

**EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THIKA SUB-COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION

This research project is our original work and has not been presented for award of any degree in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effects of social media on the interpersonal relationship of college students in Thika sub-county with the aim of looking off more at three problems where social media influences the face-to-face communication informs curated content on social media to self-perception and self-esteem and the emotional impact of cyber bullying that content in cyber bullying. The study focused on the mixed-methods design combining quantitative questionnaires and validated scales data with qualitative data provided by semi-structured interviews. 514 college students from Thika, Kiambu County, Kenya, was selected through stratified random sampling. Quantitative analyses reveal significant findings: higher social media usage frequency is negatively correlated with face-to-face communication frequency, curated content significantly impacts self-perception and self-esteem, and cyber bullying profoundly affects emotional well-being. It additionally contains theoretical framework which clarifies the theory in which this study was supported. The two keys are social comparison theory and uses gratification theory. The data was collected through questionnaires. This allowed the study to be covered faster as it can easily collect the data from large population.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Use of social media has tremendously transformed the way people, particularly college students relate, connect and build relationships. Social media and the programs that allow us to run them such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok become part and parcel of our daily routines, comprehending the numerous effects affect this age group becomes significant. Social media have developed over the years since their introduction as a mere communication tool to a complex tool that has an impact on the people who use it. In *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*, Boyd (2014) notes that such sites have now become the focal point of the social life of youngsters, which influences how they communicate and pose the issue of self-image.

The Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954): argues that one determines his or her self. Curated and frequently unrealistic content on social media increases such comparisons and has a dramatic impact on the self-esteem and self-perception of users. In addition, Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974): the framework can be used to determine the reasons behind the media including social media usage, what people need through the media such as socialization, entertainment, and informational needs.

It has been demonstrated that the frequency of social media influences traditional face-to-face communication ability. In the book *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age* (2015), Turkle addresses the issues of the digital communication era and states that people communicate less in real life and see the quality of real communication

diminish, in particular among young people. According to the research conducted by Chou and Edge (2012), the access to curated content on websites such as Facebook can alter lives of other, which more than often provides blast users with low self-esteem and low self-worth that drives them to seek other means of validation. This points to the need to get to grips with the psychological effects of social media.

Cyber bullying is a big problem associated with the social media. According Schneider et al. (2012), the level of emotional and psychological impact on adolescents caused by cyberbullying is significant to the extent of escalating anxiety, depression, and even suicide thoughts. The study is critical towards gaining information on dangers of social media by college students.

The effect of social media is highly prone to students because they are at a particular developmental age and are susceptible to the social pressure around them. Identifying the dynamics of of social media on their interpersonal relationship and well-being is paramount in deriving up effective interventions and support systems.

The proposed study will give a detailed investigation on the role of social media on college student interpersonal relationships. Through the concepts of affected communication skills, self-perception, self-esteem and emotional well-being, the study aims at providing valuable information that can be used to educate the literacy or policymakers and even mental health professionals to support this demographic.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Social media in our everyday lives by college students has transformed the tapestry of the interpersonal relationships. This online transition creates a huge challenge to the conventional social interactions and this could have implications that should be deeply explored. High popularity of the social media, including Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, among college students puts their effects on communicative abilities, emotional health, and building of significant relationships in question (Boyd, 2014).

The main problem is that social media might encourage superficial relations with no depth and genuineness. Turkle (2015) explains that the paradox of feeling connectivity and being disconnected is caused by constant digital connectivity. The consequence of such a phenomenon is that students may have an increased level of social anxiety and reduced face-to-face communication, which negatively affects the quality of their interpersonal relationships. College years are especially critical and problematic because of this issue during the development of social life and establishment of partnerships.

In addition, the problem is brought up to the influence of the social media on self-perception and identity in college students. According to Chou and Edge (2012), the social media profiles are screenshot and can result in making negatively comparative self-judgments and lower self-esteem. The social pressure to self-represent oneself ideally may add to the sense of not being good or insecurity. This phenomenon of social media usage shows the dire necessity of learning to determine the impact of social media on the self-esteem and mental condition of students.

Despite these concerns, there isn't much research that examines the two-sided influences of social media on the college students' interpersonal relationships. Some studies emphasize the advantages of social isolation through connectivity (Hampton et al., 2011), but the deficits have not been as comprehensively investigated. This research intends to consider the research on the students of Thika sub-county to inform social media strategies to imagine the use of social media to the extent of positive and negative effects.

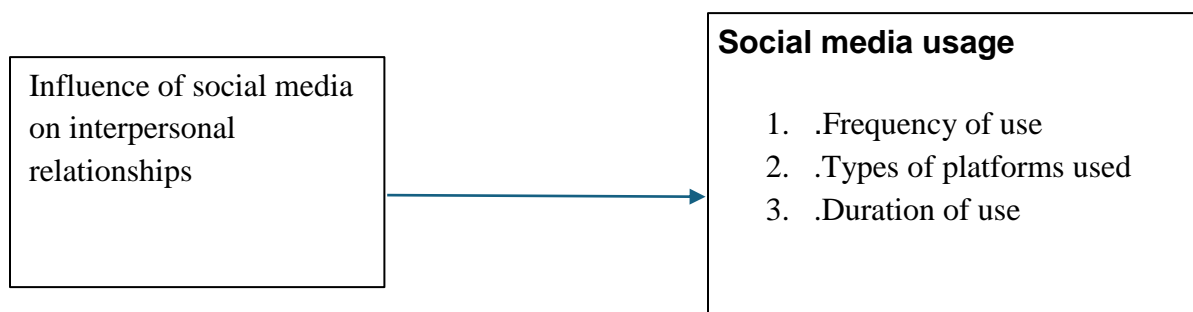
1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to understand the influence of social media on interpersonal relationships among college students.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Dependent variables

Independent variables



1.5 Research Questions

- i. How does the frequency of social media use impact face-to-face communication among college students?**
- ii. How does exposure to curated social media content affect the self-perception and self-esteem of college students?**
- iii. How does the incidence of cyber bullying on social media platforms affect the emotional well-being of college students?**

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1.6.1 General Objective

To investigate effects of social media on interpersonal relationships regarding how digital interactions impact communication patterns, emotional well-being, and relationships' quality, of college students in Thika sub-county.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess effects of the frequency of social media usage on face-to-face communication among college students.**
- ii. To explore how exposure to curated content in social media can shape an individual's self-concept and self-esteem among college students.**
- iii. To assess the prevalence of cyber bullying on social media and its impact on the emotional wellness of college students.**

