**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK**

# THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE MAINTENANCE OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS: A CASE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY- AFRICA

**By**

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**2019**

# DECLARATION

I declare that this research project, is my original work and has not been submitted for examination to any other university.

Submitted by:

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…… ……..

Signature Date

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signature …… Date ……..

**Professor Edward K. Mburugu**

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my children, whom I pray will not only follow in my footsteps and pursue higher education but shall surpass my expectations and I encourage them never to give up in pursuit of their dreams and aspirations.

I also wish to dedicate it to all relationship experts in their respective fields, be it counsellors or coaches who work with couples every day to help them navigate through the complex issues facing couples in romantic relationships in our country

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I sincerely appreciate the Almighty God for his grace and strength which enabled me to come up with the concept and guided me until the completion of this work.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **SNS** | Social Networking Sites |
| **DM** | Direct messaging |
| **NACOSTI** | National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation |
| **USIU** | United States International University |
| **FBO** | Facebook Official |
| **TV** | Television |

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the influence of social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships among college students with a focus on undergraduate students of USIU Africa. The students selected were in their fourth year of study as they were about to complete their studies and enter the workforce and must have formed romantic relationships offline or online in their time of study in the university, consequently having experiences maintaining these relationships online due to proximity or other reasons. The objectives of the study were to; evaluate the influence of time spent on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students; assess the influence of the behaviour of gauging a partners' commitment on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students; investigate the influence of use of face to face apps for interaction on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students; investigate the influence of how gender differences in the use of on social media has on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students. The study used the Anthony Giddens theory of Modernity and Self-Identity and Social Conflict Theories to explain the influence of social media on romantic relationships. The researcher used the descriptive research design with both quantitative and qualitative data collection from the respondents and key informants. A questionnaire was used for quantitative data while an in-depth interview guide was used for qualitative data. The study population target was fourth year undergraduate students in a romantic relationship between the ages of 18-25 who are also among the highest consumers of social media. A sample size of 100 respondents was proportionately selected to represent both genders. From the findings the researcher can state that maintenance of romantic relationships on social media is a common phenomenon due to the introduction of technology and its influence on the way we live now is stunning to behold. With online dating and maintenance of relationships online being a new phenomenon, it means we have not yet had a chance to reflect on how it is changing our developing country for both good and bad. The study established that when relationships are maintained online, the frailty of human bonds increases with the ease of which online relationships can be formed and terminated. From the study it was realized that a lot of partners use social media to monitor and surveil their partner's behavior without their consent or knowledge. This has led to comparison of their relationships with others and the increase of conflict in relationships due to the pressure to conform to the societies' online standards. Some partners who have dissolved their relationship online felt that it may be easier because there is no physical interaction leading to lack of responsibility when it comes to handling their partner's feelings. From the study it was realized that the use of social networking sites and face to face applications as a substitute for personal interaction in romantic relationships has resulted in deteriorating relationship quality and decreases intimacy among those maintaining their romantic relationships online. This study recommends that for those students using social media to maintain their romantic relationships, it is important to keep private information about their relationship away from the public. This will help save the partners from possible trauma should the relationship end. The study also recommends that individual should have personal boundaries and be discrete on what they post on social media because it exposes their relationship and can be a source of backlash, hate and even insecurity to them from those who come across their profiles and have malicious intentions.This study further recommends that future research could include an in-depth investigation focusing on the effects of social media use and misuse in marriage and adult relationships.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the study

Since we live in a networked society, our social relations are linked to each other through shared social contacts (Cotterell, 2007). Social networks have also greatly changed due to the introduction of technology, the internet and the access of smartphones in most households globally and in developing countries.

Globally, according to Internet world stats it was estimated in June 2018, that there are around 4.2 billion internet users around the world, which is a staggering number. Social media has changed our lives fast and dramatically. The use of social networks worldwide is increasing as fast as ever. Among the internet users in 2017, 71 percent of them were social media users and these figures were expected to rise. North America is ranked as the first where social media use is very popular at a rate of 66 percent. More than 81 percent of the United States population in 2016 had a social media profile. The increase worldwide of the use of smartphones and mobile phones or devices has opened up the accessibility to social networks available as mobile apps and are optimized for mobile use which has enabled users to comfortably access many social media sites from the palm of their hand (Miller et al, 2016).

With over 2.27 billion monthly active users on the social network Facebook according to the third quarter in 2018, the site is currently the leader in the market in terms of how widely it has reached the world. It has shaped the social media landscape and according to internet world stats as of December, 2017, Kenya had 7 million Facebook users. Since Facebook's launch it had been an important factor in various discussions on user privacy and in the distinction between the real self and the online self.

Social Media however, is still a relatively young phenomenon especially in Kenya, yet it's influence on the way we live now is stunning to behold. It being new, means we have not yet had a chance to reflect on how it is changing our developing country for both good and bad (Freitas, 2017). We are currently reacting to as opposed to responding to and shaping its presence in our lives and of those we teach mentor and parent.

The college years are a period of life between the late teens and adulthood, that are characterized by independence and individuation whereby, relying on one's parents has dwindled and now establishing commitments of work and long term love connections begin. It is during this time that the college students focus on themselves by obtaining tertiary education, developing necessary skills, knowledge and are becoming self-aware which are all necessary as they become adults. This also includes decision making for themselves from mundane things such as what to eat to whether to get married or not which has been seen in some of the romantic relationships formed during college years that end up in marriage. The emergence of digital communication has provided an added layer to this process (Wright, 2017).

Some of the characteristics that distinguish college student years from other life stages aside from the self-focus and independence, is when students explore their identity, whereby they are also exploring other possibilities like love and work, or their intimate relationships as they head towards making more permanent choices. By experimenting, they develop a sense of identity and they are able to understand their limitations, capabilities, beliefs, values and how they fit into the society as a whole (Chambers, 2013).

Another facet of social media is that it emphasizes on the creation and the maintenance of social relationships. For social media users, all the content created and the followers built on various social networking platforms, each are ultimately designed for fostering and creating of more intimate relationships with others and in some cases it's the only way to meet new people that one would never have met any other way. Therefore, social media has greatly changed the foundation of how we now relate with each other (Hendrick, 2000).

Social media has enabled people to connect and communicate and not have the pressure of necessarily being in the presence of the other person. Therefore communicating via internet may lead to having more easy conversation especially for those people who are shy and

experience difficulties when communicating in person or physically. As a result social media can contribute positively to relationship formation as for as long as such long breaks from the first online conversation and the time they interact in person (Agnew, 2014).

College students use internet for research, school assignments, communication with family, friends and for forming and maintaining their romantic relationships. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook offer college students, platforms for communication and entertainment and have grown vastly in the recent years. Young adults from the age of 18-25 are the largest consumers of the internet using social media largely for communication and entertainment. They create social identities or profiles and mostly use the Internet for entertainment and keep updating their friends and loved ones on their day to day life. The obvious truth is that it has many positive effects it also has negative effects on them (Cotterell, 2007).

In recent times, the numbers of people and time spent in social networking sites due to access to the internet, has grown rapidly. Most homes, restaurants and institutions now have internet access due to the laying of fibre optic cables commonly known in Kenya as "FIBA" and people no longer have to rely on visiting internet cafes, or have to use college or work computers to access the internet. These changes therefore, may have an effect on the level of physical or personal interactions among people and in these case college students (Blair, 2017).

**1.2 Problem Statement**

Social media helps to stay connected to family and friends especially when people are far from each other. With the option of updating one's relationship status on platforms such as Facebook, social media can help a partner know how much they mean to each other if their partner updates their status with a statement such as "in a relationship" or "engaged" or even "married". Generally, someone who hides nothing about their relationship on social media gives an impression that they cannot hide anything from their partner which contributes to trust among couples (Ellison, 2007).

However, early childhood memories, most people witness the forming of relationships through their immediate and extended families and sometimes members of the community

which they belong to. These memories from childhood shape their peception of forming relationships, how they define them and also understand them as adults. Culturaly for many, the formation of relationships starts by meeting in school, church, clubs, formal introductions or arranged. This leads to inteacting with each other regularly, dating and eventually marriage or forming of long lasting friendships (Blair, 2017).

According to Internet world stats, in comparison to other East African countries, out of 20 territories that make up East Africa, Kenya has been ranked as the seventh country having most Facebook users in East Africa. In addition to Facebook use, Twitter is also a growing platform. According to Portland (2018), Nairobi is ranked among the most active in East Africa when it comes to Tweets. From observing prior research on the use of internet in relationships and how it affects the social interaction or communication in young adults, prior research has not led to an agreement of whether it has any effect on personal communication or not, with some research suggesting it does and other research suggesting there is little or no relationship between internet use and social interaction (Cotterell, 2007).

Therefore it is important to study the influence of social media on romantic relationships among college students since they are among the highest consumers of social media and particularly in Nairobi since it is one of the largest cities in Eastern Africa and also because it is ranked as the most active city in use of social media in East Africa (Ephrahim, 2013). Social experiences of college students, play a huge role in shaping their behaviour as they individually journey on the life course of young adulthood. Therefore whatever form of social networks that their lives are embedded in, may greatly influence the nature and sustainability of their romantic relationships.

