users overcome self-esteem issues.

The Western influence could also be a reason why university students have resolved to use Facebook as a form of interaction. A typical African would value persons and friendships but this is slowly slipping away from university students in Kenya. Respondents claimed that FB has caused a breakdown of human ties by affecting normal interactions since cultural norms are being ignored while interacting. Cultural norms form a critical part of proper and meaningful interactions and when they are ignored, humans living in a community are socially broken.

> FB's power to influence people's behavior has drastically reshaped interaction patterns of users. We are now influenced so much by FB that we even change our dressing; our manner of speech, our personalities and the list is endless. Cultural orientation is reshaped and people no longer following cultural norms while in communities. We are critically getting rid of who we are or what we are and our interactions are consequently affected. However globalisation aspect gets to benefit. **(RS 19)**

The respondent had no positive things to say about FB unlike other respondents. She dwelt on the negatives of interactions caused by FB effects on cultural norms. She claimed that frequent users of FB ignore the cultural norms while interacting and this breaks down the social ties of people living in a community. Despite all that, the respondent felt that FB is a good way of communicating and it has revolutionised the global village.

FB is a global phenomenon as it has allowed its users to overcome limitations of time and space. People can embrace diversity and learn to be tolerant in their views because of the exposure they get from sharing experiences globally. University students can meet online on a global scale, share views, interests and studies depending on their needs.

> Social media at large has enabled students interact in academic circles as they can easily discuss matters academic. They can argue and exchange references and share different views of different scholars in a friendly and instantaneous manner. Most of those people who are there collect samples and want to know more about something, when they ask on FB. FB people are free and always ready to assist. People online are brutally honest and can critique a situation with varying evidences. **(RS6)**

Facebook has become good news in the current world as we people are able to network with anyone anytime and in real time. This is working well for global interactions.

> With Fb, I am now able to interact with my many friends in the diaspora. I am able to keep tabs with what's new, including movies, fashion and trends. FB interaction has made me sort of an idol among my friends as I always appear exposed and informed. However, these trends coming from the diaspora has made some students misbehave and ape a western lifestyle which get them in a lot of trouble, eg. drugs, online dating, slaying, pornography etc. The dangers of the global networks are that we end up isolating ourselves from our real world and throwing away our culture and religion which keep us on check. **(RS 9)**

Both Respondents 6 and 9 argued for the benefits of FB for causing globalisation which to them is a good thing for improvement of interactions and therefore improving human lives. They stated that people are able to get better networks and help their communities because of FB's power to cause interactivity on a global scale.

Majority of the university students who frequently use social media, have come to trust social media as a credible source of information; a place of learning, teaching or looking for counseling or advice services.

> FB has become like the new free consultancy and counseling sites for its users. We no longer go to pastors or parents, elders and even counselors when we have trouble but now university students and even teenagers interact on FB to sort out their troubles. The true opinion now lies on FB**(RS, 8)**

FB is also a place of over-information; materials online are too overwhelming that it even becomes difficult to pick what is genuine from what is fake. Anyone can publish and post content without any form of gate-keeping and this can mislead many readers.

From the discussions, it is clear that FB is a top agenda-setter among university students. Apart from being trendy, FB is responsible for setting the stage on what is important and needs to be discussed by the youths. Sometimes there may be some very pressing matters in a community but when FB discussions are on, the agenda remains what is trending on FB and not what may be important and urgent for the community.

> There seems to be a more personalized 'touch' to interactions. In conversations, Facebook more often referred to as FB, while walking on Campus Street the conversations always seem to revolve over what was on the comrades FB page as everyone is deep buried in their smartphones reacting to the campus page posts. This discussion forms an agenda for a whole day's interactions among students. When you would ask one about their thoughts on the online agenda, a common

phrase engulfs the atmosphere; 'I'll get back to you on FB, check on FB I responded comprehensively, etc. **(RS 5)**

So young persons in universities form groups on the basis of their interests, so guys with a common interest will be lost in their world discussing something intriguing that happened or is trending on Facebook **(RS 8)**

FB is mostly used for show offs as people use it to showcase their glossy lifestyles, their travels clothes and connections. When FB is continually used for purposes of showcasing lifestyle, it eventually leads to impression management of the user. Users use it to express certain opinions and take issue with those with contrary opinions. This leads to a user developing a certain aura about them because of the stand they take online. The online posts have gone a long way in influencing the way students change their lives and interact.

Today as I speak, most students in the university have the smart phones which they claim they use for research but the reality is that 80% in my opinion use it for social media purposes and especially FB for showcasing and reinventing their lifestyles**(RS 4).**

Some year back I used to use FB to showcase myself I would use it to show off some of my fancy travels, ideas and even experiences. I used FB to also share with friends the good things that are happening in my life, I have never expressed my bad days nor sad emotions. People are no longer real; people want to fake everything and because everything is fake they have to keep a distance from their friends for fear that they may realize what they are faking. We alienate our real and close friends for online relationships and when we face difficulties in life, we take on the axe and kill someone because we are emotionally imbalanced. The university social halls are empty; people are emotionally unstable and quick to anger because they have no problem-solving skills due to over reliance of FB interaction**(RS 21).**

Respondents assert that due to the pressure for impression management, fake comradeship occurs and these relationships consequently became unreal.

> When we finish campus, we will be unable to network and make it in life because we lost much needed friendships while in campus. Many of the romantic relationships in campus do not last much because they are built on sand and not on solid rock. Students pick lovers and especially us girls pickup boys that are popular; bad boys who are famous for all the wrong things. No wonder we end up being victims of sexual abuse, defilement, rape and even domestic violence**(RS 21).**

Respondent 21 used to use FB as a channel for bragging and showing off but at the time of this study, his use of social media network had declined. He believed that FB has reduced face-to-face interactions and students no longer talk to each other and that the relationships that exist are not genuine. He went on to blame Facebook for a lot of negative things which included; sexual abuse, domestic violence, defilement and rape.

Another respondent from FGD 2 had this to say:

> Majority of university students in universities use FB as a means of seeking attention. They use it to get publicity. FB is the place students get a lot of likes and get noticed. This is a place they show off their lifestyle, new clothes, boyfriends and their travels. They show off how classy they are and how they roll in the university. **(RS 3)**

4.7   Weakened Face-to-Face Interactions

There is an argument that FB has drastically weakened physical interactions among university students usually in close proximity. It was observed by majority of respondents that many times, one will find students buried in their smart phones and not caring to even share pleasantries and greetings.

> Today when you want to reach out to people, you have to get their attention online. Young people don't meet up to share their experiences in campus. They are accustomed to following the discussions online and ignore their close friends. Within institutions of higher learning, university students cannot network among themselves and this breaks social ties making students experience lonely and frustrating. University students in campus are more depressed and frustrated today than in the times when we had no social media. Cases of suicide and depression are

order of the day since real help cannot be gotten online**(RS 5.**

I joined Facebook because of societal and peer pressure. My friends kept asking me why I am not on Facebook. So I decided to give it a go. I stopped commenting and responding to posts because I became more aware of the dangers of social media and even reduced my number of followers. Suicide rates have increased because youths no longer communicate with each other. Youths have become addicted to their smart phones and no longer have time to socialize. They have become obsessed with the number of followers and the number of likes one has. Students living in one room do not know or understand each other because they spend ninety-nine percent of their time outside class on their phones. University students with actual physical friends are rare to come by because a large number of their friends are online. Students in universities lack empathy because they rarely see the world outside their phones. Facebook has a lot of benefits when used correctly and should think before joining the app and before posting anything on the app**(RS 15).**

Yes. It has reshaped interaction patterns in that before it was launched, there was more face-to-face communication and in the case of long-distance, people would use SMS which was quite boring but Facebook has made interactions livelier as it introduced use of images in chats and the use of emojis which brighten up conversations**(RS 18).**

Respondent 18 confirmed that indeed, FB has drastically weakened FTF communication on a growing scale since its inception. She praised SM for overtaking the old and boring text messages and the innovation of images, videos, instantaneous chats and the very trendy emojis.

Through the downplaying of the need and essence of physical interaction, university students are lost in social media platforms Facebook being one of them; they lack the very basic skills of interaction when on a one-on-one session. This has led to a generation that seems confused and out of order. This illustrates the influence of Facebook on interactions among university students in university**(RS 14).**

Respondent 15 joined FB due to peer pressure but was no longer active after realising the dangers of FB. According to him, suicide rates have gone up due to lack of communication among students although it is beneficial when used correctly. The respondent saw a lot of negative things about FB.

Respondent 14 further asserted that due to lack of physical interactions, the younger

generation seems confused.

> With online platform I have meaningful interaction with friends and family, liking their photos, commenting, chatting and staking them. I am always at par with all their movements and they also know all about me online**(RS 12).**
>
> Young people find it easier to communicate online than FTF. This makes the whole interaction process change in manner of style and quality. The online platform has made it easier for interaction and communication and it has given an opportunity for introverts communicate and sort out their esteem issues. Esteem problems are taken care of by FB and introverts have resulted in talking too much and sometimes with this ability, they destroy relationships. I find that FB features including the messenger is working well and superseding the face-to-face communication which is now backward**(RS 12).**

Respondent 12 argued against FB reshaping interactions in a negative way. She argued

that all online interactions are modern and admired by university students. She argued

against the claims of Respondent 5 that FB has caused an era of lonely frustrated youths

and Respondent 15 who claimed that online interactions have distanced people who are

always in close proximity. The respondent further asserted that FB has given a unique

opportunity for introverts to express themselves, but worried that this opportunity may

became a problem because introverts may sometimes over-express themselves and

destroy relationships.

> FB is shaping interactions in a bad way when friends can no longer communicate for more than ten minutes. It gets too boring when friends fail to talk and sharing ideas. This is totally breaking human relationships at a high rate **(RS 10).**
>
> In the university, FB is a preferred means of interaction. For example, when we closed campus and returned home, the person in charge of accommodation in the university posted on THE REAL COMRADES in FB that booking would start at 3:00PM and all students should remain vigilant. Apparently, I did not receive the news because I was not online but luckily my friend was and she alerted me on the eleventh to go online and book **(RS 10).**

According to the respondent, FB has weakened social bonds among university students to the extent that friends cannot hold a physical conversation for more than ten minutes. He claimed that FTF interactions are a thing of the past; that today, even university senior administrations were reaching out to students on very critical matters through FB. This means that FB has been overrated and makes users further alienated on physical interactions. From his arguments, FB is a preferred mode of communication among university students. However, the respondent also had issues with the negative things that can happen on FB.

> I joined Facebook because of societal and peer pressure. My friends kept asking me why I am not on Facebook so I decided to give it a go. I however lost interest in Facebook after about a year and moved on to other social media sites such as Instagram and Snapchat since they became more interesting than Facebook. Currently, I only use Facebook to view advertisements and news sites such BET or E Online in order to be more aware. I stopped commenting and responding to posts because I became more aware of the dangers of social media and even reduced my number of followers **(RS 2).**

> It's not really changing because of the introduction of other social media sites that are trendier robust and interesting. The entry for example of WhatsApp has dwindled the use of FB. Because if you go to campus a time like now, people cannot spend an entire without using WhatsApp severally but students can take days and sometimes even weeks before logging on FB. WhatsApp is giving that platform for better interaction and engagement between students than FB ever did**(RS 11).**

Respondent 2 said he joined FB due to peer pressure but was no longer active after realizing that there were other friendlier and better SM sites than FB. The respondent particularly mentioned Snapchat and Instagram, which he preferred over FB. This same argument was earlier captured by other respondents claiming that FB was outdated and preferred by those from the 'villages,' the uneducated and backward in the community.

According to him therefore, FB has not reshaped interaction patterns because it is no longer influential or preferred over the other SMS. The same views of Respondent 2 that FB does not reshape interaction patterns of university students is supported by Respondent 11, only that Respondent 11 seemed to favour WhatsApp over Instagram and Snapchat in reshaping interactions of university students.

> I also use it to store my memories in form of pictures because it allows you can access your account anywhere in the case that you lose your phone. You can retrieve your old pictures. Online interaction by Facebook users leads to decrease in offline interactions and this is so because FB the company is so innovative that we feel like we are missing nothing close to FTF communication. It is important to note that social media builds morale for individuals and also boosts self-esteem. When used wisely one can find good friendships as well as grow oneself as individuals**(RS 21).**

Respondent 21 used FB as a storage media to store photographs and other forms of media. Such photos and stories can be shared with other users, thereby making FTF interaction less likely as people do not have to meet to share past memories. From the respondent, constantly improved innovative features on FB further alienate face to face communication.

The creation of online FB groups has worked negatively in maintaining physical interactions. Groups are noted to be very particular and members of group are intolerant to people in different groups. These online groups occasionally meet and ensure they keep their circles closed to outsiders. These groups carry the same nature of behavior outside the groups and do not engage members of different groups on off line interaction just as it is online.

> The online messages are cooked and sometimes hateful and opposing groups cannot see eye to eye because of the vile propagated online. Groups in campus have been known to be so distance and sometimes even violent. Once a group posts a hate message, it is easily copied and understood by other groups as hateful**(RS 6).**

The respondent believes that FB has reshaped interactions among university students by being a catalyst of disengaging face-to-face interaction through online group formations. The respondent, just like majority of the respondents, had some negative things to say about FB with some of them being quite gross. Today, with the entry of social media in the country, fewer patient students, more cases of violence and extremisms are evident, than can be recalled happening in the 90s.

Respondents argued that they had enlisted themselves in groups and that they had identified themselves in groups. These groups have group thinking habit that eventually influences individual characters and personality. University students take to the group norms that can sometimes lead someone to trouble without knowing.

Today, through such sites as FB, students are lured into secret groups and can no longer meet and share ideas about ideologies. As such, when the interaction is destroyed, students are left in the hands of extremists. Most university students identify themselves in groups in terms of social status, economic status and social behaviours. This includes sexual orientation that is catalysed by FB. As a result, his affects the interaction patterns of students. Students then fall in deferent groups and individuals falling in similar groups know each other and interact only among themselves.

Respondent 14 further affirmed the dangers of online groups stated by Respondent 6. They claimed that groups work to not only discourage young people from interacting but further separate them into groups belonging to certain social status, economic status and even sexual orientations.

FB has had influences on the use of language to the extent that now, interactions offline and online are affected. It influences the use of language as the language of interaction has greatly been affected. Lecturers complain of poor language use among students who are observed to be adopting incorrect grammar in academic writing.

Information sourcing and entertainment are mentioned as some of the aspects of interactions that are being adjusted by social media. Interaction occurs at levels of sourcing information and entertainment because these are some of the needs of university students and sometimes the subjects of their interactions at personal and group levels. Some respondents mentioned that they no longer relied on major media outlets for news because they got everything on FB. They said that there was no need to wait for the 7:00PM or 9:00PM news because everything was available online all day and that there is no gate keeping on FB news. They also mentioned that whenever they were bored, they just tuned to their smart phones and opened various profiles where they got the most thrilling entertainment that was impossible to get anywhere else except on FB.

> Today, I use Facebook basically to get informed of the daily occurrences. I spend a great deal of time following News Pages and news online. I'm happy because there is no gate keeping and I get even the gory images of news that would otherwise be censored on TV**(RS 19)**

> For the four years I have interacted with university students in the university during

my undergraduate program, I refute the suggestion that Facebook has in any way changed their interaction patterns. I do not think that social media (Facebook) interaction has become a new form of preferred interactions among university students in universities because there are other more competitive SMS like WhatsApp. However, with social media, face-to-face communication is slowly being eliminated. I use FB to notify different groups of the meetings in university. We had peace union programme. I was the secretary general. I would notify them of the activities such as public engagement. I use FB also for information sourcing**(FGD 1, 10).**

Respondent 19 used FB to get information on daily basis. He believed it has not changed interaction patterns and has not become a new form of interaction because sites like WhatsApp were more preferred for interactions than FB. He was also of the opinion that FB is eliminating face-to-face social ties.

Facebook is a good and bad thing. It's good for entertainment, getting information, sharing your ideas but too much of it can be addictive and make you lose touch with the real world**(RS 13).**

Respondent 13 was of the opinion that FB has grown into a multifunctional platform, good for information sourcing and sharing ideas. However, she also believed that FB is a two-way thing that is good for entertainment but can be addictive if not used properly.

4.8 Summary of Findings

Majority of the students joined FB for the purpose of meeting friends and interacting with peers while most joined due to peer pressure. For most of them, it was initially a good thing but as time passed by, they started noticing the dangers and negative influences of FB. Students began copying each other's lifestyles, which is a dangerous thing in two ways. Firstly, these being institutions of higher learning, it can lead to lack of originality, which promotes academic plagiarism and kill the objective of innovation since most

students would rather take shortcuts and copy than be creative. This, as most respondents noted, has created a culture of laziness in social interactions and academic work. Secondly, students who cannot afford to copy the flashy lifestyles of their colleagues may end up feeling left out, which can lead to low self-esteem and depression, which are among the leading causes of suicide.

Most students also felt that relationships on FB are not authentic, terming them fake. Relationships founded on FB, according to the students, have led to a lot of negatives happening amongst students, which include sexual assault, rape and domestic violence. These things happen because of lack of proper interaction between students with their peers. It was noted that students no longer visit each other in hostels like they used to do before and some of them did not even know each other because they were all drowned in FB. As healthy as face-to-face communication is fast becoming a thing of the past, some students cannot express themselves in front of a group of people because of addiction to FB. This has apparently eroded people's culture and students are no longer observing their cultural norms and have decided to ape the Western culture.

Despite all the above, some students believed FB has somewhat influenced their lives in a positive manner. This included ability to communicate to anyone, anywhere at any time of the day at a very low cost unlike the way it used to be in the late 90s. FB also comes in handy when one wants to advertise a product, search for a job or interact with peers in academic circles. This is thus part of positive networking that comes out of FB.

Although many people are using it, Facebook is not as popular as it used to be in the late 2000s because other improved social media sites have come up, giving FB stiff competition by providing improved and better services.

4. 9   Discussions

According to Drago (2015) little by little, technology has become an integral part of the way that people communicate with one another and has increasingly taken the place of face-to-face communication. This study indicates that university students are influenced by SNS to use interpersonal communication less (Drago, 2015). The study shows that SNS is removing the necessity for interpersonal communication, therefore decreasing social bonds and weakening interpersonal communication skills. This is supported by Brody (2016) who posited that technology is not a good substitute for personal interaction (Brody, LeFebvre, & Blackburn, 2016).

The entry of smart phones has negatively influenced interpersonal communication; this study shows that university students are buried in their smart phones using SM and, in most cases, FB in particular. Res Rainie and Zickhur (2015) reflect on this matter, stating that Smartphone's have become a necessity in the lives of many Americans, affecting how users and non-users alike approach basic social norms and etiquette. People are sorting through new rules of civility. These scholars' argument is brought out by Respondent 5 who narrated how it is impossible to get the attention of students when you attempt to get their attention online. The respondent added that the high use of FB for interaction has made students accustomed to online chatting and that they cannot manage to sustain offline interactions with colleagues. This does not correspond with the

society's traditionally accepted behavior and social norms (Rainie & Zickuhr, 2015).

The study shows that as users spend more and more time on SNS for interactions, they consequently reduce the amount of time they spend communicating face- to- face. Peer pressure to interact on FB also contributes to reducing trust and weakening of F-T-F interactions. The study findings show that those who are not able to interact on FB are alienated and do not feel part of university life. They therefore join the bandwagon of interacting online for fear of being isolated.

A study by Przybylski and Weinstein (2013) indicated that mobile phones inhibited the development of interpersonal closeness and trust, impaired users' human functions such as empathy and intimacy and as a result diminished connectivity, quality of the relationships and communication (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2013).

FGD and interview respondents' ideas confirm that conflicts are now common and harder to resolve as online interactions do not allow participants opportunity to read body language, which helps in reinforcing communication. On FB, people say whatever they wish without fear of consequence. Attacks are common and grounds for trust are almost impossible. Face-to-face interactions can help resolve conflicts as by using it, university students are better placed to resolve conflicts. This finding relates to Alsop (2008) who postulates that millennials who spend more time using online communication lack valuable skills occurring in face-to-face interactions that can help users listen attentively, speak well and read other people's expressions and body language (Alsop, 2008).