1.7 Hypothesis of the Study

- i. To investigate the effects of the frequency of social media usage on face-to-face communication among college students.
- ii. To explore how exposure to curated content in social media can shape an individual's self-concept and self-esteem among college students.
- iii. To investigate the prevalence of cyberbullying on social media and its impact on the emotional wellness of college students.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Because it adds to the knowledge of how social media presents multiple implications for college aged students' relationships with others, self-esteem, and existing emotional wellness, this study will be useful. In relation to education, this research helps educators create interventions targeting safe social media practices. Educators can also consider negative implications presented here and how to target those areas as well. This research could inform policy makers as to ways that they can consider supporting students in use of social media; they can adopt policies that promote safe usage and deal with the challenges posed through cyberbullying. Mental health professionals can use study findings and pursue patterns of interventions that address the disassociation of social media claimed to have psychological impacts for participants. Within the academic community, this study encourages growing literature in this area. From a student perspective, this can help them have more informed choices about their social media practices and weigh the pros and cons associated with this technology.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The research focuses solely on college students aged 18-25 in Thika, Kiambu County, Kenya. It explores the key social media. The collection of data will be conducted for a single semester of academic study to establish consistency across data collection methods. There are several methods of data collection being used including, surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observations which will provide both quantitative and qualitative data. Delimiting the study allows for relevant, neat, and manageable research, however the delimitation and focus may limit generalizability with respect to other populations, locations, and settings.

1.10 Limitation of the Study

Due to various challenges on the surrounding, researchers will encounter the following limitations;

- i. Lack of adequate time because of other roles as students
- ii. Inadequate reference materials due to unequipped liabilities

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter aimed at reviewing literature available on the effect of social media. It focused on three main aspects that include the effect of frequent usage of social media on face-to-face communication, the result of curated content on self-perception as well as self-esteem and the emotional impact of cyberbullying. Through the synthesis of other research outcomes, the review seeks to add more insight on these dynamics and find out areas that have not yet been investigated. Moreover, it has the theoretical structure that explains the theory to which this study was taken. The two keys include the social comparison theory and gratification theory use.

2.2 Impact of Social Media Usage Frequency on Face-to-Face Communication

With the increase in use of social media among students, the effects of its use on conventional interpersonal communication have brought about a lot of concerns. Since the choices of students to use Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, among other platforms, to maintain contact are becoming common, their face-to-face interactions are changing in kind and degree. In this part, the author will discuss the degree of social media use and its impact on the communication abilities of students and the quality of their personal relationships.

College students are the most users of social media and previous studies indicate that most of these students spend a number of hours everyday using these media. According to Junco (2012), it was reported that the average college student spends a notable amount of his or her time engaging in social media activity that most likely takes time that may be

used in actual communication with a person. Such change in communication patterns raises questions regarding acquisition of relevant interpersonal skills.

Among the main issues that should be mentioned is excessive use of social media can also contribute to the reduction of face-to-face communication. According to Boyd (2014), along with the ability of social media to provide the learners with connection to a long-distance friend or a friendship group, it can decrease the number of encounter meetings. Turkle (2015) goes into further detail by stating that there is a possibility of people having more superficial relationships through the convenience of digital communication as people will find simpler and easier communication on the internet as opposed to in-person interactions, which are potentially more meaningful.

Another sphere that suffers due to use of social media is the quality of interpersonal relationships. Kross et al. (2013) found out that when spending time on social media, individuals felt lonely and socially isolated. This makes it a paradox in the sense that, although people feel connected to each other due to the presence of social media, they feel isolated and hence social media, though capable of keeping people in touch regarding their lives, may not help them have the innermost emotional satisfaction that is often achieved through face-to-face communication.

Developing communication skills is important in every individual to have when they are in college because it is the time for many individuals to refine their social skills. Radesky et al. (2014) indicate that an individual's increased reliance on social media takes away important abilities to read social cues and engage in thoughtful and intentional conversations. The need for good communication is a skill that students need to develop

at some point in their life, they will have experiences (both positive and negative) where they will need to draw on their communication skills.

Ultimately, social media is a double-edged sword in respect to communication. Social media provides a vast amount of communication opportunities at unprecedented levels and also hampers the quality in person interactions that occur. While technology provides an arguably easy way to send messages, texting has the potential to decrease the quality of interactions that people are having face-to-face. Przybylski and Weinstein (2013) provide evidence that the introduction of mobile devices into two-person social interactions reduces the quality of the interaction - and produced less engagement and satisfaction with the quality of the conversation.

For college students, the reduction in their ability to communicate face to face is serious. This population is at a unique and critical point in their social skill development and ability to create and maintain friendships and relationships. To model and produce students who prefer to communicate and navigate their environment through social media eliminates many opportunities to engage in very thoughtful social cue behaviors. Moreover, if the population continues to favor online communications over face to face, it may act as a detriment to their personal and professional academic goals.

2.3 Impact of Curated Social Media Content on Self-Perception and Self-Esteem

In social media, users will post curated content in which they are only going to show their idealized lives. This trend also known as highlight reel can greatly affect self-perception and self-esteem in college students. The third goal of this research is to understand the effect of such exposure on the students perception of themselves and their peers.

The social media content that is curated means that the users post photographs, videos and information about the positive events that are happening in their lives leaving out the negative events that happen. Such selectivity in sharing may form skewed realities so that users end up having the impression that the lives of other people are glamorous, exciting, or more successful than theirs (Chou & Edge, 2012). This is especially so among college goers who are at a very decisive stage of defining self and evaluation.

Social comparisons arise through exposure to idealized images over social media and people tend to make comparisons between themselves and those peers who appear to be living a perfect life. According to the social comparison theory given by Festinger (1954), they were driven to compare themselves with other people to get a sense of how they performed according to their abilities and opinion. The negative comparison with regard to social media may lead to adverse self-evaluation and inferiority feelings (Vogel et al., 2014). These effects can particularly target college students struggling with academic pressures and social changes.

Continuous showing of idealized content may be harmful to self-esteem. Use of social media very often correlates with a low self-esteem, when people are resorting to the so-called upward social comparisons (Fardouly et al., 2015). Such comparisons may result in developing a feeling of being inadequate, as students feel that their own lives are inferior to the images created and shown to them on social media. This opinion is amplified by the situation of the fear of missing out (FOMO), which has more chances to decrease even the self-esteem and life satisfaction of the individuals (Przybylski et al., 2013).

The psychological effects of curated content are not exclusive to self-esteem. de Vries and Kühne (2015) revealed that social media use can also impact mental health. Alongside developing self-esteem, social media presents the opportunity to create idealized images of ourselves, and the pressure to conform to supposed standards of beauty and lifestyle standards may lead to body dissatisfaction and less resilience in mental health issues (anxiety and depression). These psychological effects are concerning, as they indicate social media has a far-reaching impact.

Several factors that could mitigate the effect of individual's curated content experiences on self-perception and self-esteem. For example, Valkenburg and Peter (2011) indicated that those with social support and more offline social interactions are not likely to be negatively impacted by social media use. Additionally, if students have critical thinking skills and knowledge about the content they are regard as social media, they might mitigate its effects. Educating students about social media and its curated content, and developing their digital literacies provided students with more healthy ways to manage, interact, and enjoy these platforms.