The college or university experience is supposed to foster thought and relationship development and not supress it (Freitas, 2017). Unfortunately it is during this time that the college students are beginning to form good romantic relationships or are experiencing bad romantic relationships. Due to constant social media use, this may leave little time for physical interaction either due to long distance between the partners, or lack of time to physically meet due to being in university, their romantic relationships may be positively and or negatively affected.

To address gaps in previous research, it is relevant to study how social media influences the maintenance of romantic relationships focusing on university students, who are in the age bracket of the largest consumers of social media. This study seeks to bring an in-depth understanding by examining the relative importance of social media in maintaining university students romantic relationships in regard to time spent, gauging partners commitment, use of face-to-face apps for interaction and gender differences in social media use.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

i. What influence does time spent on social media have on maintenance of romantic relationships of college students?
ii. What influence does behaviour of gauging a partner's commitment on social media have on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students?
iii. What influence does the face to face interaction apps on social media have on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students?
iv. What influence does how the gender differences in use of social media have on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students?

### 1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following mains and specific objectives.

#### 1.4.1. Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to find out the influence of social media on the maintenance of college students' romantic relationships focusing on undergraduate students in the Unites States International University as an illustrative case.

#### 1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives that informed this study are:

i. To evaluate the influence of time spent on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students.
ii. To assess the influence of the behaviour of gauging a partner's commitment om social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students.
iii. To investigate the influence of use of face to face apps on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students.

iv. To investigate the influence of how gender differences in the use of social media has on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students.

**1.5 Justification of the study**

As our communities develop with the introduction of technology and internet, use of social media has greatly changed how young adults communicate. Traditionally, social communication was interaction between one person to another or physically but now one can have a conversation with hundreds of people at one time (Miller et al, 2016). This has also been replicated in romantic relationships making communication easier between couples without being close proximity but also less personal.

University or college students comprise a large population of social media users and tend to share more and more of themselves on social media and less in the physical world due to creation of social identities that at times are not a true reflection of who they really are in person. This is because social media does presents them with the pressure to look or behave in acertain way in order to fit in with the changing trends of the society (Ephrahim, 2013).

Social media is different from physical communication because not only are strangers able to connect, but it is also used to sustain relationships that were first established offline and to maintain online relationships as well. When an individual joins a social media networking site, they often begin to identify strangers as friends. However, the term "friends" is misleading because it doesn't always mean that this is a friendship in the traditional sense despite them being connected virtually. These relationships can be deemed as weak in the sense that their interaction is less personal in comparison to a friendship or relationship where individuals meet physically to interact of for coffee and catch up (Ellison, 2007).

study will focus on University students due to the fact that they have access to social media and from research, are the highest consumers of social media also because a lot of college or university students are away from their homes and reside in the school accommodation and therefore use internet in order to communicate with their significant others due to proximity (Ephrahim, 2013).

## 1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The following were the scope and limitations of the study.

### 1.6.1 Scope of the study

The study sought to evaluate the influence the behaviour of gauging a partners' involvement on social media has on the relationship. This study also investigated the influence of use of face to face apps to interact on social media has on the romantic relationships and lastly sought to establish if there is any influence on the maintenance of the romantic relationship due to differences in the use of social media between genders.

The researcher only focused on fourth year undergraduates of United States International University- Africa campus.

### 1.6.2 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to only Fourth year students who were the main respondents as they were about to complete their studies and enter the workforce. They also must have formed romantic relationships offline or online in their time of study in the university. Consequently they had experiences maintaining these relationships online due to proximity or other reasons. The study was also skewed towards heterosexual participants. Other sexually identified participants were not included.

### 1.7. Definition of Concepts

**Social media:** Social media refers to a collective group of online channels of communication that are dedicated to interaction, sharing of content and collaborations that enable users to participate in networking (Miller et al, 2016).

**Social Networking Sites:** Social networking sites refer to the online communities that allow people to create social networks or relationships because they focus on 'user relationships'. Members of these communities meet through creation of social identities or profiles that contain information of themselves that they feel comfortable to share and any other information that is necessary to allow for easy recognition in the virtual community (Chambers, 2013).

**Coupling:** Coupling refers to the art of bringing two people or things together (Agnew, 2014).

**Romantic Relationships:** A romantic relationship is a relationshipp that is based on mutual, intimacy, commitment and love. It encompasses feelings of closeness, sexual attraction, connectedness and a decision to remain together (Montemayor, 2019)**.**

**College Students:** An individual who has been admitted into a college or University, who is being taught under a certified teacher or being supervised in order to qualify for a degree.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on reviewing literature that is relevant to the topic, drawn from diverse experiences across the world that is relevant to the research subject.

## 2.1 Social media and relationships

In the twenty first century, the use of technology for development and maintenance of social networks has enabled a lot of people to connect from different nations. The formation and sustenance of relationships via the internet is not unusual. The years an individual spends in college are a developmental period in the human lifespan. They are the period between adolescence and adulthood between ages of 18 to 25 years. Most of the college students do not live on their own and also do not have sufficient income to be fully independent and are depending on their parents or guardians for their daily upkeep.

It is during these years where college students go through the period of exploring identity, self-exploration and self-focus. Most of the college students now, have grown up in a digital era and most of them have no knowledge of a time when digital media was not a huge part of our lives. Digital technology can help or hinder identity development, contribute to antisocial behavior, hinder the relationship between their parents, friends and also romantic partners (Wright, 2017).

According to Walrave et al, 2016, there is nothing new with the way the young adults behave with the internet. Nothing has changed, just the venue meaning that social media has helped the young adults meet up with friends or romantic partners without the hustle of moving from their houses and commuting to the spots they used to meet before.

It can be argued that technology is just a new medium to use to interact with others, but patterns in relationships and quality of communication remains the same. However, questions still arise of the influence it has specifically on young adults'romantic relationships, since they are not interacting according to the traditions of communication and their interacion with

the online environment is quite different from adults since they see the internet as a better place to interact with their already existing friends than physically (Walrave et al, 2016).

### 2.2. Time spent on social media and its influence on maintenance of college students'romantic relationships.

It is not uncommon to hear partners in a relationship share that they feel that the other partner spends a lot of time on social media and this brings rise to feelings of jealousy or doubt in their relationship when they see other relationships looking more romantic than theirs (Freitas, 2017).

#### 2.2.1. Social Media and Relationship Development: "Becoming Facebook Official"

In the beginning of a relationship online, partners often start by "liking" the targeted partners' content or by "sliding into the DM" of the targeted partner. When the couple decides that they are now in a relationship, relationship status change enables them to reassure each other of their commitment and also this is when the relationship is recognized by friends and peers online (Bowe, 2010).

Changing of their status is normally an indication of laying possession or claim to a partner and also shows that the other partner is no longer available to other potential interested partners. For many couples in an online relationships, becoming "Facebook Official" or FBO is usually quite exciting and also presents an opportunity to share with friends on their social media platforms (Bowe, 2010).

#### 2.2.2. Social media and Relationship comparison

College students constantly checking in to their social networks to see what is happening with their friends or peers is ussually normal. In doing so the pressure to share their lives by updating every moment of their day's activities has become more of a cultural norm. Young adults unfortunately tend to only post about the highlights of their romantic relationships and not the negative moments or sad moments. While this may be a good thing to show the good side of their lives and probably even inspire and encourage other couples while also

protecting their own privacy, it tends to set unrealistic goals or expectations of relatonships to their followere or viewers (Tokunaga, 2010).

Social media shows the highlights of people's lives most of the time and only very few couples allow the world to see their vulnerability, their arguments or insecurities. This often contributes to feelings of insecurity and comparison in those couples who may feel that compared to the relationships that they see online, theirs has too many issues or theirs is an unhappy relationship which can be a negative influence to their relationship (Chambers, 2013). It is also imperative to keep in mind that what is seen on social media is not always true or a true reflection of people's relationship because one only gets a snippet or a few minutes into the relationships of others. (Tsangarides, 2018).

### 2.2.3 Social media and Self- Identity development

The stage of young adulthood represents the first and potentially the most important period for identity development of a human being. Identity exploration during adolescence involves reflecting on ones relation to family, peers and the community (Wright, 2017). At this stage young adults specifically college students are considering things such as their career journey, whether to have a long-term romantic partner and many other life decisions as they enter adulthood.

According to Wright, 2017 having an identit gives structure and meaning to one'life and adds value to their experiences. In the digital era however, due to the anonymity of social media one can become whoever they choose to become.University students often find themselves engaged in a form of editing of their identity, where they put in a lot of effort and intention, where they select what to post online about themselves and their relationships.

## 2.3. Gauging partner commitment on social media on maintenance of university students' romantic relationships.

Social networking sites allow a user to create a profile which is public, identify and also get connected with users and trace or identify other users in other networks in order to interact with them. It also allows the user to connect with their romantic partners and post messages on each other's profiles, to view photos of each other, go through their partner's post history and private messaging.