This study finding that SNS addiction can be a cause of lack of conflict management skills is supported by research conducted by the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA, 2013) where employers complained about young adult's inability to speak and write competently. A clear characteristic of generation Y is the overall lack of emotional intelligence. He argues that achieving emotional intelligence begins with developing listening skills. Research by scholars and the finding of this study therefore agree that skills and abilities that are lacking among university students can be tied back to low interpersonal communication skills as a result of overuse of SNS for interaction purposes (Jauhar, Ting, & Abdul Rahim, 2017).

Some arguments in the present study are not in agreement that FB weakens FTF interactions. This line of thinking is supported study by Hynan, Murray and Goldbart (2014) who claim that members of generation Y see SM as a positive means of enriching friendship and self- representation. The study further states that SM interactions can be instrumental in preserving and supporting long- distance relationships. This is supported by discussions in both FGDs where respondents agreed that SNS interactions sometimes support face-to face interactions by helping users affected by distance to constantly keep in touch, consequently preserving interactions that were otherwise in threat of collapsing (Hynan, Murray, & Goldbart, 2014).

Other studies indicated that users see SNS as means of enhancing their face-to-face interactions. Rainie and Zickhur (2015) see SNS as useful to co-ordinate get-togethers with friends. Some participants in the FGDs and interviews also supported the sentiment saying that they had more meaningful interactions online that supported the offline

interactions. Respondent 12 said that when she likes and follows her online friends, she then helps to strengthen their offline relations. This line of thinking is also seen in FGD 1, where some respondents argued that online interactions help to strengthen face-to-face interactions. In line with strengthening FTF interactions are study findings that in some cases, FB interactions help to boost the ego and esteem of users. This is then transferred to the face-to-face interactions.

According to Mustaffa et al (2011) FB is a means of communication with friends and a way to reconnect them withhold friends. Diaz, Evans and Gallahger (2011) argue that FB enhances people's ability to connect with peers, helping them to form positive relations. The study finding shows that FB creates an opportunity for making new friends and new connections (Diaz, Evans, & Gallagher, 2011). It is highly regarded for its strength and ability to create wider than ever possible networks. This line of argument is supported by Joo et al (2017), who say that FB interactions are good for encouraging long distance relationships and helps people to remain in touch (Joo & Teng, 2017).

FB was the third most widely used website after YouTube and Google; this is a sentiment held by an in-depth interview respondent in this study who claimed that majority of university students in universities are registered with FB as compared to other SNS. On the backdrop of the high number of registered users on FB, Donath (2007) cautions that as much as SNS may provide many benefits, such as keeping in touch with peers, its privacy is regarded as a serious threat to users (Donath, 2007).

The study findings show that with the entry of SM, there is no longer privacy and confidentiality as a matter of choice or force. The nature of FB and peer pressure forces users to share their private matters including their feelings to a global audience. Research shows that SNS encourage users to expose and reveal personal information with a promise of better experience if they do so (Luo & Zhong, 2015).

Some respondents agreed with the arguments from Luo et al when they stated that during FB registration, users have to include their personal addresses, dates of birth, home town, schools attended, marital status and workplace; information that sometimes exposes university students to malicious people who may damage their reputation and life (FGD 2 Respondent 9).

A good number of respondents agree that it is virtually impossible to remain private on social media as everything about a registered user is available to the online networks. The findings of this study show that FB prompts users to say and post their feelings. User-privacy is critical and comes with many dangers when undermined, but on FB interactions, a click of a button can change someone's life completely. Interactions are not genuine online as anyone can create a fake profile and identifying fakes is a huge task. Those with fake identities can take advantage of innocent users and cripple their private lives.

These study findings demonstrate that FB is a top agenda-setter for discussions among university students in the university. It sets stage for what is important and what is not important for discussion. Facebook interactions may sometimes disregard what is critical

and important in a community and incline users towards what is trendy. This finding is supported by Holcomb et al (2013) who say SNS users set agenda for other users by being the source of information (Holcomb, Gottfried, & Mitchell, 2013).

The scholars posit that news distribution and news filtering are most common interactions that happen on SNS. They assert that SNS set salience of issues deciding what to share with other users (Holcomb, Gottfried, Mitchell, & Schillinger, 2013).

From the foregoing discussions, it is clear that FB is a top agenda-setter among university students. Apart from trendy, FB is responsible for setting the stage for what is important and needs to be discussed by the youth. Sometimes there could be some very pressing matters in a community but when FB discussions are on something else, the agenda remains on FB and not what could be important and urgent for the community.

Scholars studying the field of SM have argued that SNS causes an atmosphere of laziness, non-originality of ideas and over-information. Eke et al (2014) brought out more dangers associated with SNS such as internet addiction, laziness, cyber-bullying, pornography, prostitution and standard crime like murder and kidnapping (Eke & Odoh, 2014).

A new finding is brought out by this study, that frequent use of FB has caused laziness to the extent that users have even ignored personal grooming. Focus Group Discussion participants criticized the way people look well-groomed and lovely on posting photos and videos online but a very untidy, unkempt and dirty when offline. The study findings also show that majority of university students in universities no longer go out to meet

with their peers, do not bother going to social halls for gatherings but prefer chatting away and sharing videos and live streams.

The atmosphere of laziness has gone to the extent that classes are being skipped, group discussions are shared online and yet this should group discussions and class attendance would have instead been a good place for bonding. The study finding establishes that university students are over-reliant on accessibility of information from SNS, which sometimes are not credible and can cause challenges in learning and retaining information. University students are not willing to go into the trouble of researching; they are glued to SNS while studying, thus reducing concentration which has direct influence on their academic performance. Facebook becomes an obstacle between students and academics. Research shows that today's students spend most of their time messaging on phone or engaging on SNS such as FB at moments when they should be doing academic tasks (Junco, 2012).

Scholars and the findings of this study confirm that FB is used as a tool to showcase lifestyle, reinvent personalities, impression management and show offs. Ginsburg-Block et al (2006) argue that FB is beneficial for users' well-being development such as self-esteem and satisfaction with life. This argument links with the respondents' idea that FB is used for impression management since the purpose of impression management is for one to feel more satisfied with life (Ginsburg-Block, Rohrbeck, & Fantuzzo, 2006). Edge (2017) likewise supports the idea by stating that use SM by youth has become a way of life where personal activities are made public (Ginsburg-Block, Rohrbeck, and Fantuzzo, 2006).

There are also ongoing debates on whether SNS affect lifestyles, behavior and wellbeing of students (Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Kutbi, 2015). The scholar's argument confirms the finding of this study that University students are today using SNS for impression management and to showcase themselves to the world.

FB has reshaped interactions in the manner in which users are struggling to reinvent themselves. Sometimes the struggles of impression management come with a cost. User interactions are characterized by show-offs through use of FB and many university students have gained popularity and fame because of the manner in which they portray themselves online. This has made FB an ideal place to get noticed, to become famous and to trend. Findings show that because of impression management, interactions are no longer real and only dwell on what can be considered as classy and fashionable.

This study finding shows that FB has reshaped interaction patterns by creating a people who are no longer original as university students have lost their identities and are always on the lookout for what is trending; they work tirelessly to always redefine themselves. Participants in the interviews and FGD agreed that the element of copying is now defining interactions in universities.

Participants in the study claimed that since majority of the students are on the lookout for what celebrities portray as ideal, they then fake things to look and act like those celebrities. In the process of faking an ideal lifestyle, students end up tired and confused and in the long run destroy, relationships with those in their surroundings. Respondents asserted thus; 'the bottom-line is Facebook has robbed the beauty and essence of

originality among us in the universities.'

This study also shows that when students fake their lives, they avoid interactions with those close to them. They then acquire more virtual friends and lose out on the real friends. As a result, such students are unable to get help in crisis situations or when faced with life's challenges. From FGD 1 and 2 participants, the cause of depression, violence and even suicide among university students are frustrations linked to too much faking or social comparison that occurs on FB. This study shows that FB has changed the manner of interactions as students today value online friends than those close to them; they trade their values for what is portrayed as ideal by celebrities.

Al-Sharq et al (2015) argue that SM is part of our society today, and that it is drastically changing social norms and culture. This argument by the scholars confirms the finding of this study, which shows FB as a foreign phenomenon from the western cultures, which is negatively altering our cultural norms and values. There is a breakdown in social bonds in the Kenyan community and in universities in particular because students are either too westernized or have simply decide to ignore African values (Al-Sharqi et al., 2015).

The study brings out the idea that cultural norms form a critical part of proper and meaningful interactions. Some scholars are in support of this idea. Mingle and Adams (2015) argue that negative effects of SNS can be seen in cultural belief system and social lifestyle changes (Mingle & Adams, 2015). SNS changes learners' behaviors by exposing them to unethical content and views that go against cultural norms and eventually harms the users.

The study shows that SNS is becoming part of the society and is consequently changing societal norms, culture and way of life which includes; manners of interaction that then affects people's social bonds. This argument is supported by Williams (2012) who stated that SM influences the user's culture, belief system, religion and values, politics and 'pop culture' (Gulati & Williams, 2013).

Facebook is a global phenomenon that has allowed its users to overcome limitations of time and space. People can also embrace diversity and learn to be tolerant in their views because of the exposure they get from sharing experiences globally. University students can meet up online on a global scale, share views, interests and studies depending on their needs. Interactions are reshaped as people became global citizens; courtesy of Facebook where users can communicate with anyone, anywhere, anytime and in real time. This is working well for global interactions while friendship possibilities are widened as interest groups meet and socialize.

A new entry in the wake of SNS interaction is the group interactions where users are able to find grounds of interest, identify with those groups and interact on newer meaningful levels. This study shows that groups can be useful when an agenda is established and people stick by the agenda and grounds of operations for the groups. The study found out that some groups on FB are likely to cause harm than good in interactions. A reflection on arguments of both FGDs concluded that more weight is brought out on the danger that groups could cause to otherwise peaceful online and offline interactions. Groups have been known to separate and became violent towards each other; this has caused tension even in the institutions of higher learning.

According to FGD participants, groups isolate themselves and are suspicious towards each other as they carry group mentality and group members in universities are unable to think logically as individuals.

This study found out that FB has reshaped interactions amongst university students by being a catalyst of disengaging from face-to-face interaction through online group formations. Today, with the increased use of social media in the country, it is evident that there are fewer patient students, more violence and extremisms, that may not be recalled happening in the 90s.

The findings of this study show that frequent use of SNS including FB; alter users' language use both online and offline therefore affecting interactions of university students who use them. From this study, the language of interaction has been affected. Issues of poor language use among students are mentioned as occurring not only in academic writing but on day-to-day interactions. Facebook has reshaped interactions due to the adoption on non-existent acronyms and words. According to Mingle and Adams (2015) usage of SM negatively affects hand writing and spelling, attendance to class, assignment submission, addiction and study time among others.

Other studies have shown that FB indeed has reshaped interactions, but in a positive manner. Another study found that FB assisted students develop their vocabulary, grammar and writing. This consequently affects interactions positively as it helped students share information and acquire new knowledge (Monica-Ariana & Anamaria-Mirabela, 2014).

The above-mentioned scholars' arguments are all in agreement that FB indeed has reshaped interactions among students. However, unlike in the findings of this study, the scholars claim that the influence of SNS on language use is positive therefore enhancing interactions. This study argues that FB negatively affects normal interactions because of its power to negatively affect language use.

Political groups and politicians have quickly realized the potential of FB and are now using it to communicate their political ideologies. Likewise, Mc Allister (2009) opines that SM and internet have become increasingly important for political content dissemination. In this era, university political rhetoric is disseminated on SNS and more so on FB. The once lively, healthy and full of life political campaigns that were held in universities are now taken over by a cold, boring online campaigns. This study shows that students prefer the vibrant campaigns and Kamkunjis (informal meetings mostly of university students) where candidates would address surging crowds with rhetoric, pomp and glamour.

Today, potential leaders work in their halls with a few political advisers who advise them, create Facebook pages and prepare political rhetoric to sell to students online. Campaigns are no longer a public affair and students interact or meet their leaders less frequently. Sometimes in the past, political campaigns were a place of 'fun' and bonding. Nowadays however, leaders or candidates create online groups where students engage and as a result, reduce the 'fun' that used to be part of campaign interactions. As such, social media, including FB, have generated new trends in interactions through online political interactions. The findings of this study are contrary to some scholars who argue that uses

of social media in political communication are actually good for developing social relations.

Likewise, Brockmann et al (2012) found strong relationships between politicians and SNS users. The scholars argue that due to SNS, interactions between voters and politicians have greatly improved. Students use social media for sharing political opinions and discussing issues around politics with fellow members of community (Stieglitz, Brockmann, & Xuan, 2012). This contradicts the study findings which show that the SNS political campaigns are actually hurting relationships in campus between the voters and the political candidates. However, what remains a fact from the study is that political campaigns on SNS have reshaped interactions in the university environment.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW FACEBOOKENHANCES / UNDERMINES SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AMONG UNVERSITY STUDENTS

5.1   Introduction

In this chapter, findings and discussions relating to the second research question on how FB-mediated communication enhances or undermines social interactions among university students in the universities within Eldoret town are presented. The findings and discussions were drawn from the use of in-depth interviews and FGDs. They are presented under themes; esteem issues, social capital and connectedness, addiction and depression, fake identities, cyber bullying, cat-fishing, reinventing personalities, secure online relationships and making new friends and reconnecting with old friends among others.

5.2   Cyber Bullying and Cat Fishing

Facebook has become a place where university students look out for revenge, to hit back at their enemies and those that do not agree with them. This is because majority of university students have FB accounts. It has therefore become a place where people with ill intentions can reach users with a mission to portray them negatively, expose their weaknesses and even send out inappropriate photos or videos of the targeted users engaging in something bad. Cyber bullying is a reality is SM, where keyboard gangsters abuse and even criticise innocent and good meaning people.

The fact that cyberbullying is intimidating people makes users become hesitant to use FB as they are aware they may end up being victims of online harassment, which undermines interactions of young users online and offline. An opinion expressed offline can be twisted and rewritten online to mean a totally different thing.

> I have no romantic relationships. I have experienced boys inbox me, attempt to appreciate me online but from the stories I have heard, I am not encouraged. I cannot put myself there. **(RS 1)**

Respondent 1 here narrated her fear of engaging in online relationships because of the frightening stories she had heard. Despite many online approaches from men, she still did not entertain the thought of engaging them. This shows that cyber-bullying is indeed undermining interactions among university students in universities.

> In campus, we have a student's FB portal, a place where those who we elected would inform us but mostly this site has negatively worked in building relationships. This site would be a place of small talk politics and romance in campus. The down side of such sites is that where there was a downfall or things could not work out, those involved in the turmoil would disseminate their troubles everywhere. This would be a place of shame, abuses and laugh for the haters. In the campus portal, incidences of nude photos of students is common and this has really destroyed possibilities of healthy relationships in campus (**RS 4)**

Just like Respondent 1, Respondent 4 expressed fears of cyber bullying on FB. She expressed concern that online bullying worsens relationships among users and that FB interactions can be used to expose people as well as only dwell in the negatives of individuals. The respondent further stated:

> See now people are shy in making relationships because of FB? People are afraid to engage in some activities because FB may misquote them or shed them in bad light. After all, an honest photo of someone seated next to a girl can be photo- shopped to show them kissing or touching inappropriately. This kind of weaknesses or

possibilities of FB scares and makes people afraid of socializing because history can be recorded**(RS 4).**

Most classic stories of cat-fishing are happening on FB and stories are scary that some have even led to death and extortion of victims. This aspect of cat-fishing is working well in making people suspicious of developing relationships even with genuine friends or potential friends who mean well. Cat-fishing is making relationships became difficult and suspicions on the online platform. The relationships that may have been developed online are vague and not lasting. Out of my initial 2000 friends, I did an audit and found myself with only 30 genuine friends. Now do the math and see just how fake this is **(RS 12).**

The respondent brought out a new discussion on cat-fishing. From her arguments, cat-fishing is when someone lures an SNS user into a relationship for the purposes of deceiving or taking advantage of the user.

She explained that since cat-fishing is very possible on FB, it has made users afraid to interact unless they are very familiar with an online friend. This element of cat-fishing therefore undermines the possibilities of proper and meaningful online interactions.

Cyber-bullying occurred so much on SM after a Moi University medical student was butchered by the boyfriend with an axe just outside the university premises, right by the roadside in broad daylight. Now this sad event went viral on FB and people have and are still talking about it. The psychopaths in our society are using this to bring out the poison in their souls and advocate for similar killings of those they call "slay queens" who sometimes include their sisters and family members. This spite on FB jokingly as it may appear has led to almost five other killings in less than five days. Boys of status and well-meaning men are now thought badly by university girls, we now have groups of male hatters and we want to be advocates of feminism and run way from men, we can date each other and only buy sperm for children where need be. **(RS 13)**

According to Respondent 13, cyber-bullying is a serious problem and a reality on FB interactions that is alienating people more and threaten families as young women do not desire marriage and young men online think women are evil. According to her, FB makes people in-disciplined and is out to kill the opposite gender relationships that were enjoyed

before FB. Some users term FB a place for gossip and idleness as Respondent 9 from

FGD 2 had to say:

> Some use it to find gossip, find stories as subjects of later one-on-one discussions. Many gossip sites like Kilimani Mums is a favorite among us university students. We also use it for seeking information like the student leaders posting news about the university. Sometimes in the hostels, we do not have TV and we get video clips of controversial stories that are aired on our favorite TV stations thorough FB **(RS 9).**

5.3   Weakening Interpersonal and Social Skills

FB communication sometimes causes esteem and ego problems in that it denies some

students confidence and positive emotions. For example, when a female student posts a

photo with her favorite clothes on, having traveled to a picturesque location, they

sometimes hope to get thousands of likes and comments. However, the online world may

fail to pamper her ego by likes and positive comments. Such a person may therefore

become demoralized and may lose self-confidence. A conclusion in her mind could be

that she is not liked and may not be beautiful enough for the virtual world. Such a person

may take such demoralization to the real world and become deliberately cold as they

imagine that they are not valued. In the end, such experiences may make the world bigger

and colder yet social media was meant to reduce space and distance.

Respondent 11 attempted to explain how esteem and ego problems are affected through

over reliance of SM for self-confidence. She further explained that when users are reliant

on SM for pampering their egos, they mostly end up emotionally unstable and moody and

the result is to become distant to those in their surroundings.

A respondent from one FGD narrated how FB can be a source of depression and low self-esteem. One major cause of suicides among students is low self-esteem. Most of them feel like they do not fit in the society, thus leading to depression and in the worst-case scenario, suicide. One of the respondents in an FGD had this to say:

> Social media has made people get depressed and they are sick. When you are sick and depressed, you cannot come out to meet the world. Depression is a serious disease when you become famous. You want to keep the status quo. You have to keep up posting and posting what is relevant to your audience. You get the pressure to always post something fancy, for example hanging out in expensive places, chasing after celebrities to take photos to post for show off and all this pressure eventually gets on your way to living a healthy meaningful life, where you are honest and get honest friends and not ideal followers **(RS 7, FGD 2, 4).**

Lack of body language on FB-mediated interaction has been mentioned as one of the things undermining interactions among university students. The ability to read a communicator's body language makes interactions more successful than when there is no body language. Respondents mentioned that the emojis and memes used on FB cannot make up for the lack of body language during interactions. Some respondents also raised concern that online language does not follow the languages learnt in school. They claimed that when one is not on FB, they may lose out or feel left out as every day, there are new terms adopted from FB.

People who use FB less regularly or those who are not on FB become alienated by the frequent users. This is a critical thing to young people as when one is left out, he or she may feel betrayed and sometimes lose self-confidence thus further destroying interaction among students.