2.4 Incidence of cyber bullying and its Effects on Emotional Well-Being

Cyber bullying, which can be explained as the ability to harass, threaten, or humiliate other people with the help of digital technologies, has become a hot topic of the digital era. Cyber bullying has becomes dangerous to their emotional state since they use social media more than anyone. This paragraph compares the prevalence of cyber bullying and its contribution to the mental issues of college students.

Research has shown that cyber bullying is a problem that is prevalent among the college students. A survey carried out by the cyber bullying Research Center (Patchin & Hinduja, 2016) showed that about every fifth (22 percent) of college students have been cyber bullied at one point in their academic life. Such a high incidence begs more insight into the nature of the practice of cyber bullying in different social media sites.

The format of cyber bullying may differ and encompass such categories as harassment, rumor-spreading, messages with threats, and moral blackmailing. Social media sites tend to give perpetrators anonymity and this gives them the courage to fluff up the bullying tactics without being directly punished (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). These types of attacks may be especially vulnerable to those students who do a lot of their personal life sharing on the Internet.

Cyber bullying is a serious emotional and psychological burden on college learners. There is a strong association between cyber bullying victims and the high degree of anxiety, depression, and stress (Schneider et al., 2012). In a study by Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, and Lattanner (2014) cyber victims of bullying are more inclined towards sadness, loneliness and fear. All these negative feelings might contribute to the trouble in academic achievement, social communication and overall health.

Cyber bullying can also negatively impact self-esteem. Victims may internalize the negative messages they receive, which leads to a feeling of a loss of self-worth and confidence. According to research by Bauman, Toomey, and Walker(2013), the often-public and permanent aspects of online bullying can impact self-esteem even more, victims may act like they are publicly and continuously being targeted and stigmatized.

It is advisable to understand how victims of cyber bullying cope with their experiences to develop effective support systems. Studies indicate that social support from friends, family, and institutions can help lessen the effects of cyber bullying (Wright, 2015), and educational institutions can provide some of the institutional resources for students who need help, including counseling services, counseling programs, and anti-bullying programs regardless if they are in-person or online.

The legal responses and institutional policies or procedures surrounding cyber bullying are changing. For example, colleges and universities may have the ability to develop and adopt policies that seek to address and prevent the cyber bullying experiences of their students; therefore, making every effort to create safe and healthy online environments for its members (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). Colleges and universities can take on the responsibility of developing awareness campaigns to educate its members, developing reporting procedures that help provide institutional control and responses, or implement disciplinary measures against the cyber bullying perpetrators.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Social Comparison Theory

One of the Social Comparison Theories postulated by Festinger (1954) shows that all human beings tend to engage in personal comparison with others to enable them determine their beliefs, skills and qualities. This process of comparison can either be up pluralistic where people will compare with the ones who are better or down pluralistic; where people will compare themselves with the ones who are worse. According to the points of social media, this hypothesis has suggested that individuals made social

comparisons continuously due to the fact that they expose themselves to the sanitized information regarding perfect lives.

Many researchers have elaborated on the initial propositions by Festinger. As an example, in this way, Wood (1989) points out that one of the outcomes of an upward social comparison on the social media is the sense of inadequacy and sense of low self-esteem. On the same note, Vogel et al. (2014) state that the reputation of social media as something ubiquitous increases the strength of such comparisons, and a person becomes even more susceptible to damaging self-analysis.

This theory has certain bearing to objectives of the current study of self-perception and self-esteem. Through the position of college students on social media to create social comparisons, the research will be able to explain the aspects of how social media affects self-worth and identity development. It also offers a theoretical framework through which it seems possible to interpret why students could feel bad when they are exposed to idealized images of their peers and how that influences their emotional well-being

2.5.1 Summary of Identified Gaps in the Reviewed Literature

Although much more has been done to study the implications of social media, there is still a lot to uncover, especially on its subtle consequences to the interpersonal relations of college students. Current research does not fully consider a wide range condition of face-to-face communication, self-perception, self-esteem, and emotional well-being and the protective effect of social support. Moreover, most of the studies are geographically based and hence they do not take into account other contexts such as those exhibited in developing nations. It is based on this knowledge gap that this study hopes to address by

conducting an in-depth analysis of the impact of social media on college students in Thika, Kiambu County, Kenya, in an attempt to include quantitative and qualitative data to present a balanced picture of the whole.

2.5.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, which was advanced by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) looks at the reasons people make effort to seek certain media to fill needs. The theory holds that media consumers are a goal-directed lot and would use a media source that best suits in terms of information, personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment.

Extensively, the theory has been used to comprehend usage of the social media. Another example is a study conducted by Whiting and Williams (2013) into what people use social media to satisfy: social interaction, seeking information, entertainment, relaxation, and self-expression. Also, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) underline that the pleasure that people pursue due to the utilization of media use could shape the manner, when they are interacting with these platforms and the results that are produced.

The theory on uses and Gratifications guides the study to give some parallel to access the reasons why students in colleges use social media and what sort of gratifications they expect. This revelation is important in meeting goals to do with the pattern of communication and emotional health. By determining why individuals use the social media, the research will have investigate how the reasons behind the use are associated with positive and negative outcomes of the social media use on interpersonal relationships as well as the well-being of the students.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology section of the proposal outlines the systematic ways in which social media will be examined for its impact on relationships between college students. The organization of this chapter was laid out to ensure clarity and flow and to include a description of the methods and procedures for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The sub-titles below indicate what content will be covered in this section:

3.2 Research Design

The mixed-methods design included the qualitative and the quantitative methods as a practice in the research methodology to offer the study that takes a consideration of the two types of data. The sources of quantitative information are surveys and verified scales. Quantitative data collecting skills help to parameter the elements of social media service, face-to-face communication, self-concept and emotional well-being of college students. The method of collecting qualitative data is focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The content of qualitative information will be more detailed and give more background on the lived experience of the participants and their perceptions of such experiences. Both quantitative and qualitative will give an in-depth approach by which the researchers will view the research questions and have an opportunity to present correct and blank conclusions since the integrated approaches enable the researcher to view numerical and descriptive data side by side.

3.3 Study Area

This research methodology included qualitative and quantitative methodologies as part of a mixed-methods design to provide a study that examines both types of data. Quantitative data is derived from surveys and validated instruments. Collecting quantitative data allows researchers to quantify aspects of social media use, face-to-face communication, self-concept, and emotional well-being of college students. Qualitative data will be collected from semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Qualitative data will support a richer depiction of the participants lived experience and their perceptions around those experiences. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies offers a more complete means for the researchers to study the research questions and present reliable and theoretical conclusions because they study numerical and descriptive data together.