### 2.3.1 Using Social media for monitoring behaviour and surveillance

In romantic relationships it is usually very common to keep checking or stay informed on the activities of their partners lives. Partners also are versed on strategies to seek more information about their partners without their knowledge, these strategies do not include normal communication which is normally the most straightforward way to gather information about their partners. Davis (2013) also asserts that when individuals suspect that their partner is undertaking in behaviours that they feel are unacceptable online, they never shy away from monitoring them online.

### 2.3.2. Social media and Relational Uncertainty

It stems from uncertainty or insecurity in the relationship of being unsure of whether the relationship is sustainable or has a future. When a partner finds themselves in this predicament, they are usually tempted to use electronic surveillance to monitor their partners. They may explore their partner's content or profiles in an attempt to find out what they are doing or look for hints as to whom they are interacting with in order to alleviate their uncertainty about the relationship (Fox, 2014). Uncertainty about a relationship's future can also present itself upon a relationship breakup. It is not uncommon to find partners who have already broken up remain "friends" in name on social media even after the relationship is over. (Ellison, 2007).

### 2.3.3 Social media and Romantic Jealousy

Jealousy specifically is as a result of emotional reactions, feelings and coping mechanisms or behaviours of individuals. It can occur both in online and offline relationships. When an individual has aspects of their self, defined through association with another, negative emotions can occur depending on the extent to which that the other person was included in the self when the relationship is threatened (Muise et al, 2009). Liking or commenting photos of the opposite sex, that may cause jealous feelings in their partner bringing tension into the relationship. The more time and individual appends on the social networking sites, the more jealousy they experience (Buunk, 1987).

### 2.3.5. Social Media and Conflict in Romantic Relationships

If the partners are interacting online quite oftenly, any slip ups are easily noticed and if the partner fails to post regularly about their their relationship, or changes the relationship status, the other partner will quickly pick that up and know something is wrong which can give rise to conflict (Fox et al, 2014).

## 2.4 Face to face interaction on social media on maintenance of university students' romantic relationships.

Physical interaction has become rare. Face-to-face conversations without being physically present has become more common for those in romantic relationships affected by proximity. More often than not, communication occurs through apps like Skype, Facetime Snapchat, Insta Stories, Facebook video, WhatsApp Video calls and many other online platforms that allow for face to face interaction (Walrave et al, 2016).

According to (Newsome, 2015) couples in long distance relationships use Facetime to go on dates like, cooking "together", watching a movie "together", eating dinner "together", read a book to each other and even watch the night skies "together'. In this era of virtual connections, relationships are more virtual and are no longer based on the proximity that held togheter the more traditional relationships of former generations that required physical interaction. (Bauman, 2003).

### 2.4.1. Lack of Physical Interaction

According to a study done by Tokunaga (2010) about relationships made online, many young adults especially university students admitted to having a romantic relationship with someone who is purely online and they had never met in person. This shows that the younger generation may not be aware of the impact lack of physical interaction may have on romantic relationships even as they enter adulthood.

### 2.4.2. Social media and Dissolution of romantic relationships

Opposition from family or friends and many other reasons can lead to breakups. Another of Bauman's assessment on social networks is how frail human bonds are and how easily online relationships can be terminated. It becomes termination on demand which is instantaneous

which can be seen as an advantage and also a disadvantage in maintaining a relationship online (Bauman, 2003).

### 2.4.3. Handling Breakups on Social Media

After a breakup, there are still experiences or history left on social media such a s pictures together, may still be found on the other person's profile because they share mutual friends. Peers can also use social media to be a place to show support towards them after the relationship has ended by either commenting or sending messages to someone's profile after a break up occurs (Bukowski, 2018).

## 2.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework examines two theories namely Anthony Giddens theory of Modernity and Self-Identity and Social Conflict Theories.

### 2.6.1 Anthony Giddens Modernity and Self-Identity Theory

The work of Anthony Giddens in the modernity and self-identity approach looks at how people understand and shape their identity in modern societies and how the media might play a role in this. Many people find themselves inevitably compelled to make significant choices everyday about dressing, leisure, relationships, occupations and beliefs while earlier societies had provided individuals with clearly defined roles in tradition on how they viewed life, work and values. The way in which people use social media reveals much about how individuals create their own identity, how they see themselves and how others see them (Giddens, 2008).

Changes are brought about by social influence and observation from the mass media, has influenced individuals on their perceptions of life and relationships. A lot of information coming from magazines, self-help books, TV, Social media whether fictional or real inevitably give the impression that the traditional relationships are a rare 'ideal' which few can expect to achieve. Information and ideas from social media do not reflect the real world but somehow they still continue to shape and our idea of the ideal relationships (Bauman, 2003).

**Surveillance**

According to Lyon ( 2013), the third contemporary theme within modernity is the theme of surveillance. Surveillance has been a theme in social science that plays a huge part in prevention and punishment of crime. However, in the age of social media, collection of information has been facilitated on a massive scale. Our information can now be accessed based on what individuals post on their social media accounts proving that we are now providing a level of surveillace ourselves and are also using surveillance to monitor our partners behaviours.

It is evident that social media does have it's benefits; the ability to communicate with anyone, anywhere in the world which really has its merits. Social media is also responsibe for the formation of relationships where previously relationships may not have blossomed. However in taking to account Giddens theory, which sheds light on our identities and the relationships we form and how frail they can become when placed into technologies like social media, it becomes less appealing (Bauman, 2003).

### 2.6.3. Conflict Theory

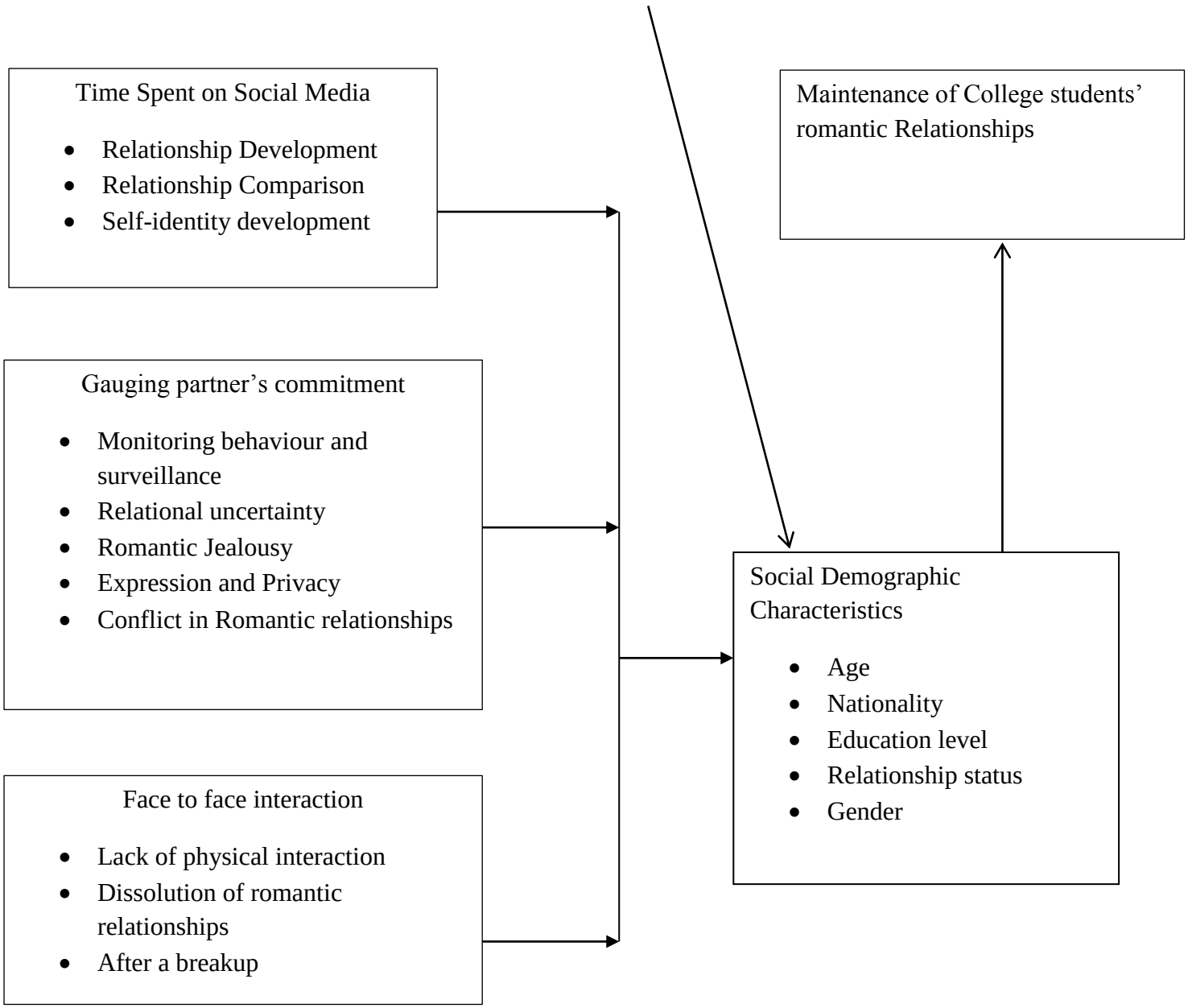
Beyond material or tangible resources individuals also compete for intangible resources as well like time, leisure, social status, sexual partners or in this case romantic partners and many other factors as well. Online relationships experience a scarcity of time, physical interaction and contant competition of romantic partners due to the perceived interaction on the social platforms and this often times leads to conflict (Canary, 1988).