Interactions have not been improved after FB use. Language has been affected and this affects performance and even social capital. Language of FB is deviating from the norms and those not on the platform feel alienated reducing one-on-one chats that are useful for development of healthy relationship **(FGD 2, 8).**

People need to talk on a person-to-person level to avoid misunderstanding so that the non-verbal communication can be read **(RS, 5).**

FB interaction keeps changing. I may equate it to "Sheng" which is neither Kiswahili nor English nor any local tribe in Kenya. FB language can be equated with Pidgin English. New expression is out every fortnight and one has to keep up in order to remain relevant or engage meaningfully. Those who do not care or cannot keep up with the ever-changing FB language are isolated. They cannot communicate effectively and lose out on interactions **(RS 13).**

Respondent 13 agreed that the FB language is not the proper language for communication and that it is constantly changing. This change is breaking up chances of developing proper interactions among people. There is also a risk of these languages infiltrating the academic circles thus churning out unqualified graduates.

FB is a place where a person can easily be influenced due to peer pressure as users are easily influenced to fit in what may seem popular. However, most of the times, what is advocated is just an illusion. Users of FB tend to copy what they see online. This copying may come at a huge cost that sometimes, it only works in undermining a user's ego and social belonging.

When a user cannot ape the kind of life they see lived by friends online, they may became jealous and envious. The jealousy developed online due to social comparison may alienate even close friends. Those that are envious may resort to faking information about their friends and this may cause a ripple effect on interactions among friends and thus lead to the weakening of social bonds.

One person can influence another person more easily depending on the interest of the person. This is so very easy on FB. For example, if one is against a certain case, he or she may go looking for cooked or skewed information and thoroughly compose some very persuasive information. This small cooked information may be used to negatively make other parties accept such information as true and thereby develop bad will against persons or groups and consequently damage relationships **(RS, 7).**

Because of envy, Some FB messages are cooked and sometimes hateful and opposing groups cannot see eye-to-eye because of the vile propagated online. Groups in campus have been known to be so distance and sometimes even violent. Once a group posts a hate message, it is easily copied and understood by other groups as hateful. Lasting and good relationships of even brothers and sisters, neighbor and relatives have been destroyed because they belong to different FB groups. Even after campaigns and elections are over, such relationships cannot be mended simply because FB does not allow for F-T-F communication which is normally good for resolving conflicts **(RS, 7).**

Facebook undermines relationships by creating petty conflicts and envy. One starts to hate another because they have more followers compared to her or they live a more lavish lifestyle. Couples break up because an incriminating post on Facebook and friends start hating each other over posts that were carelessly written or misunderstood. **(RS, 15)**

Respondent 15 seemed to allude that communication on FB is very flimsy; that simple misunderstandings can be like an iceberg tip; looking petty from the top but underneath is a huge obstruction. Relationships are broken forever with no chances of amendments since FB interactions are not good for conflict resolutions as mentioned by other respondents in this study.

A good number of respondents had overwhelming support for the idea that the number of online friends does not translate to quality of friendship. Respondents agreed that a user can have 5,000 friends online but still be a very lonely person.

Online interactions also lead to neglect of responsibilities, ignoring those in your surroundings, causes loneliness and consequently depression among frequent users. Online relationships also lead to suspicion and ruining of online and offline relationships. For instance, when a friend wants to reach out to you online and finds that you are off, he or she may suspect that you have no interest of building a relationship but the truth may be only that you may not be having bundles to communicate at that particular time **(RS, 7).**

Sometimes when a person in your surrounding wants to ignore you, they take on the phone and pretend to be busy online. This has been done to me so many times because in nature, I am an extrovert and love talking to people than engaging on devices **(RS, 2).**

The respondent 7 claimed that phubbing (the practice of ignoring a companion so as to pay attention to the phone) is a new way used by SM users to avoid interactions with people in their surroundings. As a result, this habit is curtailing the opportunity for people to know one another and to interact as strangers.

Facebook, like any digital platform, is addictive and can cause depression and should be used sparingly. The more one becomes addicted, the more they lose sense of their surrounding and become introverted and very anti-social **(RS 15).**

Respondent 15 linked addiction to depression, advising that SM should be used sparingly. To him, the consequences of addiction convert an extrovert into an introvert and therefore an anti-social person.

Facebook has been said to cause isolation; losing touch with the immediate environment. High interactivity on Facebook causes loneliness. Constant chatting with online friends means less time is spent on your close physical friends. Others tend to start laughing on their own or speaking to themselves. This type of behaviour is mostly prompted by reaction from the online friends. Mostly, people around may feel odd and therefore tend to keep off from associating with them. High Facebook intensity creates a distance from our immediate environment **(RS, 20).**
I have 5,000 friends and 2,000 followers on FB but I am a very lonely person. I get bored a lot because it's not tangible. These friends are not tangible unlike when I would have real friends we would meet and talk. My real time friends are better than those online. I therefore conclude that the relationships on FB are not real **(RS, 21).**

The respondent narrated the way FB can cause loneliness among frequent users; that some users can be seen smiling and laughing when they are using online platforms but not to those near their surroundings. This respondent said this behavior causes uneasiness and discomfort to those in the physical surrounding.

Undermining of interactions among university students is seen through the lenses of addiction. Respondents mentioned that many university students are already addicts of FB and SM and that they get depressed when they have no bundles to remain online. They also get depressed when their posts are not reacted to and even when they become too engaged in other matters that they have no time to log online. The addiction is therefore causing depression and a very difficult life to young adult users.

> It's disconnecting people by causing addictions that cannot be managed on an offline status. Addicts of FB are totally unable to manage offline interaction lasting more than a few minutes**(RS 2).**

> I feel relationships are affected mostly when people become addicted to Facebook and they are always on their phones. People barely know how to interact with their fellow human beings in their spaces because they are used to interacting with faceless people online. Social forums are rarely about making friends and meeting people because addiction shifts our focus to the superficial lifestyle that is propagated on Facebook**(RS 13).**

Respondent 2 stated that addicts of FB are unable to initiate, leave alone maintain, offline interactions. Consequently, this undermines the social bonds of university students. Respondent 13 read from the same script. He said that the consequence of addiction is that it makes users to be unable to interact because they are used to interacting with faceless people.

I have a friend who is an addict of FB. She sleeps at 4:00AM and spends three quarters of her time on FB. We have lost touch since I am not doing what she is doing and she claims I am backward. People need to know that they are not paid to be on FB. Unless you're doing something that earns you money, there is no point of being fixated on the phones claiming to be busy**(RS 14).**

Addiction to FB also has a direct influence on time left out for other forms of interaction. This addiction to me is worse than alcohol addiction since it causes esteem issues unlike alcohol action. When someone is addicted to FB, they are basically incapable of engaging on one-to-one interactions. This inability translates to self-esteem problems and people with esteem issues find it extremely difficult to survive in such a competitive world. Eventually, we hear of depressions, suicide and murder in the universities. Two in every ten youths in Nairobi commit suicide every week because of something propagated by FB**(RS 14).**

Respondent 14 was very emotional; sighing every time she talked about FB addiction. She claimed that FB addiction is worse than being an alcoholic because it causes esteem problems that alcohol addiction does not. She said esteem problems among FB addicts has led to depression, suicide and even murders in universities. She also made a sweeping statement that two in every ten youths commit suicide that could be attributed to FB use.

In relationships for example in a couple relationship, you can talk and text your spouse but when it comes to you two communicating in the house, you all go silent. This addiction to online communication even among husband and wife could lead to complete fall out when such people are forced to stay together, say in the same house, they will be unable to express themselves and this leads to worry and fear that they are not meant to be together, consequently leading to a fall out**(RS 18).**

Respondent 18 further added that addiction can also intrude homes. From her explanation, it is clear that no one is immune to addiction and the dire consequences it brings.

According to majority of respondents the essence of a one-on-one or physical interaction seems to have lost its value in the wake of SM. University students have been seasoned to believe and accept that the in-thing is online interactions. They carry all their matters

including; dating, job searching, friendships and even counselling online. The students are unable to relate with the older generation and those who do not engage in online interactions as they lack relationship skills such as conflict management.

> University students have failed to acquire critical life skills necessary for survival in the society and therefore, they prefer to hide behind masks on Facebook where there seems to be an identity crisis as in most cases, they do not command the circumstances of their lives. Their lives and conditions are dependent on the views, likes and comments of their followers on Facebook. They are prisoners of themselves**(RS 3).**

> In this critical generation, most university students fail to embrace positive criticism. They have been sired to believe everything should be perfect. Therefore, they fear making mistakes publicly where they could be criticized. Rather, they have a choice to hide their identity on Facebook, though using a 'fake name' that is a name that is not officially theirs. This could be due to perhaps the failure of our parents to inform us that it is okey to fail in the process of trying out life**(RS 12).**

Like Respondent 3, Respondent 12 agreed that FB is responsible for denying University students the opportunity to acquire critical skills in relationship building. She stressed that because the students have no idea about how to handle relationships, they hide behind the mask of SM, where they can hide their identities with fake names. Facebook-mediated interaction undermines social interactions among students in universities through establishing barriers to one-on-one interactions. One-on-one interaction is key in shaping relationships and creating a whole individual fit for the society. Facebook brings in the challenge of pushing away friends, family and other persons in order to utilize it resulting in self-seclusion.

> In universities, Facebook make students lack relations skills which they ardently need for the job place, survival and negotiating deals. Facebook also make students shy off from participating in group tasks assigned by their lecturers sufficiently to the required standards of measure. In lecture halls, majority of students have become more like zombies. There seems to be only a select few students who answer and ask questions in class and engage in interactions with the lecturer. The

rest it's hard to tell whether they are even in class**(RS 8).**

Like Respondents 12 and 3, Respondent 8 further stated that FB interactions go beyond friendship and proceed to academic circles. She claimed that those addicted to FB perform worse in academics and are like "zombies" in class. She elaborated that lack of interactions skills is a cause of many conflicts in universities.

> Facebook-mediated interaction also undermine social interactions among students by robbing them of the essentials of an ideal interaction where there is supposed to be conflict and means to deal with it meaningfully. It happens that when students in universities experience conflict, they take to social media and for that matter, Facebook, where they tear one another down in embarrassing insults which ends up escalating the whole issue that would otherwise have been handled harmoniously**(RS 8).**

5.4 Social Capital and Connectedness

Respondent 2 was of the idea that social capital and connectedness is undermined by SM. Facebook, she claimed, is highly preferred by youths today and it distances young people from each other She added that people prefer chatting online than meeting up as well as sending electronic flowers instead of actual flowers that can express real love. She also claimed that friendship is viewed in a different.

> Through FB, friendship is viewed in a very different way. People appreciate online chats and not love letters anymore. People send emojis and memes and not visit each other or send post cards or buy flowers. We show love by tagging our friends and not standing with them during hard times. This has undermined social bonds among young people**(RS 2).**

> Some relationships that arise on Facebook are also either short-lived or long lasting, depending on the reason of establishment of the relationship. For instance, university students seeking a one-time service will get in touch, relate as much as they need one another and when the demand is served or achieved, that marks the end of the relationship. This case is true in terms of Facebook marketing, advertisements among others**(RS 3).**

During political campaigns when folks are running for office, they use Facebook relationships acquired to serve that need and when it is done, they always seem to have abused the human dignity by using them as a means to the end. This happens in that immediately they get the votes from the followers on Facebook and ascend into power, that makes the end of the relationship and they will also appear or resurface when they need the masses on Facebook to participate in re-electing them into office. **(RS 3)**

The above arguments were made by Respondent 3 and seem to support the idea that FB relationships are not genuine and only work to meet individuals' selfish interests; and in no manner serve to create true social bonds and connectedness among its users. The respondent raised an example where FB users only use FB interactions for their selfish needs and thereafter dump those they have used. This is demonstrated in the case of a politician and a young adult seeking a one-time service from another on FB. In both cases, we see no intention of developing lasting interactions and thereby no lasting relationships is created.

I miss the personal connection with my friends and family because today majority of communication is on social media and I miss the personal touch. I know of students who have never bothered to travel home or visited friends from nearby universities because they assume they are in touch on FB. This has broadened the space of social interaction. This has broken relationship, caused suspicion and even couples have fallen off because of lack of personal contact which is critical for relationship development**(RS 4).**

In my view, Facebook has undermined social interactions in most universities. Unlike in the past where students would be brought together by activities such as games and clubs, students nowadays have no time for such. Social interactions where students meet face-to-face are more beneficial because there is some element of human touch missing on most Facebook interactions. For instance, you cannot tell someone's mood on Facebook same way you cannot tell whether they are genuine or not **(RS 9).**

> I remember when I used to visit my elder brother in campus some ten years back. I remember a very rich university life. I remember with nostalgia (face brightens up with excitement) of activities; outdoors and indoors. The social halls were full, libraries and even the fields. Student campus life was rich with the buses always moving to other campuses ferrying students back and forth. Today, I see the fields empty, libraries empty, no social gatherings at all. What people need is to plan their programs and time and not to be controlled by FB**(RS 15),**

Respondent 4 was of the view that FB is broadening the space for social interactions among university students. She belied that FB interactions are responsible for suspicions in relationships and that it causes couple breakups because there are no efforts in nurturing relationships. Just like Respondent 4, Respondent 9 and 15 are read from the same script and expressed the same history of how interactions took place before the advent of FB. They agreed that FB is affecting social capital in universities. Respondent fifteen recalled the past with nostalgia, where universities were full of activities and interactions unlike today, when campus life is dull. She added that FTF interactions create an element of human touch, which is not there on FB interactions.

5.5   Fake Identities

FB interactions have caused university students to work hard in either faking their lives until they make it or have been reduced to a situation of identity crisis, where they no longer know themselves. One of the cases of identity crisis as brought forward by some of the respondents is that some university students have allegedly become so lost in FB such that they no longer know themselves nor are they able to command the circumstances in their lives. They have been reduced to depend on people's views, likes and comments so as to massage their egos.

Some users have no self-esteem as they do not treasure themselves and resorted to taking

fake names or opening fake accounts with names of celebrities so as to hide their real-life

situations from themselves and others. Identity crises in the long run undermines true and

meaningful interactions among university students, when you are faking it or undergoing

an identity crisis one is unable to associate with peers that are well known to them. These

arguments were expressed by several respondents as indicated:

> Facebook-mediated interactions undermines social interactions amongst university students through adopting a false personality, struggling so hard to be who they are not perhaps through exposing high-end living standards while in real sense they are struggling to feed themselves. Young people have refused to accept who they are and work for the betterment of their lives, something that would be achieved if one were to be honest with themselves. This is a huge gap that affects one emotionally, psychologically, mentally and can lead to depression if not addressed because one has to work so hard to hide the lie and is always in the fear of; What if my friends discover I'm not what I present to the public?(**RS** *5)*

Respondent 5 supposed that due to the effects of fake identities and identity crisis among

users, it is virtually impossible for affected persons to engage in meaningful interactions

with their peers. Therefore, they isolate themselves and consequently undermine

interactions.

> When someone selects the photos to post, they normally seriously select photos, edit and even filter so as to have an almost angel-like image. The photos posted are not real but are then sent to a real world with real people who have emotions and can even feel betrayal. When other users are attracted to what they see, they make attempts to get into contact and when they get to meet after a long time of attempts, they finally get to meet and meet on disappointment and feelings of betrayal and dishonestly. Relationships that were now nurtured online become destroyed on the first meeting on a face-to-face basis(**RS 11).**

Respondent 11 brought out the argument of fake identities on FB. He asserted that users

over edit and even filter their photos to the extent that it becomes a completely different

image from the original. These fake images are sent out to a real world and the consequence is causing emotions of betrayal. Due to fake identities, relationships are undermined and destroyed.

SM media communication, including FB interactions has the possibility of encouraging illegal relationships and uniting people with vices in the community. This is according to some respondents. Some respondents related illegal relationships with the possibility of undermining interactions among users both offline and online. Respondents claimed that since some relationships are initiated online, they cannot flourish offline as some users may be hesitant as because they fear that some online friends could be dangerous criminals planning to lure them into their criminal activities. This fact makes interactions among users undermined.

There are some illegal relationships that emerge from Facebook. These kinds of relationship have negative effects on the participants and are against the expectations of the society. They include relationships that advance drug trafficking, illegal smuggling, robbery with violence among others. Gangs that lure innocent users and extort cash from them in pretense they offer certain services also form on Facebook. The becoming imposters is also a possible illegal relationship that university students can come together to form to commit criminal activities **(RS 3).**

In many cases, FB has been used by hate mongers to propagate tribal hatred and political hatred. Tribal profiling also occurs on Facebook and other social media sites. This in turn affects how we relate with each other along the tribal lines and political affiliations.

Facebook has provided a room where propaganda as well as a hate are spread. Prejudice has been a reality as people are ready to judge each other based on the feelings they got from the online platforms. **(RS 19),**

Respondent 19 posited that some users and in some cases, leaders congregate on FB platforms to propagate hate. Some users, according to Respondent 19, use FB interactions to spread dangerous propaganda and that it has become a place of prejudice, therefore undermining meaningful interactions.

5.6   Diminishing Cultural Values and Norms

Because of the overwhelming adoption of SM and its power to shape behavior, many users not keen to use it carefully end adopting new cultures and trends depicted in SM. There is the common trend of users following celebrities and using them as role models. Some of the celebrities are from different cultures and those celebrities that are local have adopted western lifestyles. The respondent's discussion showed that majority of young people join FB in order to follow celebrities but in the long run, their cultural values are negatively affected. The youth live in a society whose culture they do not agree with.

> The desire to isolate oneself has encroached our cultures through the university students due to the influence of the products they consume from the Western culture though social media. They want to ape the West running away from the particulars that define Africa. This explains the confusion and hullaballoo in the country**(RS 18).**

> When students live on FB, there are certain content on FB that go against the values of society. A critical example is the case of terrorism and violence and users are frequently recruited under the illusion of getting monetary benefits. Apart from dropping the moral standards and values, another disadvantage of being fully online is that you became lazy. You have no time to get hands on things to have them

work**(RS 4).**

Respondent 4 raised concern that values of peace are taken over by vices such as terrorism when users are influenced by FB. He further claimed that users of SM drop their moral values in pursuit of western cultures and that this divides the communities more. Once communities are divided, interactions are reduced, thus creating opportunity for hostility.

> The African culture of engagement is where we are sensitive with what we say. We share greetings and pleasantries, take time to meet and talk and even laugh together. People announce deaths sensitively, meet to celebrate occasions and buy gifts for loved ones. The FB culture is different. We announce death online, we send gift emojis and tag people with memories not bothering to call for meetings that enhance our bonds **(RS 7).**

Respondent 7 insinuated that the FB culture is a bad one, working to undermine the African culture that is good for people and communities. His arguments were similar to what was mentioned by respondent 4.

5.7   Infidelity and Hostility

Some respondents in the study mentioned that FB is good for business relationships and for casual friendship. A few respondents stated that some romantic relationships leading to marriage have occurred or were initiated online. However, majority of the respondents disagreed that it is not possible for online FB relationship to last, leave alone flourish. The respondents claimed that the relationships initiated and nurtured online are only contractual and cannot last long enough. The respondents also claimed that online engagements among couples lead to infidelity, especially with young men who are

always searching for more attractive partners, are always available online. Arguments were advanced that couples who share their love online, tagging each other, are more likely to be victims of infidelity as other men or women notice their prominence online and want to have a share of what is not theirs.

> My boyfriend dumped me for some hotter girls he met online. Apparently, those girls are our common friends. He started by liking, then commenting on their status. Soon, I knew noticed was wrong, even before I approached to inquire. I noticed that one of the girls had tagged him as her lover. I am no longer talking to him as the new girlfriend has threatened to kill me if she finds us communicating **(RS 8).**

In the opinion of Respondent 8, users who show love online by either tagging or sharing their loved one's photos are more likely to lose them through infidelity. The respondent's experience shows that online infidelity can graduate into hostility between couples who were once lovers. This argument resonated with Respondents 2, who claimed that when online lovers fall apart, there are huge chances of violence or even homicide.