3.4 Target Population

The sample size in the proposed study would be college students enrolled in the learning institutions of Thika town in the Kiambu county in Kenya. This group is chosen due to the high prevalence of the use of social media websites or the possibility of deterioration of the quality of their relationships with other people and feelings. Thika is recorded as having an average of 279,429 people as per the results of the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census. The census did not provide the figure of college going students going to college in Thika but an estimate indicates that there are more than 10,000 or even 15,000 students who are enrolled in higher education institutions in Thika. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) presents the population data since to them falls the task of

carrying out the national census in Kenya and hence they provide realistic and accurate data on various population characteristics.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Sampling involves selecting part of a population that represents the whole population (Hadiza and Rabiou 2020). This study used stratified random sampling as it will get a representative sampling of the entire college student population of Thika, Kiambu County, Kenya. The process begins with dividing the population into strata having distinct characteristics, for example: age, gender and academic year. Participants are selected randomly from one stratum and others from the behavior or characteristics of the entire population so that the sample is representative of their entire student population, increasing the accuracy and reliability of results. In other words, using stratified random sampling enables the researchers to purposely account for variations and differences in the population of students, and then control those differences as subgroups of the student population.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size will be determined by using Yamane (2021) formula which is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- **n** = Desired sample size
- **e** = Margin of error (set at 0.05 for 95% confidence level)
- **N**= Total population size

Given that the target population is 70, the sample size will be obtained as follows:

$$n = \frac{70}{1 + 70(0.05)^2}$$

n = 59.5

n = 60

3.7 Measurement of Variables

| Variables | Measures | Measurement scale | Question number |
|------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| Frequency of Social media | How often students use Social media platform | Likert scale (1=Never,5=Very frequently) | Q1 |
| Duration of social media use | Average amount of time spent on social media per day | Options (e.g., <30 mins,1-2 hours,>5 hours) | Q2 |
| Types of platforms used | Social media platforms regularly used | Multiple-choice (can select multiple) | Q3 |
| Face-to-Face Interaction Frequency | Frequency of in-person interactions with Peers and family | Likert scale (1=Never,5=Very frequently) | Q4 |
| Face-to-Face Interaction Quality | Quality of in-person interactions | Open-ended | Q5 |
| Self-Perception and Self-Esteem | Self-reported self esteem | Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1=Strongly disagree,4=Strongly agree) | Q6 |
| Incidence of Cyberbullying | Experiences of cyberbullying | Survey questions on frequency and type | Q7 |

Table one: Measurement of variables

3.8 Research Instruments

Questionnaires are to be the primary research tool of this research. According to Kombo, a questionnaire is a method of data research which utilizes data using a bigger sample (2006). It is an instrument that is designed to gather a quantitative data on the pattern of social media usage and how often a person communicates face to face, how one views himself/herself, as well as self-esteem and emotional well-being of college students. The questionnaires include both closed and open headed questions, which would assist the researcher to cover the experience and perception of the participants in more detail.

3.9 Validity of the Measurements

The study ensured content validity by designing surveys and questionnaires that adequately addressed all aspects of social media usage, face-to-face communication, self-perception, self-esteem, and overall emotional well-being in college students. Experts reviewed the instrument and a pre-test was used to confirm that the items included in the instrument represented the concepts being measured. The study used this process to ensure that the variations consisted of appropriate questions that only described the variables being examined, adding credibility and reliability to the study.

3.10 Reliability of Measurements

To guarantee fidelity of measurement, the study will employ standardized procedures and validated instruments for the collection and measurement of data. The questionnaires will result in consistent and stable scores when administered repeatedly. The data collection

instruments used were pilot tested to improve on the instruments, so the questions would make sense when administered, and show consistency with previous research. Further, internal consistency of each instrument was measured by to ensure internal consistency using the Cronbach's alpha, and test - retest measures were completed to confirm that the instruments would measure what they are entitled to measure, demonstrating reliability. This established range of approaches means that the findings can be treated as reliable and valid.

3.11 Data Collection Techniques

This study utilized questionnaires which include meaningful information about social media, face-to-face communication, self-perception, self-esteem, and emotional wellness for college/university students. The questionnaires included a combination of closed and open-ended questions to provide potential quantitative data and qualitative information that allowed respondents to provide their ideas about the topics addressed in the questionnaires administered either in person or online to captivate enough student participation and provide student-based examinations and findings. The questionnaires also allowed the researcher to conduct a better analysis of the students' experiences as well as their perspectives. The use of questionnaires for data collection was selected for the potential to accumulate large amounts of data in a systematic manner and to provide a more fully formed and nuanced understanding of the topics.

3.12 Data Analysis

This study will rely on the use of a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis methods in its data analysis because they will enable the researcher to analyze

the collected data comprehensively. First, the questionnaires will be used to gather quantitative data on students. Statistics analysis methods will be used to analyse the quantitative data, namely, descriptive statistics, correlation, and various regression models. By using such kind of analyses, we can look at the data on the experimental conditions and search through them, to find pattern and with which variables in relation to each other (social media effects on student interpersonal relationships). Second, open-ended responses to questionnaires will start the gathering of qualitative student data. Qualitative analysis allows us to summarize and/or pull themes from the data and gain insight in what students have experienced and perceived in terms of social media influences on their interpersonal relationships. Collectively, employing both types of analyses enriches the research findings and offers a foundation for synthesizing the data and empirical research when analyzing the impact of social media on college students' interpersonal relationships.

Regarding the qualitative data analysis, we used initial coding data of thematizing and coding: The first coding students must do with the data is to segment the data into smaller pieces and reflect on their similarities and differences. Students can start with open coding by assigning each segment of text (sentence, paragraph) a code that illustrates what the particular section is about: e.g., "Positive social media interaction," "Effect on self-esteem," "Cyber bullying experience."

3.12.1 Graphical Presentation

The study uses several visual representations to convey the data in an understandable format. Charts, graphs and tables are used to visually represent statistical relationships

(example relationships, such as social media usage frequency and face-to-face communication, curated content and self-esteem, etc.) and trends from the data. The findings include visual representations to clarify the findings presented in the study, as they allow the data---which can become very complicated---to be easily understood also by the reader. In addition to presenting a visual synopsis of the study, these representations support the understanding of the analysis and communicate the results adequately to the reader.

3.13 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The research addresses logistical and ethical issues in a thorough manner to establish both integrity and safety for participants. Logistically, the research design and project was carefully crafted to fit students schedules and availability. The project collected data both in person and online to maximize student participation. From an ethical standpoint, the study also involved an informed consent form for each participant. It was also important to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality, and even reduce any potential harm where possible. The study was ethical, rigorous and adhered to ethical considerations that were intended to protect participants' rights and safety, and subsequently demonstrate the highest possible standard of research ethics throughout.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1: Introduction

This chapter deals with the findings of the study, found from data collected through an online survey.

4.2: Response rate

The research was using a sample number of 60 respondents. There were 53 respondents who completed the survey completely, whereas seven respondents did not make it. This provides a response rate of 88.3%. This is sufficient in making conclusions.