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework

Several components of social media play a role in the maintenance of college students' romantic relationships. These factors may be inter-related and may influence the maintenance of the romantic relationship. There are several independent variables such as time spent on social media, gauging a partners' commitment on social media, face to face interaction of partners on online platforms and differences of social media use depending on the gender that may influence the maintenance of the romantic relationship online.

These are use of social media for relationship development, relationship comparison, self-identity development, monitoring and surveillance, uncertainty, jealousy, expression and privacy, conflict, lack of physical interaction, dissolution of the relationship and after a breakup.

***Figure 2.1*** **Conceptual framework of independent, intervening and dependent variables of the influence of social mediain the maintenance of college students romantic relationships**



# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the methods that the researcher used when carrying out the study. It was organized under the following sections: Site description, research design, units of analysis and units of observation, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, methods of data collection, ethical considerations and data analysis.

## 3.2 Study site description

The study was carried out at the United States International University- Africa at the Nairobi campus. USIU is an International University that enrolls students from about 71 nationalities. Since the students come from diverse nationalities, some are far from home and therefore have to use online communication as a way of connecting with their loved ones.

## 3.4 Research Design

The researcher used the survey design method which is also known as the descriptive research design method (Iarossi, 2006). The descriptive or survey design method was used to collect descriptive data which is important in describing elements of a specific group and to study the relationships between or among variables and also to study values of a group and figure out the commonalities of a group.

### 3.5 Study population

The study targeted college students in heterosexual romantic relationships and have used social media as a platform to maintain their romantic relationships. The research targeted college students enrolled at USIU in their last or fourth year of study who are between the age of 18-25 since those are young adults in college and are also among the highest consumers of social media. According to the USIU 2018 fact sheet, the total population is 6,458 with 54% of this number being female and 46% being males. The number of undergraduates in each academic year is approximately 350- 400 students from all faculties.

### 3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

#### 3.6.1 Sample Size

The sample size was 100 respondents proportionately selected to represent both genders.

#### 3.6.2 Sampling Procedure

The researcher got the number of respondents drawn from the group using randomized purposive sampling method. This technique was chosen because it is a probability sampling method, where sampling was done through random screening that enabled the identification of those in a romantic relationship and are fourth year undergraduate students. Randomized purposive sampling was to enable the researcher to focus only on the population that was of interest that enabled the researcher to answer the research questions. This is also because the researcher had no knowledge of the number of respondents who are in a romantic relationship beforehand.

### 3.7 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher obtained the necessary documents to facilitate the process of data collection. An introduction letter was picked from the University of Nairobi, Department of Sociology and Social Work and also a research authorization from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. The letters were used to gain access to the institution of interest and prove that the research is being done ethically. The researcher then proceeded to collect data using a structured questionnaire that was distributed to the college students in the selected university. After the data collection activity was over, the researcher combined all the filled questionnaires for data analysis. The researcher was assisted by one research assistant.

### 3.7.1. Collection of Quantitative Data

**Questionnaire**

Quantitative data was derived from a structured questionnaire of closed-ended and a few open-ended questions. The questionnaires were physically distributed to the selected number of respondents at the selected institution. The questionnaires assured them of confidentiality and their privacy upon submitting personal information. The collected data was then downloaded and input on Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for cleaning analysis. After the forms were physically filled by the respondents, the researcher entered the information collected into the software for analyzing the data. A questionnaire was chosen because it is time friendly; and can reach a large population of respondents and it is self- administered.

### 3.7.2. Collection of Qualitative Data

**Interview Guide**

The researcher used an interview guide to collect data from the key informants during the interview sessions. The guide comprised of both open-ended and close-ended questions. In the open-ended questions the researcher took notes while interviewing the key informants, whereas the close-ended questions had option questions that were determined by the researcher.

Qualitative data was derived from data gathered from the open ended questions in the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was categorized according to the study objectives. The data was then edited, coded and reported using descriptive narratives and tables showing the experiences and findings from respondents (Nachmias, 2014)

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher submitted the completed research proposal and tools of data collection to the Department of Sociology and Social Work of University of Nairobi and NACOSTI for approval and received a clearance letter from the University and authorization letter from NACOSTI to proceed to the field for data collection. Upon receiving the permit to collect data, the researcher visited the selected institution to familiarize with their organization structure, give the clearance letters and get permission to conduct the study within the institution.

The researcher ensured that the respondents had informed consent before filling the forms, that no one was coerced to take part in the study and ensure that the respondents acted on a purely voluntary basis. Confidentiality was assured before the respondents filled the forms. The respondents also were informed that there were no direct benefits to them, monetary or otherwise for participating in the study. Any other source used whether primary or secondary was acknowledged in the report.

### 3.9 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches based on the research questions.(Nachmias, 2014)

The software that was used for data analysis was Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Qualitative data was analyzed and condensed into the theme categories then summarized by use of descriptive labels and reported in verbatim by use of direct quotation.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter shows the study findings data analysis regarding the research topic. Tables present the data and thereafter interpretations made to give meaning to the results. The main themes reflect the objectives of the study.

## 4.1 Response rate

As shown on table 4.1, 82% of the respondents participated in the study by filling in the questionnaires as required and returned back. 18% of the participants received the questionnaires but were non responsive.

**Table 4.1 Response rate**

| **Response** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Response | 82 | 82.0 |
| Non-response | 18 | 18.0 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100.0** |

## 4.2 Being in a Romantic relationship

One of the pre-requisites of being a respondent was that one had to be in a romantic relationship as indicated in table 4.2 that 100% of the respondents who participated in the study were in a romantic relationship. This means that the questions presented in the questionnaire, were well answered by participants who had experienced being in a romantic relationship.

**Table 4.2 Romantic relationship**

| Romantic relationship | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 82 | 100.0 |
| No | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.3 Fourth year undergraduate students

Another pre-requisite of being a respondent was that one had to be in their fourth year of undergraduate studies since they had been in the university for a while and have experienced dating or maintaining a romantic relationship while they were away from their significant other. As indicated in table 4.3, 100% were students in fourth year.

**Table 4.3 Fourth year undergraduate students**

| Fourth Year Undergraduate | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 82 | 100.0 |
| No | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.4 Social and demographic Information

#### 4.4.1 Gender

Most respondents were female at 69.5% and male respondents were 30.5%. This in comparison to the USIU fact sheet shows that females make up a larger population of the university population than males.

**Table 4.4 Gender distribution**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Female | 57 | 69.5 |
| Male | 25 | 30.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.4.2 Age distribution

The respondents were characterized into five age groups as illustrated in table 4.5. the majority of the respondents were between the ages of 18-24 at 59.8%. This was followed by the age group of 25-34 years at 23.2%, then 35- 44 years at 17%. The ages of 45-54 and 65 and above had no participants within that age bracket. A key informant, a male counsellor collaborates this by stating that *"most of the young people now use social media to start and maintain romantic relationships."*

**Table 4.5 Age**

| Ages | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 18-24 | 49 | 59.8 |
| 25-34 | 19 | 23.2 |
| 35-44 | 14 | 17.0 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.4.3 Nationality

From the study findings, majority of the respondents were Kenyans at 86.6%, with Ethiopian and Ugandan being at 2.5% each. 1.2% each of the other respondents were Rwandese, Nigerian, Sudanese, Zambian, Korean, Malawian and Tanzanian. This representation made the results collected to be diverse. Majority of the respondents were Kenyan due to the fact that USIU is based in Kenya.