> My boyfriend of four years dumped me for a common friend we shared online. This was on my last year of study and I even contemplated suicide were it not for my offline friends. Everyone knew about us. My classmates and parents, everyone! We were always posting our affection online and then suddenly, all stopped. (Tears flow freely) I cried myself to failure in my fourth-year semester one. I lost weight and hope to live. I wish we never shared our love online. (**She sobs bitterly, I chose to comfort and take to another question**)(RS 17)

Respondent 17 was clearly very emotional. She, like Respondent 8, narrated cases of infidelity on FB, where boyfriends leave steady relationships for other 'better 'girlfriends online, who were common friends. The alleged infidelity caused pain and even suicidal thoughts to these university students newly in love.

Some respondents claimed that FB has no control over what you get to view on your

page. They claimed that FB has no way of classifying users into groups and that everything goes to everyone online. Some respondents complained that they get to view gory images and sometimes even those of loved ones in accidents. Sometimes, they said, their profiles are hacked and pornographic content displayed on their pages to very huge audiences. This weakness in FB then causes decline in meaningful interactions as people would prefer to use other SM platforms that are more secure like WhatsApp and Instagram.

> FB undermines interaction because it gives opportunity for users to say or otherwise interact on things that they would not really do in real life. You see, when the social order or pecking orders of socializing is broken then relationships are broken. FB allows for young people to be disrespectful to adults and leaders in our society. Relationships are undermined between the elders and the youth; elders think of the youths as spoilt and the youths think of the adults as backwards and intolerant. This is serious conflict that breaks the order and relationships of people who should be very reliant on each other**(RS, 12).**

Respondent 12 was of the view that FB gives people an opportunity to say anything without fear of consequence. University students are abusing the privilege and hurling insults and communicating inappropriately to adults, leaders and community members. The fact that societies are culturally driven causes conflict among youths who are now breaking norms. Compared to the manner in which FB undermines interaction, arguments for enhancing were limited and not as strongly and passionately brought out by the respondents talking about how FB undermines interactions.

5.8   Enhancing Information Sharing and Interpersonal Engagements

Majority of respondents said that FB enhances interactions by its ability to link old friends.

FB has worked miracles in terms of connecting me to my very old friends as early as primary school. Some friends; I would never have met again if it were not for FB. With FB, we just ask the whereabouts of friends and the platform opens up the widest most comprehensive search with 90% success. It does not only direct us but also gives an account of what they have been doing, sharing with us photos and videos **(RS 3).**

FB has enabled users interact; when I get into my FB page, I get many people I had lost contact with. It has made people get together and share common interest. Through FB, we can populate an entire list of friends we were in High school together at Nakuru high school. We keep updating each other and improving our social capital. I would easily go to my phone and post content on the Nakuru high school page and I would get feedback quick and sometimes even advice about some critical decision I have to make**(RS 4).**

The about how FB can enhance interaction better than other SM sites was corroborated by all respondents. Respondents 3 and 4 expressed the excitement of being able to be in touch with their old friends and improving their social capital because of FB.

I would say FB has significantly improved social interactions among students in the universities. Students are able to better interact with other students from other universities. If it was not for FB, I would have just known my classmates only. I would not have met other law students in the University of Nairobi, the Eldoret University and so on and so forth. These students are part of my network now and we even carry out research together that helps us in our studies as lawyers**(RS, 6).**

You can get into contact with long lost friends and also create new ones through FB. But this can only be possible if we work hard to maintain the relationships offline after an initial online contact. FB also creates good business and partnership relationships because the genesis is founded on a win-win situation and therefore people can get networks and even job opportunities online. We also have good groups on FB for example the Christian Union, the counselling groups and the like. These groups are excellent in assisting students with their personal, relationship and group problems and a good place to nurture strong and genuine relationships**(RS, 7).**

FB is improving social interactions among students. I cannot compare the world today with the 1990s before entry of social media space. I strongly believe we are better because through FB, we get to be better informed. We know about scholarships available and get to apply**(RS 19).**

Respondent 7 agreed with Respondents 6, 4 and 3 that FB enables users to reconnect and make friends. He, respondent 7, however cautioned that reconnections and linking with old friends is possible on FB only after deliberate efforts are taken to maintain those relationships on offline. He added that FB creates a unique opportunity for good business partnerships and relationships that are based on mutual benefits. He said that some on FB like Christian Union and counseling groups work very well in building social capital in university and that they help students in dealing with conflicts and relationship problems. Compared to the costs involved in traveling to meet friends in distant places, some respondents argued for FB enhancing interactions by keeping those distant relationships alive. Some respondents stated that compared to other SM platforms, FB is the most affordable among all. They asserted that the introduction of FB *kadogo* (Facebook Lite application) has gone a long way in keeping people in touch. They also advanced arguments that FB interactions are more real compared to sites like Instagram.

> It's enhancing interactions because it cuts distance and limitations of time and money. Otherwise, without it, some people would be disconnected. As they say, out of mind out of sight**(RS 2).**

> FB enables timely information; Moi University is a large campus and sometimes, it would take months before you meet up with your friends. But because of FB, students are enabled to keep in touch in a timely manner. Despite the difference of time and space, it has enabled people to interact and do development projects .For example, I know of a women's group on FB known as Women for Change & Development. This group is not only in Moi University but also Maseno and Egerton University. The group chair arranges weekly meetings with an agenda for discussion that enables an hour's interaction that translates into development. FB enables people to advance in terms of social relationships, economic empowerment and that is not very possible offline because logistics like travel may be required and participants may not have funds **(RS 13.**

> Facebook is always available compared to face-to-face where schedules must sync and one can save important information for future reference compared to face-to-face where that is virtually impossible. Facebook is cheaper compared to face-to-

face interactions when you factor in the cost of travel, the time consumed between point A and B and the cost of hosting another person such as food and drinks. With as low as ten shillings, one can be able to interact on Facebook since it has the lowest data consumption amongst social media platforms**(RS 15).**

Respondent 15 added a new argument that FB enhances interaction by its ability to store memories for its users. Through memory storage, users can remember each other and retrieve memories that help them stay together, which in turn positively enhances interactions among online friends.

5.9   Establishing and Maintaining Social Networks

Some respondents mentioned being comfortable sharing their desires and troubles on FB with strangers who may be willing to help than with their known offline friends. Respondents claimed that indeed, online interactions can be secure especially in cases where one does not trust those in their close circles to be meaning well and remain secretive.

> The beauty about the online friendship is that it is very secure; in that the person you are friends with online does not really know you, has no ill motives or could be like a close friend that you may disclose yourself to and ends up back biting you. Online friendships are secure and honest and can really be useful to help a person who wants to express their worries without fear of disclosure. When you confide to an online friend, you do not fear withholding any information as they will not back-bite you**(RS, 17).**

> People on FB cannot judge you and your situation like mine when my boyfriend dumped me. I was in a lot of pains that I developed ulcers. I never told my friends that my boyfriend dumped me. This pain would not heal and I had no one to talk to about the reality. What helped me are my FB friends abroad who didn't judge me but advised me all through until I was able to walk out safe with a few injuries but not as a casualty**(RS, 17).**

Arguments were brought forward that FB is a place people seeking popularity and fame can thrive and enjoy being in the public eye.

> FB really helps those persons looking for popularity, political mileage and those interested in show casing their life styles for different purposes. FB allows such persons to reach a wider viewer. We see people like Vera Sidika, Huddah Monroe and the likes getting to earn money by showing their round bottoms to those men and women interested in seeing them. I'm told they even send you nudes of their bottoms in exchange for money**(RS 9).**

According to Respondent 9, celebrities find a place on FB to make money, get more followers and even advance a new way of life that they may be aping from western cultures.

> For most people, it's preferred because it's easier to communicate online than face-to-face because of issues users may have such as being ashamed of who he or she is, their lives, their background and even faces, so with such people who in my opinion are many, this form of communication is preferred as they find it easy to do online than on face-to-face**(RS 12).**

> It allows the un-educated, the introverts and those with esteem issues an opportunity to express themselves. It gives them opportunity to say anything without fear of consequences**(RS 21).**

Respondent 12raised a new argument; that it is easier for some people to communicate online than face-to-face. She claimed that such individuals may have various limitations such as simply being shy, ugly, physically incapacitated or have esteem problems. For such people, it is easier to communicate online than on a face-to-face basis.

5.10   Summary of Findings

Despite all the efforts Facebook has done in creating a global network, the efforts could not have come without a price. Face-to-face communication was the main means of communication in the pre-Facebook years but with the current trend, Facebook has managed to undermine social interaction to the point that students in the same physical

environment are not communicating with each other one-on-one. It was the opinion of some students that Facebook is actually creating more introverts to the point that some students are unwilling to interact offline but are very active on Facebook.

Facebook has managed to create fake relationships in the sense that the foundations of these relationships are not as solid as relationships built offline. The outcomes of these relationships are catastrophic as it is evident with incidents of negative exposure, where after painful breakups some people publish revenge porn and messages to spurn their partners to hurt them common. These acts scare people and make them to become socially anxious and to become aloof. Distancing oneself socially may have negative effects on someone as human beings are social and need others to live fulfilling lives.

Western influence seems to be the major factor behind university students resolving to rely on Facebook. In a typical African society, friendship was highly valued and close friends were considered family. This is however, no longer the case. Students used to respect the adults, but with the current online interactions, the youth even insult their elders because they hide behind computer screens by creating fake accounts and do not fear anyone.

There are certain sites that lure innocent youth with the promise of fancy and lavish lifestyles and since some of their colleagues are living that life, they subscribe to the sites blindly, not knowing what is in store for them. Examples abound, of youths being tricked into joining terrorist groups like Al Shabab.

Some have joined cults and some have been promised jobs only to end up as slaves in foreign lands. The repercussions of such kind of acts are grave because at the end of the day, many of them end up dead.

On the other hand, keeping in touch with friends abroad was almost impossibility but at nowadays, thanks to Facebook, one can communicate to their friends and relatives anytime wherever they are in the world at an affordable price. Facebook also has a live feature which allows users to stream events happening anywhere in the world just by a click of a button. Access to information has become quite easy and as soon as something happens, one can access it instantly.

Students have joined online marketing communities and are now fending for themselves using online platforms. A case in point is that of a university student who is also an artist, and makes extra cash by posting her work on Facebook and selling it online. Job opportunities have also been created as companies advertise positions on their Facebook pages, where many young people gain access and apply successfully.

5.11 Discussions

Several respondents mentioned cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking and cat-fishing as issues of concern when using FB. This has been corroborated by scholars. Cat-fishing, according to respondents in this study, is using SM to portray oneself in a way that is not entirely true with the purpose of targeting other users for deception. The respondents mentioned that because of the sheer numbers of users of FB, FB has become the ideal place to troll, bully, cat-fish and attack unsuspecting users. Respondents noted that because cyber-

bullying has become a norm in SM use, it has had the negative influence of undermining interactions that would have otherwise been beneficial to university students.

The reactions and responses from the respondents of this study and other scholars observe that cyber-bullying and cat-fishing are common online phenomena and that they undermine possibilities of effective and fruitful interactions.

The sentiments of Respondent 4 expressed the reality of cat-fishing, which is rampant on FB. The respondent narrated that cat-fishing is now working towards totally undermining online interactions. Cat-fishing has several negative consequences that lead to suspicion and lack of trust among SM users, which may undermine social interactions. Studies by Brandtzaeg et al (2016) support the argument of Respondent 12 that indeed, many cases of cat-fishing on FB happen among university students and that the consequences are grave. The scholars point out that 68 percent of participants in their study admitted to engaging in some form of online cat-fishing and that cat-fishing is significantly common among young adults than older adults (Brandtzaeg, Lüders, Spangenberg, Rath-Wiggins, & Følstad, 2016).

In a cross-cultural comparison of U.S. and Slovenia on emerging adults' SM use, cat-fishing was positively associated with Machiavellianism and narcissism, exceeding the concerns and fears of cat-fishing raised by the participants of this study.

The Literature Review for this study has confirmed most of the issues raised by the respondents of the study concerning the issues surrounding cyber-bullying and cat-fishing

on FB. According to Abdulahi et al (2014) when students increase frequency in the use of SNS, they also increase their privacy and security issues. This means that frequent SNS users face threats to their privacy and security, identifying identity theft as one of the security and privacy issues faced by SNS users (Abdulahi, Samadi, & Gharleghi, 2014). Cyber-bullying among undergraduate students is a problem that needs immediate attention. He observes that cyber-bullying can make users to lose their identity and sense of belonging and lead to cases of suicide, violence and dropping out from school. He further advices that university officials should put intervention strategies in place to combat cyber-bullying.

The assertion of the above study was expressed by FGD 1, Respondent 4, who claimed that cyber-bullying on FB has branded university girls as 'slay queens' (empty heads) who must face the axe. This is a claim to violence through cyber-bullying that is then undermining interactions.

Bjornsen argue that cyber-stalking is perceived by potential victims to be worse than real-life stalking. The argument of the scholars is in agreement with FGD Two, Respondent 8 who claimed that there is much more to fear when one is stalked online than offline (Bjornsen, 2018). In a study conducted by Lyndon, et al (2011) two thirds of university students used FB to monitor their previous partners, harass or simple cyber-stalk them.

The idea of being cyber-stalked has great potential in making the victims to fear exposing themselves to stalkers online or offline since the more they can be noticed the more harm can be caused (Lyndon, Bonds-Raacke, & Cratty, 2011).

Scholars and respondents in this study have linked FB to reduction in social capital and connectedness among university students. FB interactions are casual in nature and easily weaken social bonds among friends. The nature of FB allows for texting that replaces in-person communication; promotes brief factual exchanges but not deeper interactions. She asserts that FB causes intense anxiety for users as they worry about how they are seen by others online and how the perception will influence face-to-face interactions. Facebook becomes for many, a place of performance, selective sharing, and tension, rather than of depth and meaningful interaction.

Respondent 2's arguments seemed to agree with the arguments brought out by Turkle, that by the very nature of online exchanges, no proper deep interactions occur between those interacting online and this has, consequently, the effect of undermining the social bonds of users. Other studies argue that ICT disconnects users from the real world of human interactions, thereby posing a challenge of building strong relationships and that constant engagement with ICT makes users to lose interest in communicating on a face-to-face level (Ngunan & Regina, 2016).

Hooker asserts that lack of or deterioration of relationship skills among Millennials can be attributed to digital technology that includes SNS. He asserts that because of relying on SNS Generation Y, fear intimacy and awkwardness because they lack interpersonal skills and that they instead choose to hide behind digital technology while interacting, instead of engaging on a one-to-one interaction. The study portrays the danger of lack of relationship skills among frequent users of FB. Some of the vices include the inability to manage conflicts, isolation of users, identity crisis, poor academic performance,

negotiation skills and team work (Hooker, 2016).

Respondents in both interviews and FGD alluded to poor relationships skills and social connectedness due to FB use. They claimed that the essence of one-to-one engagement has lost value in the wake of SM. This deteriorates intimacy among university students. Because of overlooking one-to-one interaction, the quality of relationships among the Generation Y has decreased. Over prevalence of online interactions speaks to the lack of communications skills. University students are unable to relate with the older generations and to those not caring to engage in online interactions as they lack relationship skills such as conflict management.

Mims et al (2013) raise concerns over links between FB and interpersonal skills. The scholars assert that FB can be a danger to students who have not had opportunity to gain social skills in a real-world setting. These sentiments are similar to what Respondent 3 emphasized on; that university students have failed to acquire critical life skills necessary for survival in the society (Mims, Llanes, & Didona, 2013).

Some scholars and respondents however argued against claims that SNS affects social capital and connectedness, insisting that SNS instead reinforces relationships and causes better ties among users. Majority of respondents supporting idea that FB enhances interactions among young users were of the view that Facebook's key strength is its ability to connect old friends, thus creating beneficial interactions among users. This was confirmed by research by Burke, et al (2011)who examined how FB affects social capital. The study opined that receiving messages from friends is associated with bridging social

capital. The study demonstrated that students use social media to bridge social capital (Burke et al., 2011). This is similar to what FGD 2, RS 6, RS 3 and RS 13, claimed; that real connections are reignited through FB interactions.

Another argument that FB actually contributes to social capital and connectedness is brought out by Lukindo (2016) in his study on the effect of networking sites on students' social interaction. In the study he argues that there is a positive correlation between time spent of SNS and social connectedness, implying that as more time is spent on SNS, there is a feeling of social connectedness on the increase (Lukindo, 2016).

Respondent 7 agreed with Respondents 6, 4 and 3 that FB enables users reconnect and make friends. He however cautioned that reconnections and linking with old friends is possible on FB only after deliberate efforts are taken to maintain those relationships offline. He added that FB creates unique opportunities for business and relationships that are based on mutual benefits. He said that some groups on FB work very well in building social capital in university and such groups include the Christian Union and counselling groups, which help students deal with conflicts and relationships issues.

According to Andreassen et al (2015) emerging adulthood is the time of increased problematic use of SM among users. This study agrees with the scholars' thoughts that university students indeed experience many challenges in their social media use.Such challenges include; addiction, low self-esteem, infidelity, health and hostility (Andreassen et al 2015). These problems, according to respondents, pose challenges that undermine interactions among students in the universities. Respondents in the study

claimed that majority of their colleagues were SM addicts. The consequence of addiction is depression and esteem problems as addicts cannot go out to interact with others on a one-to-one basis. The respondents also asserted that when users are addicted, they become emotional when they for some reason cannot get access to the internet on their devices or when they are not appreciated or acknowledged online. Respondents and researchers alike agree that when users become addicts of social media, they are unable to initiate or maintain physical relationships with those in their environment and this affects the quality of relationships among them (Andreassen, 2015).

A study by Hou et al demonstrated that there is an association between the frequency of SNS use and addiction. The study further revealed that addiction is associated with college students' mental health and academic performance. Self-esteem issues occur because of addiction and are underlying causes of mental health problems that college students suffer when addicted. University students spend more time texting than attending classes or studying (Hou et al., 2023).

This supports a FGD respondent who Mentioned that learners today are 'like zombies in class waiting for a few classmates to answer questions while they are buried in social media" (FGD 1, Rs 7). On matters health, majority of university students spend most of their time on SNS and the time spent generates health problems such as backache, headaches and lethargy.

A study by Othman (2017) showed that SM platforms have huge possibilities in affecting a user's self-concept. The sentiments of Hou et al (2019)were echoed by Respondent 14

who claimed that because of addiction, FB users become depressed to the point of committing suicide, which is a clear indication of mental health problems that are related to SM addiction. A study by Kircaburun (2016) showed that social media addiction can lead to self-esteem issues and depression among adolescents. The scholar asserts that adolescent period is a transition period to adulthood and that harmful factors such as depression can affect a student's development negatively (Kircaburun, 2016).

On the contrary, a study by Botou (2018) about whether FB influences self-esteem concluded that self-esteem has no correlation with the frequency Facebook use or their level of acceptance or popularity of the users (Botou & Marsellos, 2018). Another argument that supports FB role in improving self-esteem of its users is brought out by Ellison et al (2007) who argue that FB interactions help to overcome barriers faced by students with low self-esteem.

This is contrary to responses from respondents in this study as no one mentioned any manner in which FB enhances esteem of its users. Their arguments were that FB undermines the self-esteem, ego, emotions and health of the users (Ellison, 2007).

This study reveals that frequent use of SNS affects the cultural values and norms of users and that it affects language use. It also causes identity crisis or creation of fake identities among its users. This leads to the undermining of interactions among university students. The study demonstrates that majority of university students are registered with FB and in their use of the SM, they adopt new cultures and trends which end up taking toll on their interactions.

Arguments about incorrect use of languages and lack of body language, propagated by FB usage abound in discussions, with FB being blamed for undermining interactions among university students. Respondents in interviews and FGDs resoundingly indicated that FB-mediated interactions lack non-verbal cues, which make interactions more effective. A few respondents claimed that this lack of body language cannot be compensated by use of FB innovations such as emojis and memes. However, in the FGDs, respondents seemed not to agree on whether emojis and memes can make up for lack of body language. Respondents and scholars alike acknowledge that users of SM have come up with an online language does not necessarily conform to correct grammar as learnt in school and this contributes to failure of interactions.