4.3: Demographic Information

Descriptive analysis was done to bring out the distribution of the study population according to select background characteristics. The results were as indicated in Table

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age | | |
| 16-20 | 10 | 18.90% |
| 20-25 | 36 | 67.90% |
| 25-30 | 7 | 13.20% |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 24 | 45.30% |
| Female | 29 | 54.70% |
| Academic year | | |
| First | 6 | 11.30% |
| Second | 10 | 18.90% |
| Third | 6 | 11.30% |
| Fourth | 31 | 58.50% |
| Field | | |
| Education | 32 | 60.40% |
| Computing | 4 | 7.50% |
| Engineering | 4 | 7.50% |
| Nursing and Medicine | 8 | 15.10% |
| Hospitality | 5 | 9.40% |

Table two: Demographic Information

A percentage of about 67.90% that is for the age bracket of 20-25 dominated the highest number of respondents. The female gender dominated the study with a percentage of about 54.70%. Fourth years were the most dominant respondents with a percentage of about 58.50%. Education as a field of study was the dominant one with a percentage of 60.40%.

4.4 To determine the impact of social media usage frequency on face-to-face communication among college students.

4.4.1 Correlation Analysis

| | | Frequency | Influence |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Frequency | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .749** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0 |
| | N | 53 | 53 |
| Influence | Pearson Correlation | .749** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | |
| | N | 53 | 53 |

** p< 0.001

Table three Correlation analysis

As was illustrated in the table above, there was positive correlation between the effect of frequency of social media use on communication between college students face-to-face and the effect that social media have in interpersonal relations ($r = 0.749$, $p < 0.001$). This meant that the use of social media in terms of frequency had a moderate effect on the effects of the social media. This is to imply that 56.10 percent of influence of social media use frequency constituted influence of social media platforms on interpersonal relationships ($r^2 = 0.5610$).

4.4.2 Platforms Used

The study wanted to find out the type of platforms used, and the results are as follows:

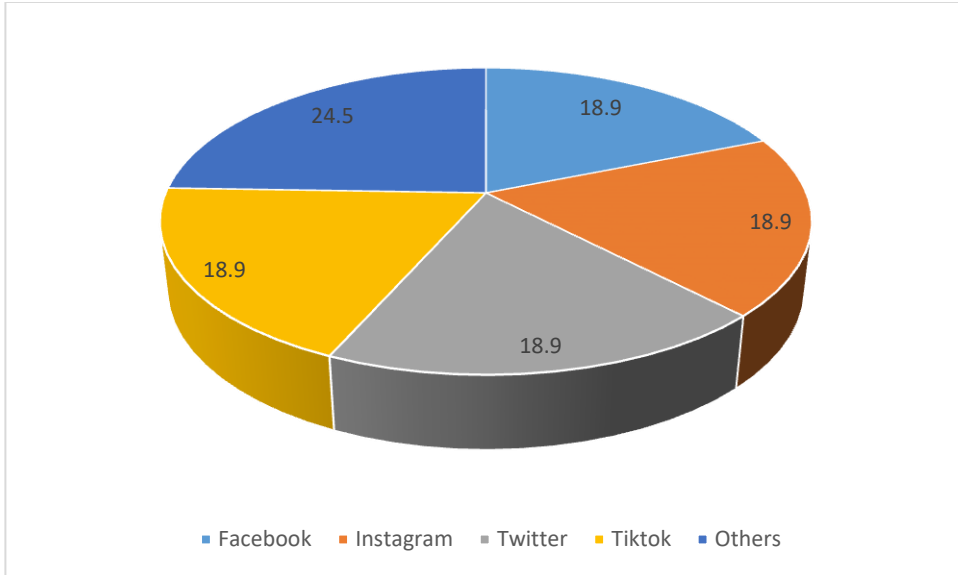


Figure one Platforms Used

Facebook was the frequently used with a percentage of about 24.5% respondents posing that its affordability makes usage easy. Instagram, twitter and tiktok were rated the same with a percentage of about 18.9%. Then respondents indicated to use other platforms at a percentage of about 18.9% also.

4.4.2 Hours spent on social media

Hours spent on social media were recorded as shown in the figure below:

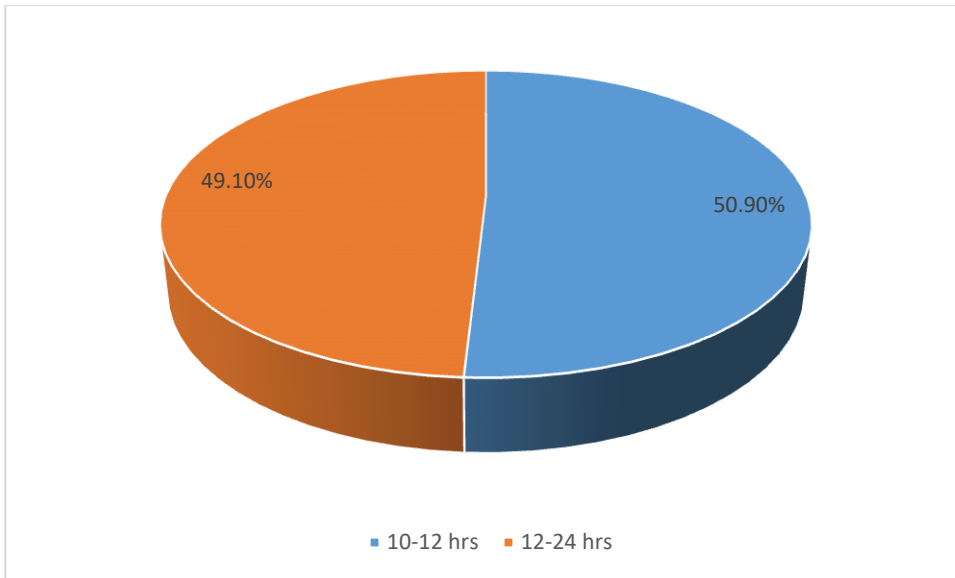


Figure two Hours spent on social media.

A percentage of about 50.90% indicated to spending 10-12 hours on social media. Respondents argued that this time rate is adequate for them to make friends and engage online. A percentage of about 49.10% indicated that they spent 12-24 hours on social media as the time rate covers their engagements fully.