**Table 4.6 Nationality**

| Nationality | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Kenyan | 71 | 86.6 |
| Ethiopian | 2 | 2.5 |
| Ugandan | 2 | 2.5 |
| Rwandanese | 1 | 1.2 |
| Nigerian | 1 | 1.2 |
| Sudanese | 1 | 1.2 |
| Zambian | 1 | 1.2 |
| Korean | 1 | 1.2 |
| Malawian | 1 | 1.2 |
| Tanzanian | 1 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.4.4 Duration of the relationship

From the study 51.2% of the respondents have been maintaining a romantic relationship using social media for a period of 1 to 3 years, representing the majority of the respondents as depicted in table 4.7. This was followed by those who have been maintaining their relationship for less than 1 year at 31.7% and 14.6% being those who have maintained their relationship online for a period between 4 and 7 years and lastly just 2.5% had been in a relationship for over 7 years. This shows that most romantic relationships being maintained on social media cannot be sustained for a long period. A key informant, a male relationship expert collaborated this finding by stating that,

> *"physical presence is very key in the maintenance of not just a romantic relationship but any relationship. The longest relationship that I have come across, that was maintained on social media is 2 years."*

All the key informants interviewed collaborate the findings by indicating the longest relationships encountered were "*between 1 and 2 years."*

**Table 4.7: Duration of the relationship**

| Duration of the relationship | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 1 year | 26 | 31.7 |
| Between 1 and 3 years | 42 | 51.2 |
| Between 4 and 7 years | 12 | 14.6 |
| Over 7 years | 2 | 2.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.4.5 Social media sites

As shown on table 4.8, 45.5% were subscribed to 4-6 sites. These were followed by 38.5% of respondents who were subscribed to 1to 3 sites, 14.5% who were subscribed to 7 to 9 and 1.5% who were subscribed to 10 to 12 social media sites. This was to show how much time is spent on social media surfing the various sites or platforms and also being exposed to various social media sites that contributed to the maintenance of their romantic relationships. A key informant, a psychologist collaborated this by stating that, *" an average of 6 to 8 hours is spent daily on social media on various sites as way of meeting and maintain social and romantic relationships"*

**Table 4.8: Social media sites**

| Social media sites | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | 32 | 38.5 |
| 4-6 | 38 | 45.5 |
| 7-9 | 11 | 14.5 |
| 10-12 | 1 | 1.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.4.6 Use of social media to start and or maintain a romantic relationship

From the study findings, majority of the respondents at 75.5% as shown on table 4.9 agreed that they have used social media to start and maintain romantic relationships, while 24.5% said they did not. Social media sites have become the most popular way to meet and connect with other people in the world (Ephrahim, 2013).

**Table 4.9: Whether used social media to start and or maintain a romantic relationship**

| Used social media to start and or maintain a romantic relationship | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 62 | 75.5 |
| No | 20 | 24.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.4.7 Influence of Social media on the relationship

As shown on table 4.10, majority of the respondents at 75.5% agreed that social media has some influence on their relationships, while 24.5% said it did not have any influence on their relationship.

**Table 4.10: Influence of social media on the relationship**

| Influence of Social media on the relationship | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 62 | 75.5 |
| No | 20 | 24.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

## 4.5 Time spent on social media and its influence on the maintenance of university student's romantic relationships

In our society today, addiction to computers, phones and other devices is visible. Social media is a powerful tool of technology but with it comes responsibility of use and also with it becoming a powerful networking tool, it has become much more than that in relation to its influence on romantic relationships.

### 4.5.1 Making time for social media per day

The respondents at 94.5%, make time to use social media during the day and a minority at 5.5% do not.

**Table 4.11: Making time for social media during per day**

| Whether makes time for social media per day | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 77 | 94.5 |
| No | 5 | 5.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.5.2 Time spent on social media

As indicated in table 4.12, 30.2% shared that they spend 2 hours or less on social media. With 25.2% spending 3 hours or less, 19.8% spending 1 hour or less, 15.5% spending 6 hours or less, 9.3% spending 5 hours or less and 0% of the respondents spent 4 hours or less. A key informant, a psychologist collaborates the findings by stating *that "on average people spend between 2 to 8 hours a day on social media."*

**Table 4.12 Distribution of amount of time spent on social media**

| Time spent on social media | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1 hour or less | 16 | 19.8 |
| 2 hours or less | 23 | 30.2 |
| 3 hours or less | 19 | 25.2 |
| 4 hours or less | 0 | 0 |
| 5 hours or less | 7 | 9.3 |
| 6 hours or less | 12 | 15.5 |
| **Total** | **77** | **100.0** |

### 4.5.3 How often they log into social media to engage the partner

As indicated in table 4.13 , majority of the respondents at 59.5% said that they log into social media accounts to engage with their partner daily. With 21.9% of the respondents logging in weekly, 13.5% logging in hourly and 5.1% logging in monthly. This indicates that spending time on a daily basis communicating with their partners is important in the maintenance of their romantic relationship.

**Table 4.13 How often they log into social media to engage the partner**

| How often they log into social media to engage the partner | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Hourly | 11 | 13.5 |
| Daily | 49 | 59.5 |
| Weekly | 18 | 21.9 |
| Monthly | 4 | 5.1 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.5.4 Visiting profiles of other couples

As shown on table 4.14, majority of the respondents at 61.5% said that they visit profiles of other couples daily. With 21.9% sharing they visit other couples profiles weekly, 9.8% shared hourly and 7.8% shared monthly.

**Table 4.14 Visiting profiles of other couples**

| Visiting profiles of other couples | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Hourly | 8 | 9.8 |
| Daily | 50 | 61.5 |
| Weekly | 18 | 21.9 |
| Monthly | 6 | 7.8 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.5.5 Social media and relationship comparison

Social media shows the highlights of people's lives most of the time and only very few couples allow the world to see their vulnerability, arguments or insecurities. This can lead to other couples believing that their relationships have a problem in comparison to those that they see on social media.

In table 4.15, 42.6% were likely to compare their relationship with those of their peers that they see online. 30.6% were very likely, 20.8% were neutral, 3.5% unlikely and 2.5% very unlikely. This shows that social media is very powerful in influencing romantic relationships because it draws couples in by setting unrealistic expectations of how relationships should be like since no one is showing the bad days, only the highlights. A key informant, a relationship expert collaborated this findings by stating that,

> *"the pressure built by comparison of relationships online has devastating consequences to many relationships. Some couples post of going on expensive vacations often, holding lavish parties and celebrations, gifts given and many others and this can lead to going into debt in order to keep up with the other couples and also post about your relationship in the same manner and also brings about the feeling that your partner is not a good partner because they are not taking you to these expensive vacations or buying expensive gifts leading to breakups or tension in relationships.*

**Table 4.15: Comparing your relationship with peers**

| Comparing your relationship with peers | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | 2 | 2.5 |
| Unlikely | 3 | 3.5 |
| Neutral | 17 | 20.8 |
| Likely | 35 | 42.6 |
| Very Likely | 25 | 30.6 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.5.6 Social media and self-identity development

Young adulthood presents a time of identity development, exploration and how an individual's values intersect with those of the society. Social media according to Tsangarides, 2018 a lot of people find it easier to deceive people through their posting as different people by having pseudo names or by creating an identity that is not truly their authentic self.

The researcher sought to find out whether in seeking romantic partners or in their social interaction on social media, respondents feel the pressure. As table % of the respo.16 indicate, majority of the respondents at 34.2% say they feel the pressure all the time to present themselves in a manner that is not a true reflection of who they are. With 31.3% saying they feel the pressure sometimes which is also a high number, 28.8% being neutral, 4.5% being never and 1.2% being not very often. This means therefore that a lot of the respondents feel the pressure to hide their true identity on social media. A key informant, a psychologist collaborates this findings by stating that,

> *" a lot of people on social media wear masks, young people are mostly going through an identity crisis and therefore the persona created on social media is different from the reality. With the saying 'fake it till you make it' being widely advocated, many couples and individuals will present a false impression of who they really are in order to impress the masses or to amass a 'following' on social media"*

**Table 4.16: If there is pressure to present self in certain way in social media**

| Pressure to present self in certain way in social media | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Never | 3 | 4.5 |
| Not very Often | 1 | 1.2 |
| Neutral | 24 | 28.8 |
| Sometimes | 26 | 31.3 |
| All the time | 28 | 34.2 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.5.7 Use of pseudo names

The respondents at 56.5% said that they were using pseudo names on their social networking sites and 43.5% said that they did not. This means that they use false names or an alias to hide their true identity on social media.

**Table 4.17: Use of pseudo names**

| Use of pseudo names | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 47 | 56.5 |
| No | 35 | 43.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100** |

## 4.6 Gauging a partner's commitment on social media on maintenance of university student's romantic relationships

Social media allows for connecting with other people by creating a public profile and being able to find others and trace their identity, connect with romantic partners, examine their history, view their posts both past and present and privately message them. Social media therefor cam allow one to monitor their partner's online 'behaviour' or activity discretely.

### 4.6.1 Using social media for monitoring behaviour and surveillance: relationship development

In the beginning of the relationship, partners will start by 'liking' the targeted partner and when they both decide that they are in a relationship, they are normally expected to change

their relationship status and become official to all their 'friends'. If they previously were 'single' they are now 'in a relationship' since this is now recognized by their peers. The change shows a sense of 'commitment' to their partner and wards off potential partners (Bowe, 2010).