The reactions of FGD 1, Respondent 7 and interview Respondent 5 are echoed by Lino (2018) who says that the interaction process on SM lacks facial expressions, gestures, emotions and other non-verbal cues. He further states that these features of communication are critical if an effective communication is to take place. Additionally, the more people spend time on SM, the more they tend to communicate poorly with other persons because of lack of body language.

Respondent 13 argued that FB language is constantly changing. She equated the English used on FB to Pidgin English and FB Kiswahili to Sheng. Her argument was that these constant changes in language interfered interactions, especially with people who are not familier with the language changes. The rise of SM has in its wake brought the use of abbreviated writings, jargons and texts. The new methods of writing have negatively

affected students' academic writing as with SM; grammatical and syntactic flaws are overlooked. He further asserts that FB nature requires people to post and share fast with no time for checking or proof reading what one writes.

This study shows that through FB-mediated interactions, issues of fake identities, identity crisis, social comparison, petty jealousy and envy are more likely to occur when face-to-face communication is used. The study shows that university students are constantly struggling to fake their true identity as they fake imaginary, successful lives until they make it, or in the process of faking a lifestyle, they lose their identity.

Gil-Or et al (2015) asserts that the Facebook-self is the making of an acceptable and popular self with a desire to compensate for real life deficiencies. This argument tallies with what Respondent 5 states; that students struggle hard to adopt fake identities in order to be acceptable. Gil- Or et al (2015) further claims that high levels of faking can potentially lead to 'precarious functioning and psychological vulnerability which ultimately can lead to psychological pathologies'(Gil-Or, Levi-Belz, & Turel, 2015). This is contrary research claims that SM users do not tend to portray themselves in ways that are very different from whom they are in real life (Back et al., 2010).

Grieve and Watkinson (2016) found out that as users mature and reach adulthood and beyond, they portray themselves online in ways that are more similar to who they really are and became. According to some scholars, social comparison, petty jealousy and envy normally occur in SM interactions. This study shows how FB is a place where peer pressure is likely to occur as university students are literary forced to adopt what seems

trendy. This is because users of FB want to copy what their friends are doing online and when they cannot manage to copy, they end up accumulating petty jealousy and envy. This social comparison by university students breaks the possibility of meaningful interaction because the element of hate crops up due to jealousy. FB interactions expose too much of someone's life in the form of videos, photos and chats which highly tempt users to compare themselves to others. When one is not satisfied with who they are, the result is faking things and when faking does not work, people become jealous, frustrated and avoid interactions with those they envy on social media (Grieve & Watkinson, 2016).

Research has investigated whether usage of SNS causes social comparison and envy. Some major like studies like those done by Steers, et al (2014) and Chou et al (2012) found evidence that particular ways that SNS are used can easily cause social comparison and envy. According to Verdun et al SNS elicit social comparison and feelings of envy on unprecedented scales. The scholars further argue that compared to offline settings, most SNS have features that make feelings of social comparison and envy especially likely. Respondents in this study agreed with the sentiments, claiming that peer pressure highly occurs in FB interactions. This peer pressure is what then makes users take on social comparison (Verduyn, Ybarra, Résibois, Jonides, & Kross, 2017). Fox's (2015) views are similar with arguments presented in this study where SM is said to be likely to become source of various conflicts in relationships. The conflict can arise from pressure to make relationships public, jealousy caused by incompatible social media, public airing of disagreements and monitoring a partner's posts on social media (Fox, 2015). The argument by Fox is like what Respondent 15 said of couples breaking up because of

incriminating posts on FB.

Respondents in this study and scholars reviewed here associate FB use with loneliness, depression and phubbing, which undermine interactions among university students. This study shows that the number of friends one has on FB does not translate to the quality of relationships. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that one can have thousands of online friends and still remain lonely and depressed.

Negative outcomes of social media use are demonstrated by Andreassen et al (2016) who reported that high frequency in SM use among university students correlates with a variety of disorders including; obsessive -compulsive disorder, anxiety and depression. His sentiments are supported by Respondent 12 who claimed that she was a depressed and lonely person despite being a frequent user of SM with thousands of online friends.

Research by Bjornsen (2018) discusses how smart phones not only negatively affect interpersonal relations but also affects communication skills. People have difficulty establishing eye contact while using smart phones and misunderstand what is being discussed. Phubbing carries with it a type of addiction that is much more devious and pervasive than most previous virtual reality related addictions (Bjornsen, pg. 265). This finding is similar to arguments by Respondent 2 and FGD respondents; that a new way of avoiding or undermining physical interaction using social media is on the rise. Facebook users resort to phubbing as a way to avoid talking or engaging with people in their surroundings.

Problems of infidelity came out strongly in this study as respondents in in-depth interviews and FGD, that it is very likely for couples who date and remain romantic online to experience problems of infidelity. Respondents claimed that when couples display affection, tag each other and flirt online they are more likely to experience incidents of infidelity that consequently destroys and undermines romantic relationships among university students. Research also shows that as much as SNS is thought to help people to make new relationship and unite people around the globe, it can also undermine otherwise healthy relationships.

A survey by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) claims that FB is a main cause of divorce in one out of five divorces in the United States of America. The study further states that 80 percent of divorce lawyers use SNS to gather evidence of infidelity in relationships. These pieces of evidences include; photographs, videos and flirty messages. (Hertlein & Piercy, 2006) says that cyber infidelity occurs when one or both partners in a committed romantic relationship uses the internet to violate promises concerning sexual exclusiveness. (Das & Sahoo, 2011) says: 'The most common reason is people having inappropriate sexual chats with people they were not supposed to.' The issues raised by Respondent 8 that her boyfriend's infidelity started with frequent chatting is captured by with people they were not supposed to.

Social Media communications including FB interactions have the possibility of encouraging illegal relationships and uniting people with vices in the community. This is according to some respondents who related illegal relationships with the possibility of

undermining interactions among users both in the offline and online interactions. Respondents claimed that since some relationships are initiated online, they cannot flourish offline as some users may be hesitant for fear that that some online friends could be dangerous criminals planning to lure them into their criminal activities, which then interferes with interaction.

Respondent 19 argued that some users and in some cases, leaders, are congregating on FB platforms to propagate hate and propaganda, making the site a place of prejudice and undermine meaningful interactions as a result.

In this study few arguments have been brought forward in support of FB-mediated communication as a useful tool in enhancing social interactions among university students. It is important to note that in this study, more ways which FB undermines interactions have been mentioned than ways that FB enhances interactions among university students. This is despite Facebook (2016) stating that its mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what is going on in the world and to share and express what matters to them. The FB mission of satisfying people's needs to create and maintain social relationships, seems to tally with some respondents' claim that active usage of FB can affect social capital and connectedness in a positive way, some respondents argue that FB fills the gap caused by distance.

As opposed to physical interactions, SNS provide unique opportunities for users to remain connected. Offline, users do not have time to maintain a large number of weak

ties unlike the possibilities online settings give users (Ellison & Vitak, 2015). According to Donath (2008) the cost of maintaining relationships on SNS is cheaper and increases possibilities of making new connections.

This same argument by the scholars are supported in this study as respondents argued that travel costs of maintaining relationships are high and the availability of FB twenty-four hours a day and unique possibility to meet virtually anyone you want helps to maintain relationships (Donath, 2007).

In this study, some respondents expressed optimism that FB's nature of being secure can enhance interactions. Some of the respondents claimed that they were more comfortable interacting with a trusted stranger in an unknown location than sharing their troubles with close friends who may end up using the information shared to harm them.

Arguments were brought forward that FB interactions can enhance the popularity of those seeking attention of the public eye and that people are able to get noticed and thus interact with a wider audience than the face-to-face option can possibly reach. Some respondents were of the idea that online interactions are friendlier and easier for interaction compared to face-to-face interactions. Reviewed literature shows that sometimes, digital communications enhance relationships; the evidence being that the more one communicates with people using devices, the more likely they are to communicate with those people face-to-face (Skopp, Workman, Adler, & Gahm, 2015).

CHAPTER SIX

AFFORDANCES OF FACEBOOK AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

6.1   Introduction

In this chapter, the findings and discussions concerning third research question about the affordances and perception of university students on their use of FB as an interaction platform are presented. The emerging themes included; commercial use, global interactions and connectivity.

6.2   Commercial Use

Respondents overwhelmingly supported the idea of FB being great for commercial purposes including entrepreneurships, business networking, advertising and promotional purposes. From the other affordances mentioned, commercial purposes took the lead.

> We only use FB to advertise our county. I was in the Communication Department for internships and we tell people what's happening in our county through the FB pages. It also has the benefit of promoting people's businesses in ways that FTF cannot. One for example selling or dealing in shoes could take photos of a variety of shoes and disseminate widely, thereby earning a name in the trade and equally selling to a wider market than FTF would ever accomplish. It has empowered young people in campus in this manner **(RS 1).**

Respondent 1 believed that FB has done a great deal in advertising and promotion, thus encouraging and empowering students and businesses.

> It has an advantage for business activities because you can reach a huge number of potential clients. For example, if you can have thousands of followers and you become unique and famous in your products line, you may not need another outlet of advertising if your FB profile is updated, trending and followed by many stakeholders **(RS 12).**

Another benefit of FB over FTF is the group communications. You are able to know who is there, what is the agenda of the group and what is usually communicated by who or who, sometimes, you may have favorite conversationalists that one may wish to closely follow. There are some groups like high school groups, family groups, close family groups and specific business groups**(RS 12).**

I have also used Facebook for business. I am a young entrepreneur and use my gift as an artist to make money through selling my art. Facebook has played a major role in building my clientele through my business page "Art by Dee". This has been made possible by the features Facebook has created for business profiles such as promotion and post sponsorships. My work has reached more people through Facebook than it would have I been used traditional advertising methods**(RS 13).**

Respondents 12 and 13 supported the idea that FB enables people to engage in business activities. Respondent 12 asserted that if one has a good product line and many online followers, there would be no need for looking for further advertisements for products other than on FB. She added that FB groups created for business purposes are also a great way to run successful businesses. Respondent 13 added that he had personally benefited from FB forums in running successful enterprises.

6.3   Global Interactions, Networking and Connectivity

Respondents mentioned that global interactions and connectivity with interest groups was another key benefit of FB interactions. They mentioned that unlike FTF where one needs to spend on travel, FB allows for instantaneous live video calls that serve the same purpose. Respondents also mentioned the possibilities of FB global interactions that allow networking with interest groups that would otherwise be impossible if interactions were physical.

FB has made the world a global village. One of its attractions over FTF is that you can engage people from far without spending money on travel. You can make friends overseas in places you may never visit. It helps overcome financial and physical barriers and also saves time. For example, some shy people can never talk when you meet but they are the real orators without fear on FB**(RS, 5).**

FB is not affected by geographical boundaries. You can communicate with anyone in the world any time of day and night. FB is also affordable. we cannot be able to talk to everyone on a one-to-one basis because of time or sometimes we may be forced to travel but FB takes care of this. Getting information on FB is faster and easier. FB allows users to freely speak even when they have speech or personality troubles**(RS, 7).**

Respondent 5 felt that FB is a global village and a serious means of engagement which is convenient and affordable. He also believed that it helps introverts express their opinions without fear. Respondent 7 added that some communication barriers such as physical barriers or emotional barriers can be avoided when engaging in FB interactions.

6.4   Information Sourcing, News and Entertainment

Several interviews in this study supported the idea that FB interactions are today more likely to be used than the traditional media for news sourcing. Respondents mentioned that they remain on FB because they benefit from live streaming of news anytime of the day or night. They also get breaking news instantaneously, before the stories are aired on mainstream stations. They also argued that FB interactions have no gate-keeping and everything is shown as is.

> Today I can survive without following news on TV because I can easily get the same and even better-informed content from FB. This, I can get anytime. I do not have to wait for the Seven o'clock or nine o'clock news. I can get images of terrorist killed and be happy to prove that actually, the recce squad did a good job. I can also follow my favorite football teams' matches and live scores **(RS 9).**

> In the current dispensation, media houses have adopted a model that creates interaction with the consumers of the information and other products they disseminate. The one I utilize more being news. Therefore, Facebook as well keeps me abreast with the daily occurrences**(RS 3).**

> FB empowered mobile journalism; people can now share information about the things happening around them with the rest of the world. One can interact with multiple people at the same time. It has created ways of communication that is

visual and real-time such as video calls and live sharing of events and things that are happening; advertisement, group communication, new ways of communication for example , video conferencing **(RS 13).**

Respondent 13 added that FB interactions have empowered mobile journalism and through online interactions, people can get to know what is happening globally.

Some respondents mentioned affordances of FB to include information sourcing, a place to search for scholarship opportunities and exchange programmes for students, job and internship opportunities and source of academic content including lectures and notes.

> It also offers us a platform where we can easily compete for employment opportunities or meet someone who might be of help in the course of pursuing their careers. FB is good for students seeking scholarships. I for instance shared an opportunity I got on FB with a friend who eventually got a scholarship in Canada. I have seen students move for mobility programmes in China and the USA through FB connections**(RS 20).**
> In the same spirit, the university students are as well positioned to interact on social media with all groups of persons including rare well to do individuals who can catapult them to their dream jobs; a factor not common in a face-to-face interaction**(RS 4).**
>
> Facebook facilitates the appreciation of diversity among university students. They get to acquire skills on how to relate, tolerate and move along with persons of a different culture to theirs. This is relevant and makes more sense because limitation to one's environment can limit one's circles to the normalcy of society; same friends, same backgrounds, same aspirations**(RS 18).**
>
> Facebook plays a critical role in enhancing self-improvement in terms of appearance or general personal grooming, etiquette, presentation and even language improvement among other factors. Young people through Facebook get to aspire for improved standards of doing things as they experience them unfold in the various platforms of interaction. They are a part of on Facebook **(RS 5).**

Respondent 18 believed that FB has also facilitated diversity among the youth in different quarters, like how to relate with people from other cultures. It was also her belief that FB has promoted good grooming among the youth. Therefore, the exposure one gets on FB improves the life standards of the users.

FB is also preferred more than its close competitor Instagram as it uses less internet

bundles. Because university students are not yet financially stable, FB offers a platform

that is convenient and affordable.

> You can load 10Mbs to your phone and can use it the whole day, chatting loading
> and following but 10Mbs on Instagram can only upload a photo and work for less
> than ten minutes. FB Mbs are even cheaper that the normal SMS on any telephony
> network and that is why it is widely adopted**(RS 5).**

> FB breaks cultural limitations. It enables users to air their opinion without
> restriction. It encourages open dialogue which allows all and sundry express their
> opinion. Offline communication has gate keeping and sieving but on FB, youth can
> say anything they want; it allows the youth to identify some of the challenges they
> face without fear**(RS 8).**

> FB enables timely information; Moi University is a large campus and sometimes it
> would take months before you meet up with your friends but because of FB,
> students are enabled to keep in touch in a timely manner **(RS 4).**

> Takes place in a less formal environment as compared to the normal face-to-face
> interaction thus people are free to contribute content pro-less restriction. Facebook
> interactions are more flexible as opposed to the face-to-face communication. Those
> involved have the liberty to engage in the conversations or back off if the
> interaction is not rewarding to them**(RS 16).**

> On FB, you feel freer to communicate anything because there is no fear of being
> judged. Judgment easily occurs on FTF than on online communication and that's
> why us students prefer being online as we discuss each and everything without the
> watchful eyes of the community around us and also to chat away and beyond the
> cultural norms that our real friends could be inhabiting**(RS 17).**

Respondent 4 found the major affordances of FB to be open discussion and timely

information. Respondent 8 applauded FB for its ability to break cultural limitations while

communicating. Respondent 5 noted the issues of FB affordability, observing that it is

cheaper compared to other SM platforms, with a respondent mentioning that the

introduction of FB kadogo had made communication affordable. Respondent 16 and 17

hinted at the flexibility of interactions on FB, emphasizing that the nature and environment of FB interactions allow users to interact freely, which is not common in FTF interactions.

From the responses, some affordances of FB interactions include its innovative features, memory and storage capabilities as well as entertainment features.

> Facebook gives you reminders on events and birthdays which help one to maintain the relationships that she has. It makes you aware of what is going on around you and keeps you informed on matters such as health and politics. Through you can get access to a wide range of information that will be unavailable to you through face-to-face interactions**(RS 15).**

> The features on FB are also a plus over FTF interaction. The exact words can remain online longer even when the person is dead. Record is kept and kept well without fear of distortion. FB also competes with personal interaction because emojis are created to cater for body language and emotion symbols. Flowers though fake, can also be sent of FB to celebrate anniversaries or even propose to a girl**(RS 21).**

> On FB, one can attach heavy photo albums and videos which is practically impossible on FTF interaction. You can practically share your whole life with photos yet on a one to one even photo album shared cannot say as much as what can possibly be said on FB**(RS 20).**

Respondents 20 and 21 agreed that FB's ability to store information is good for interaction purposes. They see this as a great strength that FB has over face-to-face interactions. Respondent 21 added that FB interaction competes with physical interactions because it has emojis that compensate for the lack of body language that occurs in physical interactions.

6.5   Summary of Findings

Facebook as a social media site has its advantages and disadvantages. The main affordances as recorded from the transcription of data is the ability to advertise both

individually and corporate. Users assume that the more followers and friends you have, the more popular you are. A person for example with 10, 000 followers can easily sell a product than a person with fewer followers. These people are recognized by companies as brand managers and used for the purpose of advertising since it is easier and cheaper to reach clients this way than relying on mainstream media.

Blogging has become a source of employment for a lot of youth. All one needs to do is to look for a trending topic write about it and wait for comments and likes this is a way of increasing traffic on their platforms and to get paid. It is possible to get exposure to other cultures even without travelling just by visiting some pages on Facebook. Learning opportunities such as cooking can also be obtained on Facebook.

Facebook breaks the limitations of fearing to speak out one's mind as it enables users to air their opinions without restriction. It encourages open dialogues which allow all and sundry to express their opinions. Offline communication has gate keeping and sieving unlike Facebook where youth can say anything they want. It allows the youth to identify some of the challenges they face without fear.

Facebook has made the world a global village. One of its advantages over face-to-face is that you can engage people from far without spending money for travel. You can make friends overseas in a place you may never visit. It also helps overcome financial and physical barriers and also saves time.

Another positive thing Facebook is that you can form a group of special interest and discuss your issues regardless of the participants' location. Users can interact at an affordable rate compared to face-to -ace where it would include travel, setting up a meeting place and probably even accommodation.

6.6   Discussion

The study shows that Facebook is rated highly as a good tool to run business. University students confirm that they have gotten unique opportunities to develop themselves financially through FB. Some respondents mentioned that through FB, they have started very successful business ventures that sort out their financial obligations. From the study, there are demonstrations that some students already have great product lines. Some have networks with multinational companies and some of these businesses are located in universities in Uasin Gishu.

Respondents 12 and 13 argued that through FB, one does not have to go in to the trouble of paying huge amounts of monies for advertisements. The idea is that one already has access to followers that they have access to advertise to. Emergence of SM such as Twitter and FB opened up millions of opportunities for marketers. The scholar insists that the ability of SM to segment the market is a key reason to its overwhelming success (Drummond, O'Toole, & McGrath, 2020). This argument is consistent with the point raised by Respondent 6; that group segmentation of users assists business people to make more sales through FB unlike FTF. Facebook interaction can reach the highest number of clients and it is easier to group one's followers into various categories with the purposes

of marketing at different levels. Facebook innovations create very special features for promotions, marketing and technologies such as newsfeeds, videos and photos in order to reach clients in a special way.