4.4.3 Frequency of face to face engagement

The frequency of face to face engagement was recorded as shown in the figure below:

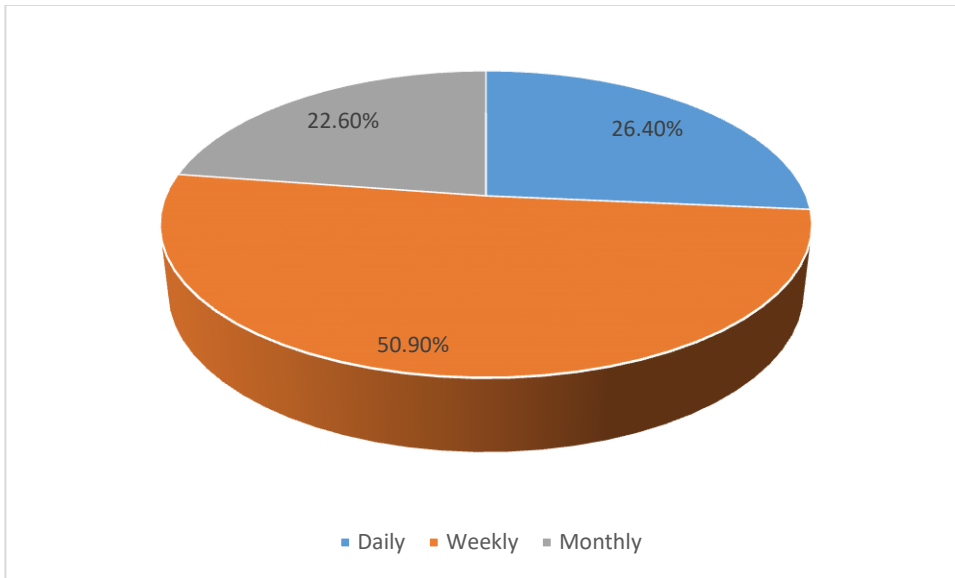


Figure three Frequency of face to face engagement

Respondents indicated to not engaging face to face frequently, with respondents recording that they engage face to face weekly at a percentage of about 50.90%. The other respondents indicated to be engaging face to face daily and monthly at a percentage of about 26.40% and 22.60% respectively.

4.4.4 Rating of face to face engagement

The ratings of face to face engagement were as follows:

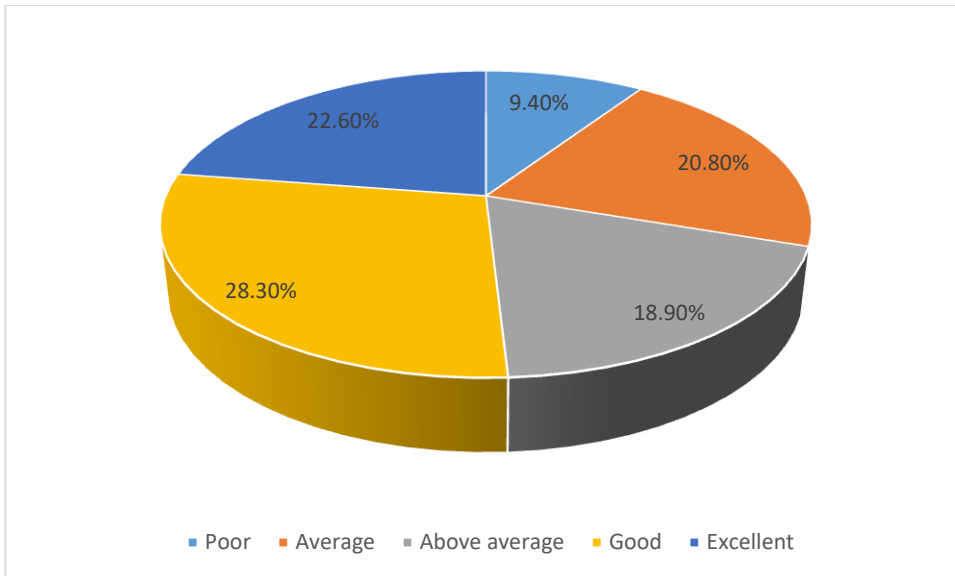


Figure four rating of face to face engagement

About 28.30% of respondents indicated their face to face engagement to be good, about 22.60% of respondents recorded that their face to face engagement is excellent, about 20.80% of respondents indicated that their engagements are average while the others rated their engagements to be above average and poor at percentages of about 18.90% and 9.40% respectively.

4.5 To investigate how exposure to curated social media content affects self-perception and self-esteem among college students.

4.5.1 Correlation analysis

The results for the correlation analysis were as follows:

| | | Effect | Influence |
|-----------|---------------------|--------|-----------|
| Effect | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .847** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0 |
| | N | 53 | 53 |
| Influence | Pearson Correlation | .847** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | |
| | N | 53 | 53 |

** p< 0.001

Table four Correlation analysis

The results showed that the impact of being exposed to content on self-esteem and the effect on sites had high correlation with interpersonal relationships i.e., $r=0.847$, $p<0.001$. This implied that self-esteem impact of social media on urated content has an important role in determining the impact in interpersonal relations. This induced a perception that about 71.74 percent of the influence of curated contents on self-esteem would be prior to the influence of social media sites on inter-personality relationships ($r^2 = 0.7174$).

4.5.2 Frequency of comparing one's self with others

The frequency at which one compares him or herself was recorded as follows:

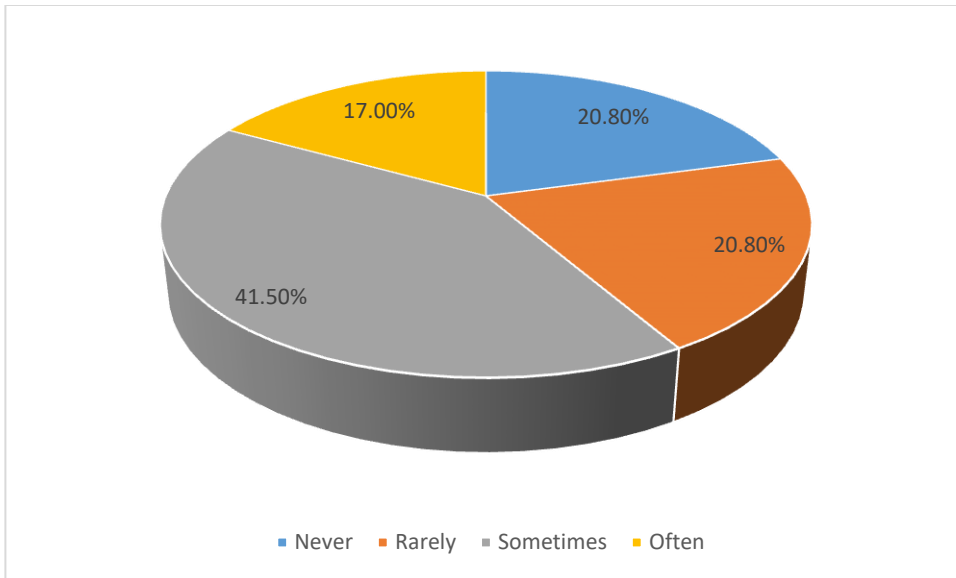


Figure five Frequency of comparing one's self with others

The results showed that about 41.50% sometimes compared themselves with others. About 20.80% compared themselves with others rarely and never, evenly. Lastly about 17% of respondents compared themselves with others often.

4.5.3 Feeling like being pressured with posts made on social media

The frequency results were as follows:

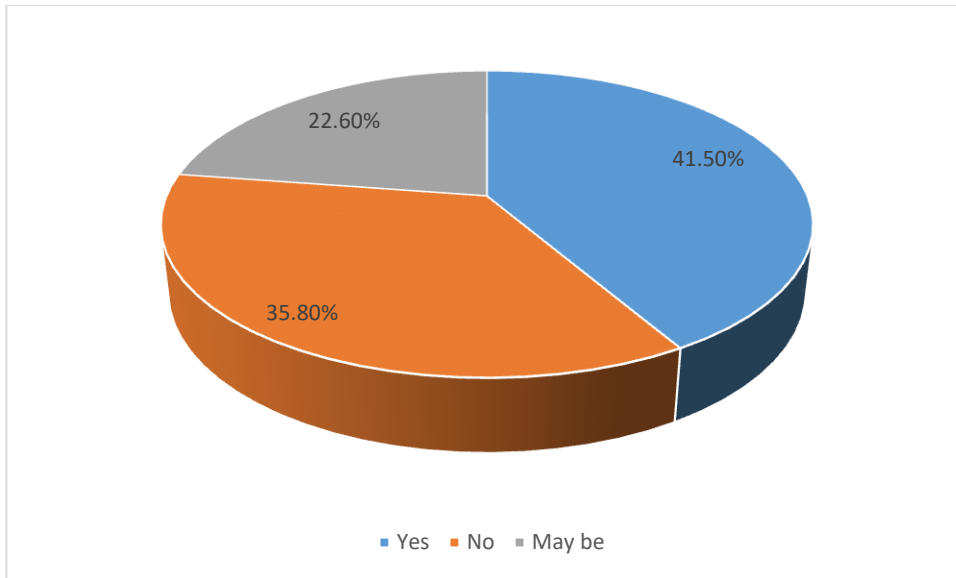


Figure six Feeling like being pressured with posts made on social media

The results showed that about 41.50% of respondents felt more pressured on posts made on social media. About 35.80% of respondents didn't feel any pressure on posts made on social media. About 22.60% were not sure if they were being pressured or not.

4.6 To examine the incidence of cyber bullying on social media platforms and its effects on the emotional well-being of college students.

4.6.1 Correlation analysis

The analysis results were recorded as follows:

| | | Experienced | Influence |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Experienced | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .893** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0 |
| | N | 53 | 53 |
| Influence | Pearson Correlation | .893** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0 | |
| | N | 53 | 53 |

** p < 0.001

Table five Correlation Analysis

The findings also indicated that the interpersonal relationships were highly associated with an increase in the incidences of cyber bullying on the social media platforms ($r = 0.893$, $p < 0.001$). This meant that cyber bullying events on the social media played an important role in the social media influence on interpersonal relationship. The implication of this was that approximately 79.74 percent of all the incidences related to cyber bullying formed part of the social media influence on interpersonal relationship ($r^2 = 0.7974$).

4.6.2 Frequency of feeling anxious or depressed after using social media

The results are as follows:

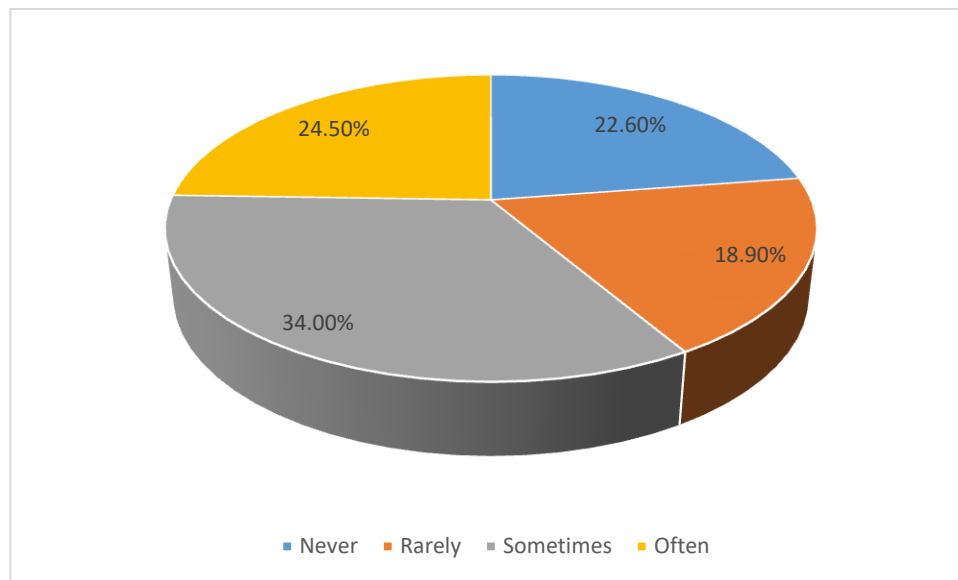


Figure seven Frequency of feeling anxious or depressed after using social media

The findings indicated that nearly 34 percent of the respondents experienced some feelings of anxiety or depression after social media use. Approximately 24.50 percent of the time, the respondents felt depressed or anxious following the use of social media.

Approximately, 22.60 percent of respondents never experienced anxiety or depression in their lives following the use of media sites and approximately, 18.90 percent respondents hardly experienced anxiety or depression.

4.6.3 Impact of social media on one's well being

The results on the impact on one's wellbeing were as follows:

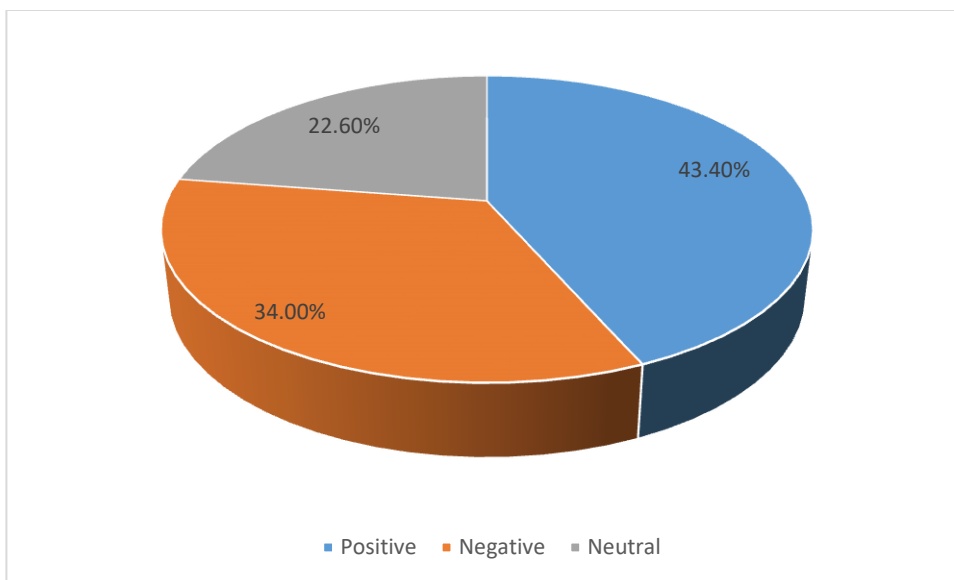


Figure eight Impact on one's wellbeing

The outcomes revealed that nearly 43.40 percent of the respondents reported positive effects on the wellbeing of an individual. It was estimated that 34%, of the population said social media affects the wellbeing negatively and about 22.60%, of the respondents were still even that social media affects one wellbeing both in a negative and positive way.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the summary, conclusions and recommendations about this study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This research examined social media effect on the relationship between individuals who study at this college in Thika sub-county through the three concepts as; how social media affects face to face communication, the influence of manipulated content on a body image and self-worth and cyber bullying effects on emotions. This study combines several techniques using a mixed-methods design that incorporates both numeric results of questionnaires and validated scales and the qualitative data obtained as part of semi-structured interviews. A sample of 60 college students from Thika, Kiambu County, Kenya, was selected using saturation sampling. A percentage of about 67.90% that is for the age bracket of 20-25 dominated the highest number of respondents. The female gender dominated the study with a percentage of about 54.70%. Fourth years were the most dominant respondents with a percentage of about 58.50%. Education as a field of study was the dominant one with a percentage of 60.40%.

Connection between effects of the frequency of social media consumption on face-to-face interactions in college students and impacts of social apps of interpersonal connections were moderately correlated ($r = 0.749$, $p < 0.001$). This implied that the frequency of the use of the social media had a moderate influence attached to the impact of the social media platforms on interpersonal relationships. That is to say that social media usage frequency percentage was added to the strength of the social media on the interpersonal

relationships ($r^2 = 0.5610$). Facebook was the frequently used with a percentage of about 24.5% respondents posing that its affordability makes usage easy. Instagram, twitter and tiktok were rated the same with a percentage of about 18.9%. Then respondents indicated to use other platforms at a percentage of about 18.9% also. A percentage of about 50.90% indicated to spending 10-12 hours on social media. Respondents argued that this time rate is adequate for them to make friends and engage online. A percentage of about 49.10% indicated that they spent 12-24 hours on social media as the time rate covers their engagements fully. Respondents indicated to not engaging face to face frequently, with respondents recording that they engage face to face weekly at a percentage of about 50.90%. The other respondents indicated to be engaging face to face daily and monthly at a percentage of about 26.40% and 22.60% respectively. About 28.30% of respondents indicated their face to face engagement to be good, about 22.60% of respondents recorded that their face to face engagement is excellent, about 20.80% of respondents indicated that their engagements are average while the others rated their engagements to be above average and poor at percentages of about 18.90% and 9.40% respectively.

5.2 Conclusions

This study did reject the null hypothesis i.e., there is no significant relationship that exists between frequency of use of the social media and face-to-face communication amid college student. Correlation between the presence of the frequency of the use of social media as well as face-to-face communication between students of institutions of higher learning and the influence that social platforms have on the relationship between people was positive and strong. This alluded to the fact that the phenomenon of social media had

a moderate impact in the impact of social media on interpersonal relationships with people.

Null hypothesis which also did not stand the study took the form that, exposure to curated social media content, would not be an important determinant on the self-perception and self-esteem of college students. The results indicated that the correlation between the influence of exposure to curated social media contents on self-esteem and the impact of social media on interpersonal relationships turned out to be rather significantly positive. What this implied was that effect of curated social media content on self-esteem was added up in the effect of social media platforms on interpersonal relations

5.3 Recommendations

Depending on the results of this investigation, the recommendations reflect the following findings. Colleges and universities ought to implement digital literacy curriculum that trains the students on responsible as well as mindful use of social media. It should be stressed that the curated content should be viewed, there is no need to compare too much, and negative emotional effects should be identified. Institutions should create and promote opportunities for in-person social engagements—such as group discussions, clubs, and social events—to help students rebuild and strengthen face-to-face communication skills. Given the strong relationship between cyber bullying and emotional well-being, colleges should enhance counseling and psychological support services. These should include avenues for anonymous reporting and intervention strategies for affected students. Institutions should establish or reinforce policies to address cyber bullying on digital platforms. This includes setting up mechanisms for students to report incidents and

receive prompt support.

Parents and educators should be sensitized about the evolving role of social media in students' lives so that they can provide appropriate guidance and support without being intrusive. Students should be encouraged to self-regulate the amount of time they spend on social media platforms and to diversify their daily routines with offline activities that enhance personal growth and mental health.

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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Academic Year: _____
4. Field of Study: _____

Section 2: Social Media Usage

1. How often do you use social media? (Daily/Weekly/Monthly)
2. Which social media platforms do you use the most?
(Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/TikTok/Other)
3. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on social media? _____

Section 3: Interpersonal Relationships

1. How often do you engage in face-to-face conversations with friends?
(Daily/Weekly/Monthly)
2. How would you rate the quality of your face-to-face interactions?
(Poor/Fair/Good/Excellent)
3. Has social media influenced the way you build new relationships? (Yes/No)

Section 4: Self-Perception and Self-Esteem

1. How often do you compare your life to others on social media?
(Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often)
2. How does viewing others' posts on social media affect your self-esteem?
(Negatively/Positively/No Impact)
3. Do you feel pressured to present a certain image on social media? (Yes/No)

Section 5: Emotional Well-Being

1. Have you ever experienced cyber bullying? (Yes/No)
2. How often do you feel anxious or depressed after using social media?
(Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often)
3. Do you think social media has a positive or negative impact on your emotional well-being? (Positive/Negative/Neutral)

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Study Title: The Influence of Social Media on Interpersonal Relationships among College Students

Purpose of the Study:

- To investigate how social media usage affects interpersonal relationships, self-perception, self-esteem, and emotional well-being among college students.

Participant Rights:

- Participation is voluntary.
- Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.
- All responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Contact Information:

- Researcher Name: _____
- Contact Email: _____

Consent Statement: I have read and understood the purpose of this study and my rights as a participant. I agree to participate in this research.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Introduction:

- Welcome and thank you for participating.
- Briefly explain the purpose of the focus group.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you feel social media has impacted your face-to-face interactions with friends?
2. Can you share any experiences where social media influenced your self-perception or self-esteem?
3. How do you manage negative experiences on social media, such as cyber bullying?
4. What are your overall thoughts on the role of social media in your daily life?

Thank you for your time and valuable input!

| | |
|--------|--|
| Week 1 | Coming up with the research project and seeking approval |
| Week 2 | Writing of the project proposal |
| Week 3 | Submitting the proposal to the supervisor for analysis |
| Week 4 | Making correction and printing the project proposal |
| Week 5 | Project proposal defense |

| EXPENSES | AMOUNT (KSH) |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Materials | 1500 |
| Printing and Binding | 1000 |
| Total | 2500 |