The respondents at 77.5% said that they indicate their relationships status on their profile and 22.5% said they don't. This indicates that updating one's relationship status is deemed very important to the other partner as it communicates that their partner is committed in the relationship. A key informant, a counsellor and relationship expert collaborates the findings by stating that,

> "*by updating one's relationship status, it shows commitment and acknowledgment of the significant others' presence on social media and it is a bold statement that those who may have been interested in pursuing them, they are no longer available."*

**Table 4.18: Updating relationship status on profile**

| **Updating relationship status on profile** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 64 | 77.5 |
| No | 18 | 22.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.6.2 Secretly monitoring your partner's online activity

According to Davis 2013, when individuals in a romantic relationship suspect that their partner is undertatking in behaviours that they feel unnaceptable online, they never shy away from monitoring them online. As shown on table 4.19, respondents at 40.5% indicated that they sometimes secretly monitor activity on their social networking sites. While 31.5% of the respondents were neutral, with 23.6% saying all the time and 2.2% saying never and not very often. This shows that the monitoring of partner's online behaviour is quite common. A key informant, a counsellor collaborates the findings by stating that,

> *"an individuals' insecurity, doubt, uncertainty of partner's commitment to the relationship can prompt an individual to monitor their partner's social media profile. This is also a way of finding out if there are having another relationship behind their back in order to prepare psychologically just in case they get dumped by their partners"*

**Table 4.19 Secretly monitoring your partner's activity**

| Secretly monitor your partners activity | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Never | 2 | 2.2 |
| Not very Often | 2 | 2.2 |
| Neutral | 26 | 31.5 |
| Sometimes | 33 | 40.5 |
| All the time | 19 | 23.6 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.6.3 Social media and relational uncertainty

As shown on table 4.20, 38% of the respondents were likely and very likely to be happy if their partner posted an accurate relationship status or photos of them with their arm around them. 23% were neutral, 1% unlikely and 0% very unlikely. This means that a partner's online behaviour contributes a lot to relational certainty. A key informant a relationship expert asserts that by stating,

> *" not updating one's relationship status, posting photos of others especially of the opposite sex more than of their partner indicates lack of commitment in a relationship"*

**Table 4.20 Likelihood of being happy if partner posted an accurate relationship status or photos**

| Likelihood of being happy if partner posted an accurate relationship status or photos | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | 0 | 0 |
| Unlikely | 1 | 1.0 |
| Neutral | 19 | 23.0 |
| Likely | 31 | 38.0 |
| Very Likely | 31 | 38.0 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.6.4 Upload photos of your relationship

As indicated on table 4.21, majority of the respondents at 53.5% said that they usually upload photos of their relationships daily. With 22.5% saying weekly, 16.9% monthly and 7.1% hourly. This indicates how committed the respondents are in their relationship. Uploading relationship photos to social media now and even makes increases confidence in the partner that they are committed and therefore positively influencing the maintenance if the romantic relationship.

**Table 4.21 Upload photos of your relationship**

| Upload photos of your relationship | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Hourly | 6 | 7.1 |
| Daily | 44 | 53.5 |
| Weekly | 19 | 22.5 |
| Monthly | 13 | 16.9 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.6.5 Likelihood of adding your partner friends as your friends

As shown on table 4.22 the majority of the respondents at 43.6% were very likely to add the partners of their friends as their friends on social media sites in order to keep tabs on their partners, if they felt insecure with the relationship. 42.5% of the respondents were likely, 11.5% were neutral and 1.2% each being unlikely very unlikely.

**Table 4.22 Likelihood of adding your partner friends as your friends**

| Likelihood of adding your partner friends as your friends | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | 1 | 1.2 |
| Unlikely | 1 | 1.2 |
| Neutral | 10 | 11.5 |
| Likely | 34 | 42.5 |
| Very Likely | 36 | 43.6 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.6.6 Social media and romantic jealousy

As indicated on table 4.23. The majority of the respondents at 53.5% said that their use of social media influences their emotions. Followed by 30.8% who said its does not and 15.7% were not sure. This is an indication that emotions are triggered by the surveillance and monitoring of what their partner does online.

**Table 4.23 Influence of social media on emotions**

| Influence of Social media on emotions | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 44 | 53.5 |
| No | 25 | 30.8 |
| Am not sure | 13 | 15.7 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.6.7 Likelihood of getting jealous or upset due to an online behaviour of partner

Respondents 44.2% said that they were likely to get jealous or upset after a certain behaviour of their partner online, or a comment from another person of the opposite sex to their partner. With 32.1% sharing they very likely would get jealous, with 22.5% being neutral, 1.2% very unlikely and 0% unlikely to get jealous or upset by their partner's online behaviour. A key informant, a psychologist collaborates these findings by stating,

> *"actions on social media that promote feelings of jealousy among partners are comments on the opposite sex posts, tagging someone who is not your partner in the WCW or MCM, constantly liking a particular person's posts especially of the opposite sex, posting photos of their ex-partner showing interest to another partner."*

**Table 4.24 Likelihood of getting jealous or upset**

| Likelihood of getting jealous or upset | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | 1 | 1.2 |
| Unlikely | 0 | 0 |
| Neutral | 19 | 22.5 |
| Likely | 36 | 44.2 |
| Very Likely | 26 | 32.1 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.6.8 Social media expression and privacy

Respondents admitted that they share details of their relationships with 50.5% of the respondents said that they share much of their relationship on social media as stipulated in table 4.25. A large number of the respondents as well at 34.9% admitted to sharing everything about their romantic relationship on social media, with 8.5% being neutral, 6.1% saying they do not share much and 0% little. This means that the urge to share even intimate details of one's romantic relationship online is a relevant concern. A key informant, a relationship expert asserts that by stating.

> *"sharing of intimate details about one's relationship has become a norm with couples sharing even videos of their intimate personal time, labour and delivery stories, homes they are living in and many more. This opens up the relationship to outsiders who may even rob their homes, start targeting their partners due to the praise they have gotten about how good they are or wealthy and when a break up happens it becomes very traumatic to the couple to deal with the backlash that follows them on social media."*

**Table 4.25 How much of the relationship your share on social media**

| How much of the relationship your share on social media | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not much | 5 | 6.1 |
| Little | 0 | 0 |
| Neutral | 7 | 8.5 |
| Much | 42 | 50.5 |
| Everything | 28 | 34.9 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

## 4.7 Face to face interaction on social media on maintenance of university student's romantic relationships

Physical interaction has become rare with face-to-face interaction becoming preferred due to its convenience especially for those maintaining romantic relationships from afar.

### 4.7.1 Use of face-face apps on social media

The respondents shared that they make use of face-to-face apps to communicate with their partners. According to the findings shown on table 4.29, a vast majority of the respondents at 77.5% shared that they use face to face interaction apps on social media and 22.5% said they don't. Those who admitted to using face-to-face apps mentioned face to face apps like Skype, WhatsApp video calls, Snapchat, Telegram, Google Duo, Tik-Tok and Facebook. A key informant a relationship expert asserts these findings by stating,

> *"couples use apps like WhatsApp video calls, skype to communicate face-to-face with their partners, this is the most preferred method than even texting, emails or direct messaging since they are able to see each other, and it creates the illusion that they are together even if they are miles apart."*

**Table 4.29 Use of face-face apps on social media**

| Use of face-face apps on social media | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 64 | 77.5 |
| No | 18 | 22.5 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.7.2 Lack of physical Interaction

Among the respondents who said that they use face to face interaction apps on social media, 63.5% shared that due to lack of physical interaction with their partner, they have to use the face-to-face- app to interact with their partner daily as shown in table 4.30. 28.1% of the respondents shared that they use the face-to-face app weekly, 5.2% hourly and 3.2% monthly. This indicates that need for physical interaction is important in the maintenance of romantic relationships on social media.

**Table 4.30 Physical Interaction**

| Interaction with your Partner | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Hourly | 3 | 5.2 |
| Daily | 41 | 63.5 |
| Weekly | 18 | 28.1 |
| Monthly | 2 | 3.2 |
| **Total** | **64** | **100.0** |

### 4.7.3 Use of face-face apps to strengthen communication

The respondents at 43.5% shared that the use of face to face apps helps to strengthen communication with their partner in the online relationship. With 26.5% of the respondents being neutral, 26.5% said they help very much, 2.5% said they help a little and 1.2% not so much. Other than using face to face apps to strengthen relationships, the respondents said that they use them to gossip, solve issues and video kissing. A key informant a counsellor asserts this findings by stating,

> *"activities that couples engage in on face-to-face social media apps are reading together, watching a movie together, eating a meal, talking and vlogging to share experiences"*

**Table 4.31 Use of face-face apps to strengthen communication**

| Use of face-face apps to strengthen communication | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Not so much | 1 | 1.2 |
| Little | 2 | 2.5 |
| Neutral | 22 | 26.5 |
| Much | 36 | 43.5 |
| Very much | 21 | 26.3 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.7.4 Whether the use of face-face apps is similar to being physically present

Majority of the respondents at 58.2% said that use of face-face apps is similar to being physically present with their partners, while 41.8% said it is not the same. This means that more than half of the respondents feel that online dating is possible without physical interaction.

**Table 4.32 Use of face-face apps is similar to being physically present**

| Use of face-face apps is similar to being physically present | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 48 | 58.2 |
| No | 34 | 41.8 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.7.5 Social media and dissolution of romantic relationships

From the study findings 51% of the respondents said that they have ever broken up with their partners on social media as shown on table 4.33, while 49% said they have never. This indicates that not all relationships are sustainable and unfortunately some do come to an end.