The features on FB allow business to easily share photos, videos, likes and dislikes and this causes seamless interactions with clients thus leading to opportunities to efficiently meet customer demands. This study shows that FB is used for promotional purposes and survey of groups for purposes of finding interests. According to Song and Yoo (2016) SM carries the benefits of marketing mix, information source and enabling clients to make purchase decisions. This is consistent with the argument of Respondent six who said that groups on FB give unique opportunities for individuals who run business online to know people's agenda and interests so as to meet group needs (Song & Yoo, 2016).

More scholars have also come to support the idea that SNS, including FB, are good for marketing. Petouhoff and Rowe (2016) argue that SNS and digital devices have greatly transformed marketing, customer service and sales turn over. This is consistent with the findings of this that university students use FB mostly for marketing and its consequent benefits; a position supported by Stelzner (2011) who asserts that brands are taking advantage of social networks interactions for advertising and making sales.

This study supports the idea that FB interactions are better than mass media for purposes of news sourcing, breaking news, citizen journalism and information sourcing. Respondents asserted that they mostly depend on FB interactions to get the whole story because there is no communication blocking. They added that they have opportunities to

read comments and reactions from the virtual world and even obtain further feedback from the source of the news (Petouhoff & Rowe, 2016; Stelzner, 2012).

Respondent 9 claimed that he does not have to wait for prime news on TV because he can get the news anytime. The study revelation that FB is used by younger adults to seek news is consistent with a study by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2015, p. 80) arguing that 'Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp, are by far the most important networks for news in that order, but for younger users prefer Instagram, Snapchat, and Tumblre also come into the picture.'

The study also reveals that some features on FB are increasing the desire by university students to seek and share the news in their networks. Similar arguments on such innovations are brought out by Ma (2015) who argued that FB introduced a trending sidebar that selects and organizes trending news and hash-tags into categories. Respondents agreed that FB is by far the most used by university students when in pursuit for news. They were of the view that Instagram is mostly used by university students seeking to showcase their lifestyles. This position is consistent with a study from Reuters (2015) which showed that when it comes news purposes, FB leads by far compared to the other SNS (Al-Rawi, 2017).

Respondent 13 talked of FB empowering citizen journalism among the youth to the extent that users of FB are able to get more detailed perspectives of any news items. Innovations such as video-conferencing and live streaming are working well towards empowering mobile journalism. According to Chang (2015) media consumption habits

change very fast and users are now moving to emerging trends. This argument supports the view of Respondent 13 that indeed, citizen journalism is a new trend that is taking shape slowly as a favorite among young people in terms of what they seek in news items. This argument is further buttressed by PR Newswire (2015) who advance the idea that tools like SM have created alternatives in news pitching and as news consumption habits change, it becomes even harder to attract the attention of the younger audiences.

From this study, it is observed that today's media houses have resorted to embracing new media as a way to interact better with their constituents and to avoid losing their market share. This study shows that majority; if not all of the major media outlets in Kenya have developed social media pages that are active and engaging. It confirms that even before breaking news goes on air, the content is already published on their social media pages. The key social media used by key broadcast stations are Facebook and twitter, with FB taking the lead.

This goes to show just how far FB has influenced interactions between media outlets and their audiences. In Kenya, almost all media stations read out comments of FB users on their live broadcasts and also use leads from FB leads to find stories. According to Jeong and Chyi (2014) some of the reasons news organization are forced to join SNS is that there need to target audience demographics, enhance their image and better brand themselves (Ju, Jeong, & Chyi, 2014).

This study shows that interactions among university students are improved as a result of FB use on academic matters and information sourcing. This study reveals that majority of

students in universities are registered with FB and some more active than others. Respondents argued that FB is the gateway to other SNS as other SNS prompt you to open an account using email or FB account. This fact compels users to stay on FB while to some users; FB carries memories and personal content that is important. Consistent with the study finding that FB is more common around academic circles is an argument by Aaen and Dalsgaard (2016) that the most used SNS among learners and teachers is FB. However, some scholars like Leafman and Mathieson (2015) posit counter arguments that students prefer e-mails to communicate with lectures as they perceive emails as more professional while SNS are considered informal and inappropriate for teachers to interact with learners (Aaen & Dalsgaard, 2016; Leafman & Mathieson, 2015).

Besides this, this study shows that students sometimes use FB for academic purposes while some use it to interact with comrades on academic matters, share lecture materials and notes, conduct group discussions and even post live lectures. Respondent 21 testified that FB had enabled her get opportunities for scholarships and assisted other students to get mobility programs in countries like China and USA.

Brandtzag's (2012) argument tallies with Respondents 22's view that SNS are used as reliable direct information sources explicitly by students. Willemse et al (2010) add that students' use of SNS for information sourcing is not surprising given the popularity and availability of user-generated content. Many people in search of information especially the university students rely on easily accessible material even though the information may not be credible (Biddix, Chung, & Park, 2011; Brandtzæg, 2012)

On academic research, the study findings show FB is used by university students in for purposes of information seeking more than for research and study. The respondents argued that as much as they use FB for entertainment, they also multitasked and interacted with colleagues on academic matters at a lesser level. The study consistently shows that students do not use FB directly to get academic material but as a way to interact around academic matters. The study reveals that on rare cases lecturer-students interactions occur on FB. Respondents supported the idea that more interactions online can be good and support the learning and teaching process. The idea of FB use for lecturer-student interactions is supported by Akcaoglu and Bowman (2016) and Pruett and Vareberg (2016) who posit that SNS are emerging as new and important methods of interactions among teachers and learners in higher education (Akcaoglu & Bowman, 2016; Chromey, Duchsherer, Pruett, & Vareberg, 2016).

This study shows that respondents supported learner-teacher online interactions on matters around offering feedback, sending course work and general academic interaction. Some respondents reported that they had had class sessions and assignments done on FB and thought that the idea is trendy and useful to them.   SNS provide opportunities for learners and teachers to continually be in contact, transcending the traditional classroom and creating new teaching and learning spaces (Lee & Teh, 2016).

The study findings show that FB enables unlimited connections with people globally, according to the words of Respondent 4, who said that young adult users of FB are connected to people of status that would have otherwise been impossible to connect with. The respondents in the FGDs and interviews voiced their support for FB being a good

catalyst for global interactions and connectivity that then play a critical role in causing meaningful engagements between people. Respondents in both interviews and FGDs mentioned that because of the ability of FB to cause global connections, they are better placed to tolerate and relate well with people from different cultures and backgrounds. (RS 18, FGD 1, 3).

The study findings demonstrate that young adult's network well because FB is able to connect people of relevant interest groups that would otherwise not be possible with FTF communication. A match is clear between the FGD and interviews responses as both agree that FB interactions help those with difficulties of physical interactions like introverts shy people. This is because all get a platform to interact through SM. The findings further reveal that when compared to other SNS used by university students, FB is more affordable and friendlier to use. The interviews and FGD responses confirmed that FB is cheaper compared to its close competitor, Instagram.

The university students agreed that while on campus, they experience money challenges making them to choose to remain on FB as Facebook uses far less bundles than other platforms. Form both interview sessions and FGDs, this study found out that students are lured by the free Facebook 'kadogo' in days when they have no bundles, consequently making them to stick with FB.

FB innovations have been improved greatly over time in efforts to make up for the limitations of the absence of physical interactions. The findings of this study confirm the argument that with constant improvement, FB cuts much of its limitations. Some of the

innovative features include the memes and emojis that are meant to take care of body language on FB interactions. Live streaming and broadcast have also helped people from different continents feel closer. The argument by both interview and FGDs respondents is that FB is good for interactions, especially when people are separated by distance and life changes. They argued that in such cases, FB plays a good role in maintaining relationships.

From the responses, some affordances of FB interactions include its innovative features, memory and storage capabilities and entertainment features. The findings also show how FB is supporting interactions by acting as a reliable storage and reminder. This shows that some users of FB have ignored the thought of deleting their profiles just because they have all their life's memories in store on FB. Facebook reminds users of special events in their lives like, anniversaries, birthdays, parties, picnics, travels and many others. These events are tagged for friends across networks and celebrated online. The study shows that this unique innovation helped maintain relationships and adds value when people use then well.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

7.1   Introduction

Chapter Four, Five and Six presented the findings and discussions of the study. This chapter presents a summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations that were arrived at after the discussions. This chapter also brings out contributions of the study to the field of research.

7.2   Summary of Key Findings

This chapter discusses key study findings according to the outcomes of the three-research questions. The results of the study pointed out that Facebook interactions are pausing significant challenges to interpersonal relationships. Just like any other thing in life, FB also has its positives. However, when weighed against the positives, the bad outweigh the good.

Some of the bad effects include; weakening face-to-face interactions, causing laziness in interactions, cyber bullying, cat-fishing, addiction, causing identity crisis among other issues. The positives include; increasing global interactions, business networking and advertising that have been made easy with FB usage. In the early 90s, it was quite hard

to communicate with friends or relatives abroad but thanks to FB, it is possible to communicate with friends and relatives abroad at the touch of a button. To make it even better, FB has video-calling and conferencing functions.

The tenets of the theories informing this study; Uses and Gratification and Social Penetration theory are in support of the study findings. The Uses and Gratification Theory asserts that people are active agents who use media to gratify certain needs. The internet has enabled SNS users to find and have more options from which they are able to select sites that satisfy their specific needs. The internet also allows audiences to be in more control of the media. This study has demonstrated that SM users choose to use certain Social Network Sites over others because they satisfy peculiar desires and needs. The study findings also show that university students are looking out for social network sites but are not particularly influenced by it. Users have control over what they interact with, when they interact with it and more content choices. This opens up the number of gratifications that new media use can satisfy.

This study describes various gratifications university students seek in their choice of FB for interaction. The needs include; socializing which includes meeting new friends and keeping in touch, commercial uses like advertising, seeking information, job seeking, updating status and entertainment. Facebook live has also allowed users to conduct online classes and discussions. It has also become a place to seek professional advice from experts on current issues affecting users.

This study shows that face-to-face interactions are ideal for creation of meaningful interactions among university students. The study argues that the use of FB alone cannot lead to healthy relationships among users. In support of the theory Social Penetration Theory, participants of the study overwhelmingly agreed that virtual relationships are not genuine and that they are too superficial and sometimes are the cause of common misunderstandings among students by causing lack of interest for interaction. This may lead to crime, sexual assault and violence.

In conclusion, FB interactions are posing significant challenges to interactions among university students. The negative challenges include; radicalization of users on political, religious and ethnic issues. Cases of mental health problems such as depression, crimes of passion, suicide and murder are equally on the rise. Closed groups on SM, FB being among them, are used to target and recruit unsuspecting users into extremist and terrorist groups. These actions are core in curtailing meaningful interactions by changing the character and personalities of those affected to lean towards self-isolation and introversion.

7.3   Conclusions

Several studies have been undertaken globally trying to establish the role that SM has on user communications. The studies show different findings depending on the study location and severity of SM use. This research set out to determine the influence of online social network-mediated interaction on young university adults within UasinGishu County, Eldoret town.

The study findings demonstrate that SNS are inevitable contemporary trends and essential media for interaction among young university students. University students are especially prone to challenges of chasing after trends in technology. As such, there exist a real problem affecting youths in Kenyan universities. The use of SNS has also been seen to significantly change the social behavior of users such that it even affects their daily activities. Face-to-Face communication is gradually being replaced and equipped with mediated communication including online social networking.

The study findings and an analysis of recent related literature provided evidence that the rapid use and expansion of SNS is negatively affecting the interactions of university students. University students are becoming over-reliant on FB-mediated interactions to stay connected with friends and family and are consequently neglecting personal engagements. Sometimes, users are inhibited from interacting with others by cell phone and other devices even when physically accompanied by other people.

Majority of the study respondents felt that social bonds are weakened as a result of FB-mediated interactions. Respondents agreed that majority of users are not even aware when SNS come in the way of proper interactions. The study shows many users communicate frequently with colleagues via FB than in person, indicating that FTF interactions are on the decrease both in quality and quantity.

If not controlled, the rapid adoption of SNS for interactions may cause a radical shift in communication methods. Will there be more conflicts in communities? Will university students be able to interact face-to-face while in the workforce or will the SNS

interactions completely separate users in communities, thus result to fewer actual friends and a more isolated less fulfilling life?

The study findings revealed that indeed, SNS are negatively influencing human interactions and if not well regulated, may change the manner of interactions forever. Apart from distracting users from engaging in quality FTF interactions, SNS also affect users' willingness to communicate physically thus weakening social bonds.

The findings of this study suggest that a paradox exists; social media may connect and at the same time disconnect people. There is rapid use and expansion of social networking sites for interaction purposes among university students. Given the prevalence of SNS in the daily lives of university students, an understanding of its influence on social interaction is important.

Overreliance on Facebook-mediated interactions negatively influences youth interactions, distracting users from engaging in quality face-to-face interactions, weakening social bonds and at times, causing conflicts among users. This notwithstanding, interactions through Facebook have contributed in developing and enhancing social relationships in geographically dispersed locations. This study concludes that while Facebook-mediated communication has contributed in the fusion of time and space, hence strengthening communication among individuals in geographically dispersed locations; it is equally undermining the development of social relationships and weakening social bonds among young people.

7.4   Recommendations

7.4.1   Families and Institutions

The study recommends that institutions and families should be sensitised on the need to engage young people with a view of enhancing the importance of face-to-face communication which cannot be replaced by online-mediated interactions. Institutions and families should caution users to be partial and advise them on interpersonal interactions on social media.

7.4.2   Curriculum Developers

University curriculum developers should include social media topics; management and appropriate use of SNS among university students. Students should be made aware of the benefits and risks of SM indulgence so as to take caution early enough. With knowledge of the dangers of SM, university students should exercise caution when utilizing SM.

7.4.3   Mentors / Counselors

Universities should provide guidance and counseling to students so as to rehabilitate students who have been negatively affected by social media. This may for example include students who have become SM addicted or those who have experienced cyber bullying or other online vices. University students should be sensitised on ways to enhance their personal experiences with social media use, by affirming their social identities

7.4.4   University Students and other Users of Facebook

It is very important to for students to strike a balance when using SM. For example, they should understand that FB is both good and bad and thus utilize it wisely.

Young people should identify what gratifications they derive from using FB.Is it for education purposes, information or entertainment? They should understand whether their gratification right or wrong from the onset. Facebook should be used based on the appropriateness of a place, time and situation. The youth should be informed of the effects of FB on their social relationships.

Since online social networking is already a significant part of university students' lives, users must take note that it should not be used as replacement for interpersonal interactions. Instead, it should be an alternative way of interacting. Users of SNS should monitor their online interactions, such that they do not lose out on real world interactions in pursuit of virtual interactions. Facebook should be a catalyst for social and relationship development and for economic empowerment of the youth.

Social Networking Sites users should endeavor to remain true to who they are and avoid being provoked or influenced to change their real identities. In other words, users should not act so as to fit it to certain groups. University students should also cautiously accept friend requests from strangers, be discreet on what they post as this subjects them to public judgment. Contentment by users goes a long way in sustaining relationships and therefore users should not pile up unnecessary pressure on themselves in order to conform to what is trendy. This is because as this hurts individual users and their relationships with others.

Facebook users both online and offline, should acknowledge their identities. This is important because when users are aware of whom they are and define their boundaries; they then create a ripple effect where other users relate to them in a similar manner. It is also important to maintain consistency both online and offline in terms of establishing the criteria of interactions with other people. It is important that Facebook users learn to draw a line between sharing one's life and exposing their lives.

Features on FB should be improved. For example, groups on FB should have features and provisions for administrators who can gate keep to ensure only meaningful interactions are allowed to take place.

Intimate relationships can be initiated online but measures must be taken to reinforce them physically. Physical relationships have been said to last longer than online relationships and therefore, FB should be used frequently only when people are separated by distance. Intimate relationships online should be handled with caution to nourish intimate relationships through interpersonal interactions. There is need to avoid posting display of affection online so as to keep one's private life private.

7.5   Suggestion for Further Research

This study opens new questions and directions for future research. From the present study, it is clear that apart from FB, other SNS are equally relevant and should be taken in to account to investigate whether they have the same effects on users as FB has. The study should be extended to older age groups as they too are users of FB and other SNS. This will allow for comparison between different age groups and various SNS outlets.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Introductory Letter

Kili Sydney Kipchirchir
Moi University
School of Information Science
Department of Communication Studies
P.O. Box 3900
Eldoret
Email: kilisydney@gmail.com

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

I am a student from the above-mentioned institution pursing a doctorate degree in the field of communication studies. My field research topic is; **Facebook mediated interactions and its influence on social relationships among university students at selected universities in Kenya**. I may wish to obtain some information from your students regarding FB mediated interactions. All information and participants will be treated with utmost confidentiality in line with the required ethical considerations.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely

Kili Sydney K

APPENDIX II: Individual interview Schedule

1. What kind of social interactions do you engage yourself in on Facebook? Why? How did you get yourself in the platform?

2. In your opinion has Facebook reshaped interaction patterns among University students in universities? (if yes how? if not why?)

3. Do you think that social media (Facebook) interaction is becoming a new form of preferred interactions among University students in universities? Why?

4. According to you what kind of relationships do you feel are arising from Facebook interactions?

5. What affordances do you perceive in the use of Facebook interaction over Face-to-face?

6. In your opinion how does Facebook mediated interactions enhance or undermine social interactions among students in universities?

7. What would you recommend to users of Facebook to keep in their pursuit of maintain healthy and lasting relationships online and offline?

8. Do you feel that the intensity of Facebook interaction directly affects the quality of online and offline relationships?

9. Is there anything you would like to add in relation to this topic?

APPENDIX III: FGD Questions

1. I assume you have friends…how do you usually interact with them?
2. If offline, could you describe how this works?
3. Now that there's Facebook, are your interactions with friends any different?
4. What's the difference, could you describe it?
5. Has Facebook affected or reshaped your relationships or interactions and correlations in the virtual world and real world?
6. Do you feel that Facebook interactions will replace other social interactions in the future?
7. Generally, do you think Facebook has enriched or undermine interaction among your fellows at the University? Why do you think so?
8. Do you feel that Interactions on the online platform are more enduring than those established offline? (why do you think so?)
9. Are there any good things interactions on Facebook have over interactions offline?
10. Has FB usage affected the relationship between you and your friends? If yes, please explain how?
11. For what purposes do you think majority of University students in Universities prefer using Facebook for social interactions?
12. What recommendations would you give to users of Social Media to keep in their virtual world? Should they be very active and participate or remain in the background?
13. Anything else you would like to say about this? Maybe an intimate relationship you have developed through Facebook?

APPENDIX IV: Consent Form

Dear respondent,

My name is Kili Sydney from Moi University, Eldoret and I am conducting an academic (PhD) study titled **Facebook mediated interactions and its influence on social relationships among university students at selected universities in Kenya.** The study has been approved by the Institutional Research and Ethics Committee (IREC) of Moi University on behalf of the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations (NACOSTI) of Kenya, and a written authority has been granted.

You have been identified as one of the participants in the study and if you agree, you will be asked questions about yourself, your views. This interview will take about 30-60 minutes of your time. This interview is not expected to cause any harm, but if you feel uncomfortable with some of the questions, you can choose not to answer them. You can also decide not to continue with the entire interview.

I will be taping, alongside taking notes for the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Your responses will be private and confidential. Your name or anything that can be used to identify you will not be written on the records. The information will only be used for the study.

Yours Sincerely,

…………………………. ……………………….… ……………………

Interviewee   Witness   Date

APPENDIX V: Sample Individual Interview

Interview 9

(Introduction and consent)

Researcher: What kind of social interactions do you engage yourself in on Facebook? Why? How did you get yourself in the platform?

I no longer keep post on FB, I use it for social stoking, health stocking, interacting with my friends as t is the in thing and major mode of communicating, I used FB to check out cool friends and celebrities. I did not find any educational values are there. My friends however claim they are on FB for various reasons including grape vine, gossip and as a site for dating, most relationship according to my friends' ideas is that the genesis of relationships is FB, people first meet on FB and then initiate intimate relationship. From my view people no longer have face to face like in the past but now FB has become the origin of meetings that can then be moved to physical meetings.

Why FB

Per pressure made me join FB as such as it was difficult then because we used to use cyber since smart phones were not out then

Researcher: In your opinion has Facebook reshaped interaction patterns among University students in Universities? (if yes how? if not why?)

I believe FB, social media and the internet has made people lazy, most students are on FB and they are on group chats, students exchange ideas through FB and FB messenger, this feature make them too lazy that they care less for proper interaction. Students don't even feet up for assignment discussions which normally support interactions, they work individually and instantaneous exchange ideas and submit a paper without meeting even

once, thus style has killed the togetherness because there are no more physical interactions among even students belonging to class groups. The drive to do work is not there, the drive to meet up is no longer there because FB has made everything easy causing even laziness of interactions.

The only positive thing I can say about FB is that you get to talk to anybody anytime in the world. When you go back to time, lest say 15 years back you will see that the troubles we are having today, of youths in universities being very temperamental, lazy and selfish was not there. Students who rioted in the universities did it for good reason of fighting a dictatorial system and fighting for their rights, students were sober and emotionally upright. Today with the entry of social media in the country we see fewer patient students, violence and extremisms, that we cannot recall happening in the 90s. Today through such sites as FB students are lured into secret groups and they can no longer meet and share ideas about ideologies, so when the interaction is destroyed students are left out in the hands of extremist sycophants.

Most university students identify themselves in groups, in terms of social status, in terms of economic status and social behaviors, this includes sexual orientation that is catalyzed by FB. These groupings are catalyzed by FB and this affects the interaction patterns of the students, students thereby fall in deferent groups and individuals falling in similar groups know each other and interact only among themselves but those in different groups also cluster themselves and avoid engagement with those in different groups.

People do not meet physically but know each other online, a person may know everything about person who they have never met and this now causes lack of privacy and bad stoking, this very feature of FB makes interactions fearful. The whole point of

having social relationship is actually to be there, get to know each other on one, when you communicate to a person physically you get to know the real version of a person. People are very fake on the virtual world and this does in no way help social interactions or rather meaningful social capita among students. Because people are unable to meet and interact, we them hear of cases of suicide in the universities because there is no platform for students to vent out what is hurting them be it relationships going soar or hitting the rocks with academic matters.

Relationships are not normal as people cannot meet, people only know each other virtually and this causes damage to all sorts of relationships, the point of having social interaction is to converse one on one where you get the real version of a person, things posted on FB are generally fake, it affects those from poor backgrounds who are forced to do things that are not morally correct in order to be equal to those that showcase a certain type of life.

Researcher: Do you think that social media (Facebook) interaction is becoming a new form of preferred interactions among University students in universities? Why?
People like short cuts especially us the youths, we want to use shortcuts to get what we want, so this thing called FB allows for this short cuts especially us youths in the university, for example we can do basically anything on FB why do I have to go out to social gathering, why do I have to get out of the house, why do I have to have a social life when I can do everything in the comfort of my house. This fact makes FB a preferred mode of interaction among us in the university. Luckily new platforms of social networking are coming up, this include Instagram which I believe is better and closely competing with FB, I believe Instagram is better as it is filtered to the point of ensuring

that nothing posted is against its policy, this is unlike snapchat that has no security features and could be a danger to the users especially University students in universities. FB is still preferred as it is easy to use, simple, and easily accessible and cheaper compared to other social media sites.

Researcher: According to you what kind of relationships do you feel are arising from Facebook interactions?

I can't even call them relationships, I can call them "phone relationships" we no longer have relationships in regard to FB because this is someone you do not know or perhaps you may have met once or twice at some point in your life but then there was a disconnect, so attempting to revive that relationship on phone is not possible. I am a strong believer in the whole doings, meet someone talk to him/her and that's the proper interaction. Social media is useful only in terms of business and marketing; you can reach a wide audience with the intention of marketing your products or services. This marketing and business are what can occur, there is nothing like real relationships and it's in FB that fake relationships occur. Relationships can only prosper if serious effort is made after an initial FB contact to really meet and get to know each other outside the online network site.

Researcher: What affordances do you perceive in the use of Facebook interaction over Face-to-face?

Myself I see no benefits but my discussion with my colleagues brings out the claim that FB is cool and trendy, they claim that they are updated and get to interact with many people, no restrictions of time and space, you can be anywhere in the world but in your phone. FB use has become outdated and among some of us students it's left out for the

backward in society, us the exposed ones prefer using Instagram. It's a good place for ladies who want to follow gossips and another else. Ladies enjoy and may I say thrive in gossip, gossip is healthy for a woman and FB is a place where women can get health and thrive in small talk that makes life a whole time interesting. Another affordance I hear is that they use it as a place for marketing themselves, their products and services they may want to offers to the world.

FB is better over F-T-F when there is a need for reconnecting with those you lost contact with over a long period of time, like you can be a parent above forty years and still reconnect with a primary school child friend over thirty years after losing contacts, for me this is the only reason I regret leaving FB recently.

Researcher: In your opinion how does Facebook mediated interactions enhance or undermine social interactions among students in universities?

FB undermine social interactions among us in the university, this is in the obvious ways, rather than meeting and being physically present we can better engage with our friends. It's possible to grow relationships that are lasting when we begin with a honest ground and not on phone where only hype is present. Phones and internet have not only made us lazy but also made us lazy in interactions and even meeting, this explains the delay in morality as we use the phones to propagate and advocate for lifestyles, we see among celebrities in the first world. The groups formed on FB further goes to alienate members in the society, those grouping are at first not founded on good principles and they cause collisions with other groups that don't fit in, this in the long run just affects interactions among us in the university for no really any good warranted reason.

I remember when I used to visit my elder brother in campus some ten years back, I

remember a very rich life among university, I remember alto of activities, outdoors and indoors, the swimming pools were full, libraries and even the fields, student campus life was rich, with the buses always moving to other campuses ferrying students back and forth, today I see the fields empty, libraries empty no social gatherings at all. What people need to plan their programs and time and not t be controlled by FB. I have a friend who is an addict of FB, she sleeps at 4am and send three quarters of her time on FB, we have lost touch since I am not doing what she is doing and she claims I am backward. People need to know that they are not paid to be on FB but some of them appearing are paid, unless you're doing something that earns you money there is no point of being fixated on the phones claiming to be busy. Addiction to FB also has a direct influence on time left out for other forms of interaction, this addition to me is worse than alcohol diction since it also cause esteem issues unlike alcohol action, when someone is addicted to FB thy are basically incapable of engaging on one to one interactions, this inability translates to self-esteem problems and people with esteem issues find it extremely difficult to survive in such a competitive world eventually we hear of depressions, suicide and murder in the universities. Two in every ten youths in Nairobi commit suicide every week.

Researcher: What would you recommend to users of Facebook to keep in their pursuit of maintain healthy and lasting relationships online and offline?

To do things in moderation, moderate your use of the app, do everything in moderation.

Researcher: Do you feel that the intensity of Facebook interaction directly affects the quality of online and offline relationships?

Too much FB may not even improve online friendship because there is really no

friendship there, it can only improve linkages for business and an opportunity to get to hear what's fashionable, trendy and gossip. I would advice

Researcher: Is there anything you would like to add in relation to this topic?

I want people to go back to the day, yes we need social media, and yes FB is a good thing when used correctly but let's go back to the day when people has conversations, we are losing that and actually losing touch with humanity, that's why we are having so much strange things going on in the world right now, when you do the math before FB things were ok, after the entry of Social media we have so much going on, so much noise, so much happening all at once to a point where a president reaches its country through twitter, this is plain stupidity. We need to go back to the roots, we need to get in touch with humanity, we

APPENDIX VI: Sample FGD

FGD 1

I assume you have friends…how do you usually interact with them?

Respondent 1

Mostly we meet in classroom, usually I have few friends meaning my circle is small therefor we met in classes or I invite them to my place, sometimes and rarely I meet new friends online and those I meet online I engage occasionally via the social media plat forms.

Respondent 2

I mostly meet my friends in person, I usually either meet then in class invite them to my place or go visiting, I also don't have a lot of friends and therefore maintain a few good friends that I interact with, am not good at making friends online, I have very few friend that I keep up with in social media.

Respondent 4

I am a one-on-one type of person, I sometimes maintain online interactions to keep in touch with friends I know and we had an actual friendship say back in high school but we are separated by distance so then and only then I initiate and maintain communication with this groups otherwise while in campus I interact by meeting up with my friends even if it means traveling to neighboring campuses so as to talk to them.

Respondent 5

I interact with my friend and meet them mostly on a face to face basis, I however find that I like online communication when my friends are far, I do not accept online relationships only in case when friends are really disconnected by distance.

Respondent 6

Apart from the few I have at school most of my friends are at home, those far from me and that at home I mostly interact with them through phone or whatsup, the friends at school I make sure that I physically and consistently meet them, I enjoy our physical bonds and we hug, laugh and share pleasantries.

Respondent 7

Majorly for me I meet up physical, one and one interactions are better for me and worst case I make phone calls but not social media things. We have strong social bonds with my friends and this has been created because we engage in social activities that require us to be physically connected, we go hiking, dancing and swimming together and this is a good thing than just sharing individual photos and videos

Respondent 3

I prefer one on one meeting, physical interactions, I am not looking at social media connections as I feel it leads to online staking, I would rather have friends can are tangible that I can meet and see and not friends that creep or prey on my in the social media and I cannot tell what their intentions are. I am really poor in other interactions that are not one on one, I rather have people I know, I am open and accept opinions of those that like online interactions.

Respondent 8

My interactions with friends vary with level of friendship, there are those friends that we meet up from time to time and this group I maintain physical interactions, there are those friends that are a little far away and we have the phone conversations, during this calls we can arrange for a physical meeting, but I am also and online kind of person, there are

those friends of mine that are very far away, say for example I am now in Eldoret and my friends are in Kitui, we have to get In Touch through FB or WhatsApp, I utilize both means and the one that can suite the level of friendship and convenience, I believe both are working well for me.

Respondent 9

It's the same for me, this is because I have friends at school and friends at home, I have to constantly keep In Touch with this groups of friends, one on one works best with my neighbors and classmate friends while online communication works best with my friends at home and even those in the diaspora.

Respondent 10

For me here in school I have a small group of friends, I have some I talk to online and those that I talk to offline, I do not discriminate against any choice as long as it is works for us the communicators.

b) Now that there's Facebook, are your interactions with friends any different?

Respondent 1

I joined FB like seven (7) years ago, I joined because during that time there was a lot of pressure to join, the young majority quickly took up the peer pressure, I would pass by a friend and notice them on FB on seeing this it deepened my curiosity and I also felt left behind so I started to develop interest and eventually joined the platform, I started doing some research at that time I was not really computer literate and I could not understand how social networking works but after engagement with friends I realized how social media works, signed in without a smart phone but on someone else's phone, I started receiving my notification through borrowed devices and I realized the joy in FB that I

wanted to acquire one for myself. I realized that FB is all about meeting new friends, that is it all about networks and connections, so that where I started admiring FB that I have remained to date however today I do not have so much curiosity, even if a new thing is added I am not really interested, I only care of things that are of benefit and this includes business unlike before as a new user I would be interested more in small talk and just fun.

Respondent 2

To me FB has really changed interactions because through FB you get a unique opportunity to link with friends who you would have never been able to contact for a number of years, FB has opened doors that were earlier on almost totally shut and it becomes a highway of people to get to add new friends and meet long term special friends, I mention a case of a lazy I was in standard three with her, just last year I got a notification from FB from a contact with names like hers, with just click in the accept button I was able to contact my close long term friends that schools separated us more than a decade away. We are able to really to interact through FB, it is made my world better as I have no limits of reach.

Respondent 3

For I see FB affecting interactions in both positive and negative manners, but let me focus on the negative part first as I feel that the negatives outweigh the positives very significantly, on FB for example those that are engaging in conversations and online interactions are unable to see and take advantage of the nonverbal clues while interacting, somebody could be laughing on you and not even interested in communication with you but still puts up an online interaction, you are led along in a path of lies and you cannot even realize you are being mocked, I think FB has attempted to bring up emojis to cover

for this weakness but emojis in themselves are not going to express the true emotions that a human being can express physically, emojis can only work while sending those fake flowers and birthday cakes which to me is even more mockery that I prefer there was rather nothing than fake flowers sent to me online on valentine's day, I would rather hold the flowers and smell them than have fake love online, this really destroys relationships as FB created and warrants shortcuts in life. When someone posts something on FB, usually the best comments only comes from what is trending an not necessarily what is right or important for public interests, for instance someone post something post something about the murder case of "slay queens" such a topic at such a moment will solicit attraction and thousands of comments because it trendy and fresh and hot, so if you were to post something like scholarships or social meetings your post will be totally ignored and you may not reach to anyone at all however much the importance of the issue, this makes the FB interactions really weak and fake and does not do any good to human beings and proper social bonding among University students like us. Fb is not about facts but what is trending I feel like we are all living fake lives through FB.

Respondent 4

I believe that FB now has not reached its previous levels of interactions, I mean that FB interactions are not as common as they were some years back, this I feel like personally I would interact on FB like 7 years ago, then I used to interact with people too much as much I did not have a phone, I used my mom's phone I would spend hours on end chatting on several open windows multitasking with anyone that popped up online, this is not the case with me today and I believe majority of you, I cannot believe that was really me them and the me today. Today FB has lost its power from interaction, Instagram and

the rest have taken its place so really don't look at it in the university perhaps if something to be done among our older people. Nobody is no longer keen on making new friends on FB anymore, we prefer WhatsApp and the more stylish Instagram than the old-fashioned FB interactions. Today I hope I have accepted less friend request on FB, I am now forced to stick with the friends and I totally reject or ignore the few attempts of people befriending me online as I know if I am to make new friendships then FB is the last place to go, number one for me is a one on one, then perhaps whatsup or Instagram but not FB.

Respondent 5

I joined FB over a decade ago, then I was in standard 6 or 7, honestly joining FB was because of peer pressure, then FB was the trending thing, if you were not there you were regarded as a villager, now then compared to now is very different, this days I believe FB is not as it used to be, what still gives FB a lifeline is that before you join any other social media platform you have to register by stating or inputting your FB account or email account, other online platform register users using email and FB accounts and this blackmail of sorts makes it difficult for users to just leave as they wish. FB set the bar that it's the primary social media that you have to be on before you join the other social media platforms, for example you cannot be on snap chat, Instagram, among others before being first on FB, and also let us look at the fact that when you register to join other online sites you are asked to register with your email of FB account, this is so because FB has become like the status quo when you are looking at the online community, so FB is as basic as having an email address that you do not need or occasionally use, I am not saying that FB is the bloodline but that it is a means to and end

and not the end itself.

Respondent 6

I feel that the people who continuously use FB I because of is simplicity to use, FB is really user friendly and many would stick there because of its lack of complications in this already complicated world, unlike Instagram where lies trouble with bundles management, it's quite expensive for students but equally enticing and attractive, Instagram is not so user friendly but the good news is that students are now computer and technology survey and sooner or later they are able to outsmart the technological hitches. FB is almost free but there is also a completely free version, this makes users us it a lot in the university, with few bundles you can chat and maintain rapport the whole day and that is why despite its troubles there are still many University students like us in the university who still prefer remaining on FB.

Respondent 7

FB is affecting interactions with friends because of socialites and celebrities locally and internationally, many University students like us keep following celebrities and we create an identity through lenses of celebrities, we create parody accounts of celebrities and therein lure thousands of students who are then forced to remain of FB with the sole intention of following celebrities, recreating or reinventing their personalities to ape what is fashionable and also those that are interested in reinventing their lives. For me I think I think following the celebrities makes University students join FB to interact with this people and to also show the world that they are also fit.

Respondent 8

A research recently conducted by one of the leading online companies reveled Instagram is nowadays becoming one of the most used social media platform that people are leaving FB to join Instagram and part of the reason is that uses are going to the other sites where celebrities are, majority of celebrities prefer Instagram because of its cozy looks and aesthetics, FB has remained original, its format has remained the same, twitter looks cool and Instagram indeed cooler, us young users love aesthetics and gloss, we prefer clearer images and software for editing and this makes Instagram and twitter the in thing overtaking FB now.

2. **Has Facebook affected or reshaped your relationships or interactions and correlations in the   virtual world and real world?**

Respondent 1

Relationships that are developed online are reshaping our methods and longevity of relationships, have very superficial relationships thanks to FB. FB has contributed to some of the social relationships that are virtual bat fake, the other social relationships that are virtual are when you take a photo and over edit it, when the photo is viewed it is like by many online, perhaps your name and what you do is all not real including the photos online, when such a person posting on FB goes to the real world they are quickly and easily rejected. FB has gone to the extent that the information provided has become a prison cell and users live two lives, one the real actual life and the other the fake life. FB has created the sense in which the information created in the virtual world can easily make the other user do something that is not original and negative, like living in a world where everyone is faking it until they make it.

Respondent 2

I am concerned with cyber security, there is some offline information and the online identity, in the online identity we straggle to maintain an image, this makes people adjust interaction methods most of the time. When I used FB back then my FB account was very active while I was in high school, you know back then I have full friends, my account was actually full. I used fake identities on FB I has a first name Chris Brian, my name is actually Brian, I added a Chris and now it sounded like Chris brow the famous celebrity, I was trending with my fake name and consequently managed to attract full capacity of friends online, some still call me Chris Brian to date. For me while using the fake name I got serious followers, I was always posting fancy photos and even posted Chris browns photos, I was always chasing after cars and house that were not mine. In the account that was real I had almost 80 friends. People tend be believe what they see online and are consequently affected by what they see. You know if you give people what they want to believe it and it's not true they will nevertheless believe in that lie, in the long run relationships are ruined as people are all putting on masks and when the masks are taken off then the true picture is seen. In the virtual world there is fake identities that translates to many followers.

Respondent 3

I find FB somehow authentic that using another social media while in pursuit of maintaining mutual and lasting relationships, my use of FB compared to other social media outlets has not affected my colorations with friends because I choose to weight and use it carefully. Through FB I have maintained my original friends, I know each of them and I keep up with them, unlike Instagram where I take photo for fame and photos to

show off only, it does in no way nature any form of relationship, but look at FB on the other hand, FB celebrates friendships, FB reminds us of birthdays, anniversaries, graduations among others, it allows us to tag those we want to remind of our loving days and we can cheer online and even ignite memories of old, t really does assist in keeping friends together as compared to the other outlets. The people on FB are more real and cannot fake like those ones on snapchat and Instagram for me FB compared to the other online platforms, you cannot lie since you have histories and identities can be followed.

Respondent 4

My views are different, I do not remember the last time I accessed my Instagram, I get to FB because I prefer it since I feel it's the best and I can trust, I go there to look for opportunities that I share with friends, I have made so many connections, both business and social and I must say this connects are real and developed by FB, see if you want to follow someone and see if they are true, most of their online information will actually betray authenticity of someone's character, don't you all think this can help develop trust in relationships? There is a way in which you can identify if a person is living the true self of FB or not, such people will keep a constant online and when you follow them offline you should still be able to see that constant, this mere factor then enables users like myself weigh and get into proper and meaningful interactions courtesy of FB. Other tools like Instagram people go there for likes and showoffs and nothing else meaningful, n FB I can post the serious opportunities I disseminate this information to all my friends and lots of them benefit and they appreciate and this strengthens our bonds.

Respondent 5

FB for me is a good tool to make rinds, I specially select my friends, I stalk and find more about my online friends before we really get down in making us special, when users pick friends carefully and run for quality and not quantity it is then possible that FB can be a tool for good interactions and colorations in both virtual and the real world.