**Table 4.33 Ever broke up on social media**

| Ever broken up on social media with your partner | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 42 | 51.2 |
| No | 40 | 48.8 |
| **Total** | **82** | **100.0** |

### 4.7.6 How breakups are handled on social media

For the respondents who admitted to have ever broken up on social media on table 4.33, majority of the respondents at as indicated on table 4.34 at 71.1% admitted to changing their relationship status after the breakup, with 28.9% that they did not change their relationship status. Some of the reasons given by the respondents for changing or not changing their relationship status after breakup include; they changed their status in order to help them heal,

to clarify to their peers they no longer were in a relationship, to be able to attract other single people or potential partners. For those who did not change their relationship status they shared that it was so that the public does not know their relationship ended

**Table 4.34 Change of relationship status after the breakup**

| **Change of relationship after breakup** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 30 | 71.1 |
| No | 12 | 28.9 |
| **Total** | **42** | **100.0** |

## 4.8 Gender differences in the use of social media on maintenance of college students' romantic relationships

### 4.8.1 Purpose of using social media

The researcher sought to find out the differences in gender use between males and females and from the findings as shown on table 4.35, 40% of males versus 28.1% of females use social media for entertainment, meaning that males use social media for entertainment more than females. The use of social media to keep in contact with others is relatively the same for both females and males with 42.1% of females versus 32% of males using social media to keep in contact with others. Females use social media for networking opportunities more than men with 24.6% of females versus 12% of males using social media for networking opportunities. 3.5% of females versus 4.0% of males use social media to share opinions, A higher number of males use social media to meet new people with males at 4.0% and females at 1.7%.. This is an indication that females are the largest users of social media when it comes to maintaining their relationships than men.

**Table 4.35 Purpose of using social media**

| **Purpose of using social media** | **Male** | | **Female** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **N** | **Percentage** | **N** | **Percentage** |
| Entertainment | 10 | 40 | 16 | 28.1 |
| To keep in contact with others | 8 | 32.0 | 24 | 42.1 |
| Networking opportunities | 3 | 12.0 | 14 | 24.6 |
| To share opinions | 1 | 4.0 | 2 | 3.5 |
| To meet new people | 1 | 4.0 | 1 | 1.7 |
| To share photos and videos | 2 | 8.0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **25** | **100.0** | **57** | **100.0** |

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## 5.1 Summary

The study adopted the descriptive or survey research design, targeting fourth year undergraduate students who are between the ages of 18- 25 since they are young adults in college, who are also among the largest consumers of social media and are in a romantic relationship, maintaining it on social media due to distance. The respondents were sampled from USIU Africa an International University based in Kenya. USIU was chosen due to the fact that it has students from various nations and they are away from their loved ones since they reside in the university campus. The fourth year undergraduate population from the USIU fact sheet is approximately 350-400 students from all faculties and through randomized purposive sampling a number of 100 respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and is represented in the information shown in the summary. Qualitative data is presented in verbatim to complement the quantitative data.

### 5.1.1 Evaluating the influence of time spent on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students

#### 5.1.1.1 Time spent on social media

The study findings show that in the twenty first century the development of social networks has enabled a lot of people from all over the world to connect. The formation and sustenance of relationships online is not unusual. Social networking sites, online platforms and applications on smartphones have emerged as the principal platforms to share and engage with new and old relationships.

A majority of young adults are subscribed to at least 4 to 6 social networking sites. They spend an average of at least 6 to 8 hours a day updating or checking their social media sites. They also spend a lot of time checking the profiles of other couples on a daily basis which is an indication that the need to spend time to see how other couples are doing or what they are posting about their relationships.

#### 5.1.1.2 Social media and relationship development

At the beginning of each relationship time is spent by 'liking' or 'sliding into the DM' of their partner. They then agree to be in a relationship and proceed to make it 'official' by changing their relationship status on their social networking sites. From the study majority of the respondents admitted to changing their relationship status on their social networking sites once they are in a new relationship. This also helps to keep off potential partners by communicating that they are no longer available to be pursued and also it signifies a s sense of commitment to their partner when their status is visible to all their online networks.

#### 5.1.1.3 Social media and Relationship comparison

Unfortunately, young adults tend to only post the highlights of their day, or the highlights of their romantic relationships and never post about the negative side or show any vulnerability on their profiles. This leads to relationship comparison because other couples viewing their updates end up believing that they are the only ones having issues in their relationships because they do not feel as 'happy' as those relationships they see online. Another way of comparison is in the lavish lifestyles couples post online of vacations gone, dinners, gifts received or given and these can lead to lack of contentment in one's relationship leading to tension, envy and even breakups.

#### 5.1.1.4 Social media and Self-Identity Development

With anonymity on social media one can become whoever they choose to become. This also includes presenting their romantic relationships in a way that they select moments and expressions to post online about their relationships and the same applies to posting inline about themselves. They are under constant pressure to edit or polish their flaws through use of filters or feel the pressure to polish their personality. As a result many end up masking their true persona or identity on social media.

### 5.1.2 Assessing the influence of gauging a partner's commitment on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students

The research was also assessing the influence of gauging a partners commitment on social media on their romantic relationship.

#### 5.1.2.1 Social media for monitoring behavior and surveillance

It is common in romantic relationships, for individuals to stay appraised of the happenings in their partner's lives. However when an individual suspects that their partner is undertaking in online behavior that feels unacceptable, they never shy away from monitoring them online. Partners admit to checking the profiles of their romantic partners whenever they feel that they

are insecure in the relationship or if their partner is commenting a lot on posts of friends of the opposite sex or liking posts by friends of the opposite sex. Some partners go an extra mile to add friends of their partners as their friends on social media in order to keep tabs on their partner in a way to a certain that their so called 'friends' are not also in a romantic relationship with their partners.

#### 5.1.2.2 Social media and relational uncertainty

Partners find themselves exploring their partners profile in order to determine what they are doing or look for hints as to whom they are interacting with in order to alleviate the uncertainty about the relationship. Partners admit to feeling happy if their partner posts a photo of them with their arm around them, and if they keep tagging them in their social media posts, the feel more certain that their partner is committed to the relationship.

#### 5.1.2.4 Social media expression and privacy

Lack of privacy on social media makes it easy for people to access information of others. When using social media it is imperative to be concerned about the issue of privacy. Users are not restricted to how much of their private life or romantic relationship they can share on social media, therefore how much they chose to share or keep a mystery lies on the user's discretion.

The study findings show that majority of the respondents share a lot about their romantic relationships with many sharing everything about their relationship. In case of a break up it becomes very traumatic due to the backlash that they experience from their peers online, demanding to know the reason the relationship is over and in some cases if the breakup happens in public and it is leaked online it becomes very difficult for the parties involved to be able to move on or heal afterwards because of the social pressure.

### 5.1.3 Investigating the influence of face to face apps on social media on the maintenance of romantic relationships of college students

In today's world without access to social networks it is almost impossible to stay connected to friends, family or partners in far places. With the introduction of face to face applications, physical interaction has become rare, with most conversations happening without people being physically present especially for relationships affected by proximity.

Applications like facetime, WhatsApp video calls, skype, Instagram stories, Facebook video and snapchat allow for couples in long distance relationships to communicate face to face

without the required physical interaction. Some activities that the study found that couples can engage in using the face to face applications are watching a movie ‘together’, reading, having dinner, video kissing and many others. Therefore the maintenance of close romantic relationships is made possible without the tiresome process of having close proximity with them.

#### 5.1.3.1 Lack of physical interaction

Many young adults having online romantic relationships may have never met physically at all. The relationship is purely online with the prospects of meeting in person being very slim or not at all. This shows that the younger generation may not be aware of the impact lack of physical interaction may have on romantic relationships even as they enter adulthood.

#### 5.1.3.2. Social media and the dissolution of romantic relationships

Social media in of itself is also a reason why many relationships face conflict due to the pressure to conform to societal online standards. Some partners who have dissolved their relationship online felt that it may be easier because there is no physical interaction.

In the event of a breakup, social media users are able to change their relationship status, by deleting their ex-partner as their ‘friend’ on social media therefore being able to inform their virtual world of their changed relationship status. Some of the reasons found in the study for changing or not changing their relationship status after breakup include; they changed their status in order to help them heal, to clarify to their peers they no longer were in a relationship, to be able to attract other single people or potential partners. For those who did not change their relationship status they shared that it was so that the public does not know their relationship ended.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The introduction of technology and social networks have greatly changed our social relations since we now live in a networked society where people have access to others regardless of proximity.As beneficial as social media has been enabling people to connect and communicate without the pressure of travelling long distances, and the positive contribution social media has on relationship formation and maintenance, the traditional way of coupling or forming and maintaining relationships still outweighs online relationships. It has also led to the pressure to present only the highlights of relationships and not the reality that all relationships do have problems. Social media users have also struggled with identity issues

due to the pressure to create identities or personas that are not real online and lastly there is also the undue pressure of struggling to maintain lifestyles that are unrealistic.

Use of face to face applications as a substitute for personal interaction in romantic relationships has resulted in deteriorating relationship quality and decreases intimacy among those maintaining their romantic relationships online. One positive influence of relationships on social media is those that use their posts to inspire and help struggling couples to work on their relationship.

### 5.3 General Recommendations

a) Many college students use social media but it is important to keep private information about their relationship away from the public. This will help save the partners from possible trauma should the relationship end.
b) Each individual should have personal boundaries and be discrete on what they post on social media because it exposes their relationship and can be a source of backlash, hate and even insecurity to them from those who come across their profiles and have malicious intentions.
c) Couples maintaining their relationship on social media need to be very open in communicating with their partners should they feel that their relationship is threatened by any online behavior of their partner, instead of monitoring or surveilling them online which helps to clear any insecurities or doubts they may have about the relationship.
d) Physical interaction is of utmost importance for any relationship to thrive not just romantic relationships. Therefore couples need to find time for each other to interact personally even if they use social media at times to maintain their relationship.

#### 5.3.1 Recommendations for future research

The research was limited to partners in a heterosexual relationship, future research could include an in-depth investigation on the influence of partners in homosexual relationships and marriages.

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## APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear Respondent,**

My name is Mary Mwangi. I am a student at the University of Nairobi's department of Sociology and Social Work currently pursuing a Masters degree in Sociology focusing on Community Development. I am working on my project – "**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE MAINTENANCE OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS: A CASE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-AFRICA"**

I would like to request for a few minutes of your time to answer the questionnaire below which will take about 20 minutes of your time.

There will be no direct benefits for you participating in the survey but the responses that I will get from you and other respondents will help us understand the topic of this research in a deeper level and this might help in formulating future policies.

All personal information collected in this questionnaire will be strictly confidential and will not be shared with an outside party.

Kindly answer the questions to your best knowledge and ability.

* Required

1. **Are you in a romantic relationship?**
   Yes [ ]
   No [ ]
2. **Are you an Undergraduate Fourth year student?**
   Yes [ ]
   No [ ]

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

3. **Gender**
   [ ]Male
   [ ]Female
   [ ]Other _____

4. **How old are you?**
   [ ] 18 to 24
   [ ] 25 to 34
   [ ] 35 to 44
   [ ] 45 to 54
   [ ] 65 and above

5. **What is your nationality?**

   _____

6. **How long have you been in the relationship you selected in question one above?**
   [ ] Less than 1 year
   [ ] Between 1 and 3 years
   [ ] Between 4 and 7 years
   [ ] Over 7 years

7. **How many social media sites are you subscribed to?**
   [ ] 1 to 3
   [ ] 4 to 6
   [ ] 7 to 9
   [ ] 10 to 12
   [ ] Over 12

8. **Have you used social media to start and or maintain a romantic relationship?**

   [ ] Yes

   [ ] No

9. **Do you think social media has an influence on your relationship?**
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

**SECTION B: TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

10. **Do you make time to use social media during the day?**
    [ ] Yes
    [ ] No

11. **How much time do you spend on social media per day?**
    [ ] 1 hour or less
    [ ] 2 hours or less
    [ ] 3 hours or less
    [ ] 4 hours or less
    [ ] 5 hours or less
    [ ] 6 hours or more

**12. How often do you upload photos of your relationship?**

[ ] Hourly
[ ] Daily
[ ] Weekly
[ ] Monthly

**13. Do you indicate your relationship status on your profile?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**14. How often do you log into your social media accounts to engage with your partner?**

[ ] Hourly
[ ] Daily
[ ] Weekly
[ ] Monthly

**15. How often do you visit profiles of other couples?**

[ ] Hourly
[ ] Daily
[ ] Weekly
[ ] Monthly

**16. Do you gain gratification from using social media?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**17. On a 5 point scale how likely are you to compare your relationship to those of your peers that you see online?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | Very likely |

**18. Have you ever used a pseudo name on your social networking sites?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**19. On a 5 point scale do you ever felt pressured to present yourself in a certain way on social media, that is contrary to your true self?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | All the time |

**SECTION C: GAUGING PARTNERS' COMMITMENT**

**20. Does your use of social media influence your emotions?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] I'm not sure

**21. On a 5 point scale, how can you rate your relationship satisfaction?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Happy at all | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | Very happy |

**22. On a 5 point scale, how likely are you to become happy if your partner posted an accurate relationship status or photos of them with their arm around you?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | Very likely |

**23. On a 5 point scale, how likely do you add your partners friends as your friends in order to keep tabs on your partner?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | Very likely |

**24. On a 5 point scale, how often do you secretly monitor your partner's activity on the social networking site?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | All the time |

**25. On a 5 point scale, how often do you visit your partners profile and read their messages if you are suspicious of his or her activities?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | All the time |

**26. On a 5 point scale how much of your relationship do you share on social media?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not much | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | Everything |

**27. On a 5 point scale, how likely are you to get jealous or upset after a certain behaviour of your partner or comment from another person pf the opposite sex to your partner?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | Very likely |

**SECTION D: FACE TO FACE INTERACTION**

**28. Do you use face-to-face interaction apps on social media?**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

If yes, which ones?

_____

**29. How often do you interact on the face- to –face app with your partner?**

[ ] Hourly

[ ] Daily

[ ] Weekly

[ ] Monthly

**30. On a 5 point scale, does the use of the face-to-face apps help to strengthen communication with your partner in your relationship?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not so much | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | Very much |

**31. What other ways do you use the face-to-face app to spend time with your partner?**

_____

_____

_____

**32. Do you feel that the use of face-to-face apps similar to being physically present with your partner?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**33. Have you ever used the face to face app to dissolve a relationship?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**34. Have you ever broken up with your partner on social media ?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**35. If yes, did you change your relationship status after the breakup?**

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

**36. Please explain the reason for changing or not changing your relationship status after a breakup?**

_____

_____

## SECTION E: DIFFERENCE IN GENDER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

**37. What is your main purpose for using social media?**

[ ] Entertainment

[ ] To keep in contact with others

[ ] Networking Opportunities

[ ] To share opinions

[ ] To meet new people

[ ] To share photos and videos

[ ] To share relationship issues

[ ] Other (please specify)

_____

**Thank you for taking part in the study.**

**APPENDIX II : KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE MAINTENANCE OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS OF COLLEGE STUNDENTS: A CASE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY- AFRICA**

## Section 1: Introduction and Consent

**Dear Respondent,**

**My name is Mary Mwangi. I am a student at the University of Nairobi's department of Sociology and Social Work currently pursuing a Masters degree in Sociology focusing on Community Development. I am working on my project – "The Influence of Social Media on the Maintenance of Romantic Relationships of College Students: A Case of Undergraduate Students in the United States International University- Africa"**

**I would like to request for a few minutes of your time to answer the questionnaire below which will take about 20 minutes of your time.**

**There will be no direct benefits for you participating in the survey but the responses that I will get from you and other respondents will help us understand the topic of this research in a deeper level and this might help in formulating future policies.**

**All personal information collected in this questionnaire will be strictly confidential and will not be shared with an outside party.**

**Kindly answer the questions to your best knowledge and ability.**

**Initials _____ Signature _____Date _____**

## Section 2: Basic Information

**Q1**

**Gender**

[ ] Male

[ ] Female

**Q2**

**Level of Education:**

***(Highest level of education achieved)***

- Primary School
- Secondary School
- Diploma
- Undergraduate
- Masters
- PhD

Other_____

**Q3**

**Occupation**

**[_____]**

**Q4**

**Age Group:**

- 24 years and below
- 25 – 34 years
- 35 – 44 years
- 45 – 54 years
- 55 – 64 years
- 65 years and above

## Section 3: Interview Questions

**Q5**

**TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

i. **How much time is spent on social media per day?**

_____

_____

ii. **What does then updating of one's relationship status on social media communicate to prospective partners?**

_____

_____

_____

iii. **How does social media influence the comparison of couples' relationships?**

_____

_____

_____

iv. **How does social media contribute to self- identity development?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

v. **What are some of the longest relationships you have come across, that have been maintained on social media?**

_____

_____

_____

**Q7**

**GAUGING PARTNERS' COMMITMENT**

i. **How much of an individual's relationship, should be shared on social media?**

_____

_____

_____

ii. **What actions on social media promote jealousy in romantic relationships?**

_____

_____

_____

iii. **What prompts an individual to check their partner's social media profile?**

_____

_____

_____

iv. **What kind of behaviour on social media indicates a partner's commitment or lack thereof to a relationship?**

_____

_____

_____

**Q8**

**FACE TO FACE INTERACTION**

i. **What kind of dating activities do partners engage in through use of social media?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ii. **How are break ups handled on social media?**

_____

_____

**Q9**

**DIFFERENCE IN GENDER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

i. **What are the main purposes for using social media?**

_____

_____

_____

ii. **How much of oneself should one share on social media?**

_____

_____

_____

**Q10**

**What advice can you give for those in maintaining their romantic relationships on social media?**

_____

_____

_____

**Q11**

**What overall effects does social media have on romantic relationships?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

| **Any additional information that might not have been captured above but relevant to the study** |
| --- |
| |

**THE END**

**“Thank You for Taking Part in the Study”**