3. Do you feel that Facebook interactions will replace other social interactions in the future?

Respondent 1

FB will not replace other social interactions now or in the future. Reason, we are living in a world where technology is growing wild, every day there are new apps and technologies that are innovated and adopted, these new technologies are what will always take over the older technologies and innovations like FB and control future interactions. I told you earlier Instagram will replace FB and this is according to credible research out there, when you think of what may be innovated in the future you can see that things will be different in future, the trend shows that in the future we will have always newer technologies that are quickly adopted by users, the choice of social media tool you're going to use will depend on number 1 on the users motive, on the type of type of demographic your targeting, like age, gender, level of education and many others, like FB you can even reach to standard 8 students, who may not be ideal for use by University students, Instagram you will find less adolescents and more of an educated majority University students, so in future from my point we will have so many social media tools and your choice will highly depend on who your targeting, I am seeing a possibility of FB in future being broken down in to sections, we will have apps which will only deal

with business, we will have other apps that will deal with friendship interactions, we will also have apps that will only host socialites and celebrities only, this will be the only way FB may survive the competitions. In future we are going to have apps that will enable us communicate in quality and not just communicate.

Objection- respondent -1

I want to disagree that this will not happen, to me when Mark Zuckerberg originated the FB idea there has be no one or not tool that has beaten the ideas of Zuckerberg, it stood the taste of time when it comes to online social media communication. I have friends all over the world, if I want to have a conversation with them I would go through FB, when the FB elites and team realized that FB messenger was losing out they quickly developed WhatsApp which we all use and realize how powerful it is, it is the WhatsApp idea that made FB people realize that they need to always reinvent, this makes me sure that FB will never lose value despite the always changing environment. If FB realizes that its communication idea is losing value they will reinvent to catchup with times, WhatsApp is evident of the trends to come up, the same FB idea is what is over flowing to WhatsApp.

Respondent 2

In the current word we have three communication channels, we have alphabet, who is the founder of google and we have amazon, which is the leading cloud provider, their storage is the greatest in the whole world and then we have the FB family, if you consider FB as a service provider for communication, we are wrong that it will lead the future, but should we consider FB as a company as a whole then we are right FB will always be on top in determining the communication in the future. Now look the acquisition FB is now making, FB has acquired WhatsApp and we are all using, FB has also acquired

Instagram, it has acquired tumbler, friend feed, oculus VR all this so when my friend claimed that apps are going to replace FB then he is completely wrong, I think in the few years we will have FB dominating future interactions. Currently nobody is talking about apps anymore, I sometimes do programming and I know nobody will need apps in the future, in the near future if we consider aspect of applications we are getting it wrong, what will lead the future is artificial intelligence, so the reason why FB is going to be the sole communication platform as a company but it is as a social media platform may not replace other social media platforms, FB will remain relevant but it needs to keep reinventing itself, FB currently has FB watch that is almost like you tube and ITV – it will create its own TV within the app this will be targeting football fanatics, the football community is one single entity with a big population, this innovations in FB will make it remain relevant. When it comes to business FB will take lead and this will make it remain relevant, this digital marketing on FB is cheaper than doing it anywhere on the online community, now anyone who wants to do the digital marketing is able to do with ease and this keeps making it remain relevant, also the way FB is segregating its audience is unique compared to all the other social media outlets, it has the power to get you meet the people you know, through data mining FB is able to connect you with people you know, this is hardly possible with other social media sites like friend feed and the like.

Respondent 3

Talking about future apps I meant future technologies, FB as it stands today, talking about traffic, talking about geographical location, talking about connectivity, this is also happening in other technologies as well, technologies in future is going to be consumer based, it's the user who will chose the type of technology to use, we will chose according

to the quality, we will chose according to how it will benefit us, FB has the highest number of user currently, but we cannot say that all this people will assure that it will remain relevant in future, for example right now we will only go with what is trending, your friend in primary school may not be relevant to you right now, as you have all grown and things have changed, you do not look at them in the same way you looked up to them when you were young, perhaps you are stronger and may not need protection and affection anymore, you may need an astute business partner to build a future with, this is the same with technology, you will not stick to what you started with but move to what is relevant n this future, the current status quo speaks louder, the moment you stabilize on amount of data, the problem with Instagram is data, when it fixes this then trust me FB is out. Let's realize that the future will be determined by us, a generation that relies on quality.

Generally, do you think Facebook has enriched or undermine interaction among your fellows at the University? Why do you think so?

Respondent 1

On the online community FB has improved the online community, this is greater in FB than other social media sites, if you have an account as a student you are able to connect to more friends. When it comes to one on one interactions there is a lot of fake love, when you send an emoji of smiling it could be a fake laugh the same person ending that emoji could be sending hundreds of them chatting away in to the night, its not humanly possible and so many smiles are directed at the same time to different people all at once, the facial expressions on FB does not translate to the actual smiles, FB has reduced real one on one interactions, this is not only on FB but all social media sites. When it comes

to dating, I am not a fun of online dating, I must way online dating is a two-way traffic, it can either work for you or work against you, today we have a lot of dating sites, some include bumble bee, Tina, all this, so this dating sites have different testimonials, some claim that they are successful some say not.

Respondent 2

I fill like on FB people are actually what they post, once you go there and put something that I do not conform to the idea, when I meet a person one on one, I will already have an impression about you. People on FB are therefore viewed in terms of what they post on FB, this is mostly the case especially when we do not know the user in person, we tend to judge them by their posts. This makes it happen that you can be having a relationship with a person in the physical but you do not know them really because they have another life online, so the relationship will be shaky because you are confused with who the real person is really, one is the person you know and love off line and one is the person who is strange online and very controversial. I feel like who people try to show us who they are on FB and what they really are has effects on relationships, some people are keyboard warriors and talking tough is not exactly who they are, they may be timid and introverts, I feel like online you may get very different people offline, when you meet such people you are disappointed and your connections breaks, you may have developed an impression that is not real.

Respondent 3

I prefer FB over other social media sites in terms of initiating and maintain better relationships among us University students in the university. I feel FB somehow displays all your relations and it harder to fake a hundred percent like in Instagram, on Instagram

people fake a lot and anyone can be anything and no trace of the original them can be found, now I advise that users should better use FB than the newer sites if they are looking at developing more genuine and lasting friendships.

Respondent 4

When it comes to learning FB has been one social sites that has helped me learn positively, I have learnt a lot including social skills, see for example there are groups of people who have successful engagements online, I follow the group and I am able to learn from them and inculcate the same group skills to my group, this skills assist is strengthening our social bonds and we grow stronger together, you see the downside of the other social sites like WhatsApp you are unable to follow groups as you wish, you must be added in order to get involved, this does not encourage social bonding among the us in the university. Through FB you can access any platform and find what can build you as a person and grow individually, what I have gotten online on FB has grown me as a person, the knowledge I gain online has enable me practice and share my wide ideas with others, I am always informed and my friends like being among me because I am always oozing with ideas this has made me favorite among the more senior colleagues. For example, I am on an online group about Artificial intelligence, I have learnt too much and outside the group my roommates always confide in me as I seem to be a philosopher of some sorts.

Respondent 5

For relationships I think FB is ideal, today even some jobs require you to provide your FB account, FB is about content, you can stock and learn more about people and you will be able to n=be prepared to develop better relationships with them offline. It's a good

place to networks and even dating, I have a friend who met the boyfriend on FB, see the case of the Kakamega twins where the county is celebrating a reunion that was separated at birth, families that did not know each other are now united and loving each other through FB, people are receiving motivation on messages and advices to resolve conflict etc and this is really a superb thing about FB.

Respondent 6

Talking about social relationships, let look at many years ago, we can recall through high school history, lets imagine how the world was in the 90s when we had no social media sites, please visualize what happens without technology, lets focus on what side out weights the other, does it make meaning to culture and ape the lives of celebrities? This is really up to how we want to use it, are we using it to improve our social bonds and the world around us or are we using social media to be immoral and skewed in life, the way you absorb the content is where we should be at, I FB controlling the way we disseminate and receive information, can we accept everything posted therein and does what we ape behaviors that will destroy our social bonds as students, when you talk about FB how will it shape us well and not control us, we shall continue to have technologies that will shape our behavior , so the negative influences of social sites like FB that lead to things like suicide and love affair gone soar, we need to initialize among users ways in which we can manage the negative influences of FB to proper relationship developments

Respondent 7

If FB went away from me I will still be surviving, this is so because I am not a heavy user of social media, there are heavy users who cannot survive 5 minutes without social media, if they cannot walk with a charger and their phones they cannot move, like you

know, there is a lot of technological material that are always coming, FB to attract all its audience it has to be exciting for the people to be there, it also had to bring celebrities online to further attract more people, this has really undermined one on one interactions, take a case of me in high school and I would sit in the house, people were speaking and I was not there, I was there but not there, I was interacting with a world out there I would not see and miss the family around me. Social media has made people get depressed and they are sick, when you are sick and depressed you cannot come out to meet the world, depression is a serious disease when you became famous you want to keep the status quo, you have to keep up posting and posting what's relevant to your audience, you get the pressure to always post something fancy, for example hanging out inexpensive places, chasing after celebrities to take photos to post for show off and all this pressure eventually gets on your way of leaving a healthy meaningful life where you are honest and get honest friends and not ideal followers.

Respondent 8

I agree with the point that if social media was not there people would be happier, social media gives as pressure that is not necessary, we see people post fake news that they are living this celebrity life and this depresses you, you are tempted to think their life is good and you are not good enough, you get depressed and think less of yourself, you became afraid to mingle with others because you assume everyone know what you are going through and that you are a looser of some sorts so you keep to yourself always hiding in the shadows of the online stars continuing to do yourself more harm.

Respondent 9

I think relationships would be better without FB, on Instagram myself I fake a lot, Instagram is the leading site in brain wash people, cause frustrations and setting fake standards, the more we adopt the social media sites into our lives the more we get distanced as human beings, please lets remain with the box addressed and worst case keep emails only.

Respondent 10

I feel that FB is indeed undermining interactions, look for example the real comrades of university people will come on the site, people will talk of uber, awards or who is coming to UoN perhaps a celebrity, people will be there seeking each other and creating a big deal that they should all attended but come on the real day no one will appear , so at the end of the day people are only there hyping and creating scene that are not real, they will be there to be heard an not really creating physical relationships, number two someone did a research project, in the project report she found out that because of SM in recent time, some people talk about murder online and this makes more people post and tag the same and actually people take out the thing and triggers more people to commit the act, on FB such material does not help in reducing the vice but actually helps in increasing it, on FB the negative energy gives the other person negative energy and this is a ripple effect that the tendency of depression and suicidal thoughts are sent in wave hit throughout the university, the negative energy on FB is bad and destroys real life real life, when you write for example that life is a straggle, life is useless or meaningless, friends are snakes, you actually make more and more people see it to be true and this is real trouble, that why I never follow celebrities because I don't want stress I don't want to

look down on myself.

Respondent 1

I feel that people on FB to go out to say things is because they feel that this is a free space but the reality is that no one is perfect, some people can actually help and seek out help for you, sometimes FB is sometimes useful especially if you know your true friends therein. I remember when I did not have FB I remember not having any pressure in my life, I would not really care to be seen what's in the background when I take photos, but today I am very conscious of everything about me even public and private appearance are a concern because if I am captured on photos and posted with a bad hair day everyone will see and comment that I am perhaps broke or I have been damped.

Respondent 4

I have zero followers, rather I follow nobody online, this is fair for me, I do not take photos with celebrities and even care to follow them, I care less about comments and likes, emijos etc. In the real world the same celebrities may not be trending or followed the same way as they are online, Vera Sidika for example is liked and followed by thousands upon thousands of young Kenyans but her neighbors have nothing they know or care to find of interest about her, she's is not a pillar or role model to even the neighbors, she's not even as cute as she looks online, does not have the fancy cars or throw money to people, in fact she is the one always paying rent late and a problem to the landlord and neighbors, so you see this two worlds are far apart, some people just get friends because they want all attention drawn to them and its only when things collapse that they realize they are all alone. Social media has wrecked the society through affecting the emotions of its users.

5. Do you feel that Interactions on the online platform are more enduring than those established offline? (Why do you think so?)

Respondent 4

I think if you make a friend online and you have the same qualities then the relationship is going to grow, me for example I met a sweet girl online and we are growing strong we are courting now, she has my engagement ring and I am seeing you married right after campus because our parents have accepted, so yes relationships can work online even more than offline sometimes.

Respondent 6

I don't think so as claimed just now, I got to be on FB when I was in standard 3, that was in 2007, in my school then I met the girl online we interacted over time since standard three I knew she was the person I loved so I pursued her for a while, after a long time her mom knew about us, she was harried and warned by her mother never to talk to me and she called warning me not to ever attempt to speak to her or reach out to her in any manner – she decided to peruse her education and so I went on FB and deleted her contacts and that was the end. I am saying therefore that friendship on FB are so easy to end even without major conflict or disagreement, all you do is to block or deactivate someone and the relationship disappears so online FB relationships are not enduring like the real bonds.

Respondent 2

The relationships online are for sure not enduring, this is because most of them are not started on a genuine note, say pictures for one that are posted online are over edited to make people look like angles or superstars in Hollywood movies, no birthmark, n scars or

even bad breath, when such people are pursued online and an eventual one on one meeting is organized it becomes a very frustrating and embarrassing encounter because the magic of FB disappear as and that why they can never last past the online hype. Most online relationships are not lasting but start with a lot of hype and hope.

Respondent 5

Only 5 % of relationships online are lasting, why am I saying this, I say this because the communication there in is just for purposes of passing time, have fun an see how people are going on in life, when I stalk my friend it does not really mean I care for them, its just that I am nosy and just want to know, when we meet in person I could just say" hi hi " and that's it, period, the relationships are just superficial unless we move it offline then that relationship has the chance to survive, online and offline personalities are very different and it's a fact that humans do not live in computers therefore saying no one can have relationships online that are true.

6. Are there any good things interactions on Facebook have over interactions offline?

Networking and globalization, we reach people who are far, we also have confidence to write anything as no one can really see us, it's also a good source of entertainment we have the sites like Kilimani mums that thrill both young and old, the drama there is just on point and anytime one gets a free time we go read and reread the funny comments from Kenyans, FB interactions are also daring, you can speak out your mind to correct government or even school administrators and today anything that goes online is taken seriously, people have gone to jail because of an online exposure, people have got numerous opportunities in life as FB has exposed them to a wide viewership, look for

instance at the first class honors girl from Chuka University who was recognized because of a FB exposure, she brought out the plight of thousands of students, looks at the gruel some murders or passion murders in our universities, the exposure has made people know the trouble with society that now NGOs ad churches are working to correct, indeed FB has a lot of benefits over offline interactions but cannot take over the roles and need of offline engagements has FB usage affected the relationship between you and your friends? If yes, please explain how?

7. For what purposes do you think majority of University students in Universities prefer using Facebook for social interactions?

Respondent 6

I want to use FB to share what I do, my works and my videos, but I do not share my personal life online.

Respondent 5

As I said before I am on FB to look at mems follow some sites and see friends, I have lost sight with and I want to see their life progress, I only follow but I don't post.

Respondent 4

I have more friends on FB than Instagram, I just put up things we do in our company and what we do, this is like business for me, when I also want to do online shopping go to FB as more products are there, I also go there for gossip and get entertained by gossip, I have an opportunity to get different perspectives from different people and I grow just a little bit by learning something's online.

Respondent 3

I only go online for professional reasons, I follow few people and most of them have meaning and content so what I get there is just what matters for me, normally I would see less notifications, posts and comments as most of my FB friends only communicate and interact on professional grounds.

Respondent 2

I am into interior design so I join sites that show case interior design and also for groups of people or groups purposefully designed and engage in interior designing.

Respondent 1

I only open my FB app shows many reds that means that I have many notifications so sometimes I am just curious to see what's going on in the world.

Respondent 7

I a lot of my time on FB is to check notification and check new friend request, those that are worth it I accept, those that are not I decline, so most of my online time is on telegram and Instagram and less on FB.

Respondent 8

For me and many students FB is an eyes opener, each day I open FB and this is the same with majority of my friends in campus, we take advantage of opportunities there, I for instance am on aim global and I see what the company has posted, I have a friend in the US courtesy of me, I found an advert online and forwarded it to a friend who then applied and got the scholarships. FB has so many opportunities for me and my friends you do not get that opportunity anywhere online or offline.

Respondent 9

Personally, I do not use FB anymore, I stopped 2 years ago, I think I got tired of it, I found a new friend Instagram and it created opportunities, I do not see why someone or students should prefer FB over other social media sites.

Respondent 10

I get to FB every two to three days but not to post but check what's going on in politics and football, majority of my friends I strongly feel do the same, especially we go online to check the university social media page, this is where you get all the information of what's cooking in the university, you even now get official notifications from university halls of residents regarding room booking. I think that since major Media stations, corporates and even learning institutions like UoN have adopted the use of FB then why should I be left out in what is regarded as important my major conglomerates and personalities like the president of Kenya, students remain on FB because the big and powerful are there.

8. What recommendations would you give to users of Social Media to keep in their virtual world? Should they be very active and participate or remain in the background?

Respondent 7

Too much of something is poisonous, in order to maintain healthy relationships it's good to minimize FB over use, anyway you are in touch but really does the relationship work, I ask that you try to ask and meet the people offline and talk and really talk.

Respondent 5

I advocate for a one on one, even if you chat online because of distance, but to keep the relationship thriving make some sacrifice travel meet u and if your forced to meet online then meet on skype.

Respondent 4

I reckoned that minimize your interaction online, better use less time to associate with people personally online and rather do personal associations in person, you gain more by doing this. If you are online for professionalism then use social media a lot online, you only get to a wider audience when online than offline, it's good to keep personal relationships offline for them to work. Like if I want to date Sheila I would rather take her out for a date and I can tell if she has feelings and if they are real that I can plan my next course of action.

Respondent 3

I don't want the pressure online and I don't want people to experience online pressure, for example I say people might get annoyed with you for not being online, they create a pressure situation that you feeling you are letting down some individual, I want to recommend that those that love being online should not demand that their friends also be online, we are all grownups and have choices you should respect everyone's choice.

Respondent 2

For me I feel like people may use it as much as they want but my problem is that when your using it be truthful, if this is your life accept it and post it, when people were faking it they spoilt relationships that were there or those that were developing, this is so because you can never were to faces in life, I know that if people stop faking and start

accepting themselves they will stop this troubles of depression, peer pressure, suicide and murder, use FB in the right way and make you mantra credibility.

Respondent 1

Use it not as a platform of creating impressions that are not real, on social media people never tell you their downfalls their personalities such as hot tempered among others, offline interactions betray real hidden character of people, I do not want to only hear of people strengths and goodness I also want to know tier weaknesses and where to find the weakness is on the physical interactions.

Respondent 8

Social media use should depend on the type of relationship one wants, if its intimate them go meet one on one and love each other if it's just Facebook them remain online since you don't have to meet, they can just hear your dead and start charting left right and center about how great you were.

Researcher: Anything else you would like to say about this…. Maybe an intimate relationship you have developed through Facebook?

Social media is a nice tool and we do not advice to be social media literate, we need to change with time but also watch out on we use, let's use our brains and its upon us to decide what we want to consume, we are moving to a world everything is online and therefore controls should and must be created.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your time.

APPENDIX VII: Research Authorization and Permit

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

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NACOSTI Upper Kabete
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P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No: **NACOSTI/P/19/67636/30146**

Date: **10ᵗʰ May, 2019**

Kili Sydney Kipchirchir
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900-30100
ELDORET.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Online social network mediated interactions among young adults; the case of facebook utility in universities at Eldoret Town"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Uasin Gishu County** for the period ending **10ᵗʰ May, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Uasin Gishu County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Uasin Gishu County.

The County Director of Education
Uasin Gishu County.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. KILI SYDNEY KIPCHIRCHIR
of MOI UNIVERSITY , 4690-30100 Eldoret
,has been permitted to conduct
research in *Uasin-Gishu   County*

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/67636/30146
Date Of Issue : 10th May,2019
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2000

on the topic: *ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK*
MEDIATED INTERACTIONS AMONG
YOUNG ADULTS; THE CASE OF
FACEBOOK UTILITY IN UNIVERSITIES AT
ELDORET TOWN

for the period ending:
10th May,2020

....
Applicant's
Signature

....
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation