

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD
INTERACTIONS IN LIMURU TOWN**

MARY WANGARI NYAMBURA

K50/69827/2013

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI**

2020

DECLARATION

It is my declaration that this Project Report is my original research work and has not been previously published or presented for the award of a degree in any other University.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Mary Wangari Nyambura

K50/69827/2013

This Project Report has been presented for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Isaac John Ndolo

Department Of Geography And Environment Studies

University Of Nairobi

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my precious mother, Lucy Nyambura, my affectionate daughters Alison and Jasmine, my loving brothers, Wainaina, Kamau and Njenga, for their inspiration, moral support and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to thank The Almighty God for giving me the gift of life. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Isaac John Ndolo for his on-going academic guidance, wise counsel and encouragement in completing this project. I want to thank my fellow students, who gave me psychological rewards and motivation for learning more.

Finally, I thank my family for their support and unconditional love for me which is my greatest strength, during my various levels of education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
ACRONYMS.....	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study	4
1.3.1 <i>General Objective</i>	4
1.3.2 <i>Specific Objectives</i>	5
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Justification of the Study	5
1.6 Scope of the Study	6
1.7 Limitations of the Study	6
1.7 Operational Terms Definition.....	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.0 Overview	8
2.1 The Family.....	8
2.2 The Household.....	10
2.3 Communication and Interaction in a Social System.....	10
2.4 New Media in Household.....	11
2.5 Digital Divide	12
2.6 Social Media.....	13
2.7 Social Interaction facilitation via New Media	18
2.8 New Media as Impediment to Social Interaction	20
2.9 How New Media Impacts Social Interaction within Households.....	22
2.10 Theoretical Framework.....	23
2.10.1 <i>Theory of Uses and Gratification</i>	23
2.10.2 <i>Magic Bullet Theory</i>	25
2.10.3 <i>Klapper Reinforcement or Limited Effects Theory</i>	26
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	29
3.0 Overview	29
3.1 Research Design	29
3.1.1 <i>Descriptive Survey Research Design</i>	29
3.2 Research Population	29
3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure.....	30
3.4 Data Collection Methods	30
3.6 Research Instruments.....	30
3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation	30
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....	31
4.1 Overview	31
4.2 Response Rate	31
4.3 Pilot Test Results.....	31
4.4 Demographic Information	32

4.4.1 <i>Gender of respondents</i>	32
4.4.2 <i>Age Bracket of the respondents</i>	33
4.4.3 <i>Level of education of the respondents</i>	34
4.5 Social Media Reliance and Usage	34
4.5.1 <i>Number of WhatsApp friends</i>	36
4.6 Nature and patterns of social media usage	37
4.7 Interpersonal Relationships and Social Media Platforms	38
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	41
5.1 Introduction	41
5.2 Summary of the Findings	41
5.2.1 <i>Reliance and Use of Social media</i>	41
5.2.2 <i>Nature and Pattern in Usage of Social Media</i>	42
5.2.3 <i>Interpersonal Relationships and SNS</i>	42
5.3 Conclusions	43
5.4 Recommendations for using Social Networking Sites	44
5.5 Recommendation for Further Research.....	45
REFERENCES	46
APPENDICES	48
Appendix I: Questionnaire	48

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 4. 1 Response rate</i>	31
<i>Table 4. 2 Reliability Results</i>	32
<i>Table 4. 3 Level of education of the respondents</i>	34
<i>Table 4. 4 Number of WhatsApp friends</i>	36
<i>Table 4. 5 Number of Days in a week the respondents use social media</i>	37
<i>Table 4. 6 Use for social media</i>	37
<i>Table 4. 7 Time Spent With Friends in a day</i>	38
<i>Table 4. 8 Social Networking Sites</i>	39
<i>Table 4. 9 Social Media Impact on Family Relations</i>	39
<i>Table 4. 10 Social Media Impact on Interpersonal Relationships</i>	39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2. 1 Theoretical Framework on the Theory of Uses and Gratification 27
Figure 4. 1 Age Bracket of the respondents 33
Figure 4. 2 Social Media Usage..... 35

ACRONYMS

SNS's ----- Social Network Services

UGT----- Use and Gratification Theory

ABSTRACT

Social networking sites (SNS) have gained great popularity in Kenya in recent times. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, are some of the commonly used SNS in the country. This study sought to examine these social media platforms in order to establish if their usage has any impact on social interactions among family and household members within Limuru Town. Two main objectives which guided this research were: 1) To establish how social media platforms impact on social interactions within families. 2) To find out if social media platforms actually bring family members close and enhance interactions with the family. The study employed a descriptive survey design which involved questionnaires that were administered as research instruments. Limuru Town was used as the research site where a target population of 250 respondents was sampled owing to the fact that they have access to SNSs at their homes. In selecting the 50 respondents for the research, simple random sampling technique was applied.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Social media platforms are impacting the modern society in major way. This can mainly be attributed to the fast growth of internet which has greatly altered the traditional way of operating within the society. The two main screens: television and computer desktop, which have been dominating for a long time are swiftly being phased out by smaller screens such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, Ipad, Ipod among others, which have increasingly become popular in recent times.

The emergence of small screens has enhanced mobility of the mass media resulting to new trends in communication and information transmission. It is these new trends which can be visualized through the usage of cellphones and wireless laptops, also referred to as “social media,” which have completely revolutionized the modern world. Social media can generally be described as online modes of communication which involve using special techniques including conversation, sharing, linkage, participation, tagging among others.

Social media platforms have turned out to be an important part of our daily lives with more people using it as the main method of interacting and connecting socially across the globe be it between individuals, friends, relatives, spouses, through social networking which has greatly transformed and impacted communication and interactions within family and households.

The integration of social media in social settings such as family and households, influences social interactions in a major way among family and household members for instance: among siblings, between parents and their children or even between spouses.

Existing literature indicates that social media impacts social interactions within family and households in many diverse ways. According to Aarsand, (2007:235), social networking websites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube, have a key role in the daily lives of contemporary society.

Social media can be used positively to bridge digital and generational divides by enhancing interactions hence bringing close family members and different generations. Usage of social media in social settings such as family and households can result to privatization of family life, whereby there is an increase of individual family preferring to use technology independently as opposed to using it collectively, using most of their time interacting with virtual friends on social media platforms through chatting, sharing links, videos, posting among others, instead of taking time to communicate, share and bond with family members.

As a result, family relationships could be strained in the long run with close family and household members feeling ignored at the expense of the virtual world. Owing to the fact that social media is rapidly evolving and growing despite having to contend with varied multiple-faceted elements socially and culturally, there is need to closely monitor and analyze the development of social media, it's mode of operation as well as measure its potential on the family which is the integral social unit.

The main aim being to ensure that family and household members do not neglect family interactions after being swept by virtual interactions via SNSs. Social Networking Sites and social interactions in families and households were the key concerns in this research. The study set out to investigate, guided by the following research questions; how is social media impacting on social interactions within households? To establish if social

media actually brings together family members and increase social interaction amongst one another, or if it results to family disintegration instead.

Technology has greatly impacted the family unit in recent times with virtual social platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, among others, replacing physical communication and interactions among family members.

This research sought to investigate if the use of technology within a family home results in increasing privatization among individual family members and also to find out if more people are turning to virtual interactions at the expense of relationships with their fellow family members. It also sought to establish if the usage of SNSs in a family setting can result in closing generational gaps and bringing close family members.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although social media has managed to rapidly evolve into various online platforms, it also has diverse impacts based on how it is handled or mishandled. As part of the larger international community, Kenya is not exceptional to these forces as a result of globalization and digitisation. Some of the negative impacts resulting from SNSs misuse include creating generational gaps and privatization of individual family life. Social media has greatly enhanced communication and interactions by creating online platforms for social engagements among family and household members irrespective of age, distance or social status.

However, there is an emerging trend observed that, if mishandled, social media can also result into generational gap and privatization as opposed to cementing social ties within families. Most individuals are increasingly using most of their time on SNSs such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, and YouTube, communicating and

interacting with the virtual world while paying little or no attention at all to physical relations with other family members.

Face-to-face conversations among individual family members are slowly fading out where you find most individuals engrossed in their own virtual world and circle of online friends who they would rather share with their psychological and emotional challenges. As a result, there is a disconnect within a family unit between those members who have access and are active in SNSs and those who are not. Individuals who are left out of these online interactions are likely to feel disregarded.

This can be detrimental to the family unit considering that interaction and communication is a paramount segment of social unit since it creates a sense of belonging. Social media platforms also play a vital role in enabling social interactions for instance between individuals who are physically separated by distance or live in different geographical locations. Obsession with virtual relations poses a threat to the family unit in general for instance where persons use almost all their time chatting and communicating with online relations as opposed to fellow family members. This can cause physical social ties to weaken and even break eventually. Cheal, (2002:35), states that contemporary society has resulted in personal relationships being complex and diversified leaving hence causing “increasing uncertainties regarding the future of family.” DiMaggio et al. (2001), holds that people are also replacing “interactions with weak ties” online for time spent with close family members.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between social media within households and its influence on social interactions between individuals

within Limuru town. The study intended to investigate the impact of social media on social interaction within households, to explore if social media brings family members together and increase social interaction among individual family members or if it causes a family divide instead.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To find out how social media impacts on social interaction within households.
- ii. To determine if social media brings family members together and increase social interaction among individual family members or if it causes a family divide instead,

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How do social media impact on social interaction within households?
- ii. Do social media bring family members together and increase social interaction among individual family members, or does it lead to a family divide instead?

1.5 Justification of the Study

This research is significant in contributing to the sociological world as it allows a greater understanding and understanding of society today. Social networking and its impact on family social interaction is an obvious subject and a point that has become very critical for the current world.

It is through these inquiries that one of the most important structures of society is investigated in greater depth, the home and the family, and society operates in this institution. This research will investigate the role of social media in the creation of social interactions in family life and the household.

This research is respected and merited to provide society and individuals with additional knowledge on modern lives and to examine the effect of social media on society today. This study would provide a better understanding of family members' social experiences in the household and appreciate them. The research would help to find answers to the social media phenomena of digital media technology. Ultimately, this study can give individuals greater insight into the conditions of social interaction. This is because the progress of the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified social media use as a means of communication worldwide.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the impact of social media on social interactions within family and household. The target population from Limuru town, Kiambu County, where a sample of 250 households was randomly selected, provide respondents for the study. The research monitored the frequency of the respondents' use of the three social networks; Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp three days a week; Monday, Wednesday and Friday for a period of one month. Limuru town was suitable for this study due to its proximity to Nairobi with most people being technologically savvy. It is a semi urban area with electricity and internet access. The major limitation with this study is getting individuals or households who have access to internet because they have to be connected or buy data bundles. This may be expensive to some individuals.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Some challenges were experienced while undertaking this study. There was the issue of confidentiality of the respondent where some respondents were unwilling to disclose vital facts for fear of reprisal or identification. However, measures were

undertaken to assure the respondents of their confidentiality of the information he or she gave including concealing their identity. The second limitation that arose was unavailability of adequate funds to undertake the research work. Finance is an important resource in the success of any study. Owing to the limited funds, the study was limited to a small area-Limuru town. Time also affected the findings. For instance, due to limited time allocated for the study, it was not be possible to interview each member of the household in order to get adequate information.

1.7 Operational Terms Definition

Family It refers to a group of people who live "in permanent arrangement with the walls of their homes, isolated from the rest of the planet." Cheal, (2002:4).

Household The household is referred to as a group of people who live under the same roof and share basic accommodation facilities." A household can also be described as a wider range of living arrangements," which may be used to describe any person in a social setting that may be composed of family members, extended family members and friends.

Social Media The term 'social media' also referred to as 'new media' can be explained as a group of technologies associated with rapid dissemination of information through online platforms which are highly accessible.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter begins by focusing on scholarly works that address the influence of social media on social interaction in families and households in Kenya. It also contains the theoretical framework.

2.1 The Family

Lalor et al. (2009) clarified that the family is paramount to young people because it is the main source of love, safety, identity and affiliation." The indigenous concept of the "nuclear family" comprising husband, wife, one child or more and household, as stated by Cheal, were often interchanged, regarded as "practical purposes" (2002). In reality, the Kenyan family unit has undergone a series of changes recently, very diverse from the conventional concept of a family, which resulted in many types of family units being created. This is why a household and a family are listed as two separate organisations.

As explained by Cheal, (2002) the present day society has diversified and complicated interpersonal relationships leading to an upsurge of uncertainties regarding the future of family setups. On the other hand, Scott, (1997) argues that "indigenous nuclear family and households" are on a sharp decline as people are increasingly becoming individualistic with the time spent together among members of the family and households decreasing more and more.

Turtiainen et al. (2007), argues that it is on that premise the family position in the society has been transformed with the family units and family values being eroded. Other than the emergence of individualism and erosion of family values, social media has been amalgamated into the daily routines of people even more than before. Increasing number

of women joining the workforce, declining birth rate, fluctuations in the rate of marriages, an upsurge in the number of divorced couples as well as the number of children born outside wedlock are among dynamic factors impacting on Kenyan contemporary society according to Lalor et al. (2009).

O'Carroll (2008) says that the contemporary family is also facing a squeeze of time, as well as changing family dynamics. In recent years, Kenya's society has undergone an increasingly rapid, fast pace and time intensity rhythmic transformation in all aspects such as working lives of people, as seen by O'Carroll (2008). This directly influences the dynamics of family life and how the family unit functions every day. Turtiainen et al. (2007) reaffirms further that developments in working life, including the labour market, have dramatically changed family life in such a way that family members spend little time together again.

Cowan (1976) observes that the only social functions which families collectively engage in in the modern society include: enabling socialization among children, consumption and tension management. He concludes that “modern families are in trouble” due to diminishing functions among family members. Another dynamic shift is the shifts in family relations, which have triggered a transition in society from primary links transmitted through family or kinship to selective relations, chosen through contacts between family members and non-kin members, according to Pahl and Spencer (2004). These partnerships have varying degrees of involvement regardless of whether they are selective or not.

Family members, for instance, may feel obligated towards each other whereas friends, on the other hand, are taken as selective relationships which must not only be

developed but also maintained. There has been an emergence of a household setting which is entirely different from the family unit courtesy of the reorientations of familial relationships, increased individualization, a drastic decrease in the time spent among family members alongside transformation in the day-to-day activities. Scott, (1997) holds that relationships among individual family members have weakened over time with idea of household replacing the notion of indigenous family. One of the main merits of conducting this research is the view of household as an entirely different entity from a family setup.

2.2 The Household

This research sought to investigate the household in general which is inclusive of other individuals who are outside the family unit. The household is a wider collection of living arrangements, according to Lalor et al. (2009). Furthermore, Scott (1997) describes a household as a group of persons who live under one roof and share basic accommodation. This means that a household includes people who are in the social world who may include the nuclear family, the extended family and friends. It is clear from this explanation that the household concept is expanded to include more people who do not have to be inter-related. The goal of this research is to decide whether social media affects parental and child contact, siblings, or friends' social interactions.

2.3 Communication and Interaction in a Social System

Mesch, (2006) explains that a family is a social system with a collective identity resulting from shared memories of being together which are made when members of the family spend time together during meals, communication or even games. According to Smith et al. (2009) communication is a transactional process which is symbolic. It can also be described as the process of creating and sharing meanings which plays a crucial role in

individual relationships for proper functioning of family or household. Families who spend their time together participating in joint events are communicated better, as Mesch (2006) has observed. For the other party, lack of contact in a family can have a negative effect on family engagement and cohesion, thus creating strained ties between household members. Therefore, contact plays an important role in improving family relations during recreation and various functions (Smith et al, 2009).

The study further explores the effect of the use of social media on social interactions and contact between individual family members and household members. In contemporaneous culture, familial dynamics have been redefined, resulting in a modern household definition that is a separate entity from the family unit. The study also examines main disparities between family and household and the significance of social and communication in a social context. It also highlights the effect of social media on communication and social interaction between people in a family.

2.4 New Media in Household

Mesch, (2006), defines the mechanism of household 'domestication.' According to him, domestication mainly refers to technologies that allow a household to operate on a daily basis and alter the culture and interaction between family patterns. This method, however, can also be connected to the incorporation of social media into the family. "Families with access to communication and information technology differ from families without them not only in access to technology but also in family dynamics," states Mesch, (2006). Church et al. (2010) claimed that social media has become a significant part of contemporary life and is largely incorporated into daily household activities.

The emergence of social media has had a profound effect in many respects on contemporary culture, including the impact on everyday personal relations. Mesch (2006) argues that the incorporation of new technology into family and household will improve the quality of family relationships. New media and emerging technology, regardless whether they are willing or not to access it, have become a primary part of children's everyday lives in the Western World. The same applies to Kenya, which has become a fundamental part of daily life, particularly among young people and the elites, with social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter.

As Venkatesh and Vitalari (1985), have observed technology, which has since become one of the pillars of future social conduct, has influenced household lives in various ways. Families and families were forced to adapt in different ways to social change triggered by the integration of the social media that led to a significant change. Venkatesh and Vitalari (1985) suggested that social change is the mechanism by which the roles and structure of a social system are transformed.

The contact between family members and a household is a significant impact of technology. Church et al. (2010) hold that if not controlled by the portability or the condition of particular devices, modern human interaction is mediated. Another influence of social media on families and households is the emergence of digital split.

2.5 Digital Divide

As a generational difference between masters and those who are unfamiliar with digital technology, Aarsand, (2007) defines a digital divide. The disparity between people who know and people who do not know how to behave in a digital world according to

Aarsand (2007) can generally be called a digital divide. He also claims that children and adolescents are expected to grow a wider range of awareness and a broader knowledge base on the use of technology by parents and grandparents. Young people may use the generational and digital divide, in turn, to distinguish behaviours such as "non-adult areas," in which adults are unable to enter.

Adults may also use the digital divide as a way to connect with their children to achieve a social interaction with children. Thus, social interaction will build and maintain a digital divide of this type. It can strengthen communication and social interactions within a household or it can interfere with communication leading further to personalisation. The definition was central to the questions of research attempting to detect the increase or decrease in social interaction in new media technology within a household.

2.6 Social Media

The term new media or social media can be explained as a group of technologies associated with fast dissemination of information through online platforms which are highly accessible. It consists of mobile and websites applications which allow individual users and corporations to engage, create and even share existing or user-generated content in digitized environments through multifaceted communication. New media is a representation of an elemental metamorphosis into multiple dialogues within a community from monologues in media broadcast. This transformation mirrors the process of internet revolution dubbed as Web 2.0.

Web 2.0 is the simple repositioning which at the beginning of the 21st century brought the Internet through a storm. It turned the knowledge producer-consumer model

into an all-user network that can use and generate content on the Internet. O'Reilly, (2005) is possibly one of the most influential academics who has clarified the emergence of social networking and the Web 2.0 revolution.

Twitter on Facebook and MySpace (simplified social networking programmes), blog (individuals or groups which produce continuing narratives of information), Google Maps (mapping software that enables sharing of collaborative point of interest), Wikis (information collections, and productions which are collaborative) eBay reputation (user reviews which are performance-based), Flickr (highly accessible software for photo sharing) YouTube (a video sharing software which is community-based), and Amazon user reviews are among key examples of Web 2.0 new media technologies.

A technological application must be first of its kind for it to be considered a Web 2.0 technology. It ought to be an original not a copied version meaning the technology in question comprises of collection and organization of collaborative information and data sharing characteristics. Solis, (2008) explains that all social media varieties share a common inbuilt ability of enabling social behavior by using dialogue and multiple ways which create avenue for discovering and sharing new information

Social Media also known as new media technologies began in the United States (US) at the start of the 21st Century and has since been growing rapidly and spreading exponentially. It has taken quite a short time for new media to evolve to a vital part of media aspect from an interesting emerging trend of communications. The first phase of the social media (2000-2005) spreads primarily in first- world countries that have technological influence such as large broadband speed, the number of computers per person and the complete freedom of communication and speech guaranteed by the

Government. Social media also got established during its early stages in Australia, Europe, North America, Japan and South Korea. At the beginning of 2005, it reached developing countries which had started growing both economically and technologically, spreading to non-democratic countries as well. It has since spread to the Middle East, Persian Gulf States, China, South East and Central America, and Northern Africa.

According to Emanuela, (2011) social media has evolved differently from other communication revolutions whereby media diffusion took place first in developed countries and only spread later on to developing countries. The new media is spreading globally simultaneously even to some parts of the world which are marginalized. Through social media, the areas are made aware of their freedom of expression get to share their customs, thoughts and even endorse them. The social genre and classes is the only remaining segment of discrimination considering that new media has significant characteristics.

Social media users can communicate to each other using a wide range of content such as texts, images, photos, sounds, videos among others. They can also use social media for strengthening networks which include families, culture, professional, religious, social and political associations in order to create and reinforce their social identity. As opposed to traditional media whose communication flow is one-way, the new media is seen to have extremely high levels of user interactions. Users of social media can simultaneously be both senders of information and recipients, content creators and users.

While some studies classify text messages as a social media type, it does not have collaboration features that allow the sharing and coordination of other forms of technology. While some studies classify text messaging as a type of social networking,

text messaging is not the same as other applications for interactive knowledge exchange and organisation. In this respect, text messages may be best suited for the category of new media instead of the category of social media.

In addition, cellular text messaging may be part of a wider technological revolution. Therefore, social media tools are a distinct part of the disaster management mechanism. Webster recounted his experience during the relief effort in Haiti in his report. During Operation Unified Response's first weeks, he said that the Blackberry text messages were the fundamental communication tool, mainly because they were the most effective way to communicate with UN offices, US government agencies and the NGOs organising relief efforts.

This study sought to investigate social media technologies specifically the potential threats and counter threats within a family. According to Ellison and Boyd (2007) social network are websites services which allow online users to create profiles, display various user connections, search and traverse through the list of connections. The uniqueness of SNSs does not come from the fact that it allows users to meet strangers, but because it helps online users to articulate and enhance visibility of their social networks. Haythornthwaite, (2005) explains that this feature enables connections to be made between individual that would have otherwise not be made. Although it is not the main objective, the connections are often between individuals who share offline connections (latent ties).

Online platforms enable individual users and corporations to employ technological infrastructure which in existence in order to come up with their own virtual communities as explained by Lavrusik, (2009). Most people, however, mostly the young people who

were born in the digital era spend over eight hours a day on average exposed to social media according to Lin, (2008). New media technologies enhance social interaction among family and household members as well as a shared experience which is created when a family member, mostly the expert, gets to teach other members on how to use social media as observed by Morrison and Krugman, (2001). It also encourages individuals to socially interact be it inside or outside the household. According to Mesch (2006), social media is a way of interacting with the family and working together with their children, where parents can communicate online.

Mesch (2006) further holds that other than the internet becoming a shared activity within a household, it is also able to unify the family by shifting back into the home most family activities such as shopping, learning and working. Moreover, DiMaggio et al. (2001) hold that social media strengthens social ties by enabling users to contact family members and friends more frequently which shows the essential role played by the internet in social relationships among individuals. According to Yoon (2006) the internet enables constant contact between family members which helps young people to reignite and intensify relationships within the family.

Individuals are not only able to strengthen connections with their nuclear family but also with the extended family as well as explained by Yoon, (2006). Social media can be defined as a new type of online interaction which according to Wellman et al, enhances offline ties (2001). The contact lacunes in face-to-face meetings are made possible. DiMaggio et al. (2001) claims that social networking is a means of improving family and friendship relationships and closeness.

That is why frequents for youths to regularly use the Internet play an integral part in the success of their connect with their parents or friends, as well as in their relationship of each party (Mesch 2006). He also noticed that young people with weak use of the Internet had stronger connections than those with strong Internet uses with their parents and friends.

2.7 Social Interaction facilitation via New Media

Mesch, (2006) states that technology changed the value of family time and has many advantages for the household and family. For example by providing varied access to information, to social interactions and time allocations, the Venkatesh and Vitalari (1985) social media has created new opportunities for household members. Mesch (2006) claims that access to technology such as laptops and personal computers has made family time more permissible than ever before. This gives people the chance to work at home, speak and even communicate with each other regardless of their geography. In exchange, this increases the time spent together, talking and engaging socially. It can also distract people into the technological lonely world, which as Mesch (2006) describes demands their individual treatment.

It encourages people to engage in household activities, thus putting an effect on private actions in a family, according to Mesch (2006). The goal of this research was to decide whether social media promotes or hinders social interaction within the family. The social networks have changed how "people access entertainment, information, and the privatisation of social activities which were previously collectively held outside of the home" explains Morrison and Krugman (2001).

According to Plowman et al. (2008), a household is a significant learning place for children and elderly adolescents where authentic and cultural meaning and the role of technology can be engaged, observed and fostered. Children use technology to express themselves, connect, entertain themselves and work in their homes, as reported by Plowman et. to the (2008). In this way kids are prepared to live with and understand technology, as Plowman et al. explained, in which technology will play an important part (2008). He explains that the use of technology may therefore make a significant contribution to older children's intellectual and social growth.

Moreover, the use of social media helps in social interactions between household members and it is also one way to learn new skills, as Mesch explains (2006). He argues that online networks have proven to be a shared household practise that also strengthens social relations in families and households by going home. Online social media usage is part of digital media innovations that are immersed in the household and facilitate social interaction between people.

The use of social media helps to improve social connections, according to DiMaggio et al. (2001), by making users and their families and friends more regularly in touch with each other. This demonstrates the important role played by social media platforms in the improvement of social ties between people. The internet, explained by Yoon (2006), helps young people to restore and intensify family ties by continuously interacting between their members through the use of media. In addition, it helps people to improve their nuclear and extended Yoon connections (2006:158).

Social networking websites like WhatsApp are a modern way to connect online to improve offline contact (Wellman et al. 2001:438). The void in face-to-face contact and

meetings is filled. It is accomplished. DiMaggio et al. (2001) believes that social media is one of the ways to improve family connections and closeness. Mesch, (2006) states that frequency of people's everyday use of social media plays an important role in improving the consistency of their connections with their family and friends. From an observation by Mesch, who have a limited access internet, connections with their relatives and friends are stronger than the children with strong Internet access, as opposed to peers with high Internet use.

2.8 New Media as Impediment to Social Interaction

Obviously, current research indicates that social media can positively influence individuals through the promotion of and encouragement of social interaction within the household. In the other hand, social networks have a negative effect on household and social experiences, such as childhood technology (Plowman et al. 2010). This applies to a perception in which childhood is fundamentally different from the past than in contemporary society. According to Plowman (2010), the current technology-driven culture has contributed to a "toxic" childhood.

This is because children are vulnerable to threats due to the daily use of social media. Child social development, for example, is being jeopardised by greater social isolation, as children tend to be alone, threatening their development of linguistic, academic and creativity. Your well-being is also under pressure as more children spend time indoors and are at risk of obesity. Plowman et al. (2010) found that contact opportunities between community members that encourage emotional growth will be minimal. This suggests that social media is a big point in this research that has a negative effect on the social relationships between individuals and family members.

In order to further strengthen this point, Bovill and Livingstone (2001) note that children spend longer in their bedrooms in their second half of the 20th century. A dormitory culture has recently grown, meaning more kids and young people spend a good deal of their free time in social media instead of spending their time in a family, community or family environment. As Bovill and Livingstone (2001) show young people spend more time in their medium-rich dwellings to individualise and to feed.

Children and young people are gradually excluded and personalised from society and spend less time with others. The effect on family communication and social interactions has been immense. There is also a negative link, as Bovill and Livingstone (2001) have noted, between time spent in the bedroom and free family time. However it can be argued, instead of family members, that the atmosphere of bedrooms actually encourages social connections with mates. The media rich dorm opened a new room, according to Bovill and Livingstone (2001) to connect with friends rather than families. The new media promotes social contacts outside of a family group, which Bovill and Livingstone 2001 noted, rather than encouraging young people to spend time alone. The social media has also become a centre of peer engagement, thus reducing the social contact between family members by taking them indoors to the external world.

As has been described in the Mesch (2006) web case, the length of time that kids and dates work with everyone for daily events is minimal. The use of social media, therefore, prevents social isolation by eroding social capital, encouraging users to flee to artificial environments such as DiMaggio et al (2001). He says that people often replace time spent with close friends and families with bad social media relationships. Therefore as Mesch (2006) clarified, the social media inside the house is negatively related to the

spending time with the family. He says that the digital media are also perceived as an activity that takes the time for young people to work with their families (2001).

Therefore, the use of social media at home, according to Mesch (2003), is positively connected to family conflicts and family connections. Wellman et al. (2001) indicate that social contact decreases with internet development and isolation and depression.

2.9 How New Media Impacts Social Interaction within Households

The use of social media in a household can either increase or decrease social interactions among members of a household. Buckingham (2000) outlined contradictory claims about the effect of social networking sites on children. In the first argument, he explains the negative viewpoint regarding social media which has been seen in the past as the death of childhood. He argues that social media undermines the individuality of children, exploits their vulnerability and eventually destroys their innocence.

Aarsand, (2007) leans more on the positive point of view stating that new media technologies, apart from equipping children with a powerful kind of media literacy, they also provide children with an array of fresh opportunities for self-fulfillment and creativity. New media technologies also have a great potential as a medium of education regarding learning. According to Aarsand (2007:251) can also be beneficial to a family especially when it is used as meeting and interaction point for different generations.

Aarsand (2007), Buckingham (2000), and Aarsand (2007) all explore how digital media technology can be used to put families and generations closer together. This indicates that other than enhancing generational divide, social media can also help in

maintaining relationships in a family. This is in agreement with what this study aimed to establish: if social media indeed brings together members of a family.

In contrast to this, the outcome of the study could show an increasing privatization where there is an increase of individuals family members preferring to use new media technologies alone as opposed to using it collectively with other family members. Whether social media has the potential to undermine natural interactions within a family as argued by Buckingham, (2000), is among aspects of new media technologies which this research seeks to investigate.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework demonstrates the theories which were used in this study. They include the use and gratification theory, hypodermic needle model as well as Klapper Reinforcement also known as limited effects theory.

2.10.1 Theory of Uses and Gratification

This is a very essential theory as it has a major contribution in present day's studies on communication. This theory is used as an approach to establish the reason why users have preference on a particular genre of media. The research intended to establish how the use of social media platforms impacts on students' performance academically as well as social interactions among them, by focusing on WhatsApp.

The theory proved useful in that it made it possible to understand the reason why students spend long hours on social media platforms, what gratification is sought by them and if they eventually find that gratification. What is more, using this theory, it was possible to understand the effects derived from using a specific social media have on the user.

Information, seeking self-status, entertainment and socializing are among the main uses and gratification factors of SNSs as outlined by Park et al. (2009). Similar factors such as the social needs, the need for information and entertainment were also identified by LaRose and Eastin (2004) who according to them are the most prevalent. UGT stands out among other theoretical perspectives through its argument that it is the audience responsibility to select their preferred media which can enable them to achieve gratification by meeting needs or desires. Based on this argument, UGT can be seen to imply an existing competition between media and other sources for the gratification of viewers.

Theory has many assumptions including the public has a constructive, media-focused usage, initiative to connect need-reward to a medium-specific option lies with the audience member, media compete with other resources to meet the needs, people are sufficiently aware of their media use and of their preferences and motivation such that researchers can provide accurate information.

Tomas E. Ruggiero is among contemporary scholars in the field of communication who have endeavored to understand how different forms of communication which are computer based have mushroomed and rapidly spread successfully using UGT. He explains that, at the beginning of every medium of mass communication for instance: newspapers, television, radio including the current internet world, a topnotch approach theoretically is provided by UGT. According to him, the potential of emerging types of media need to be analysed on their basis to provide new gratifications and uses including unsynchronized communication, hypertextuality, ability to allow interactions as well as demystification.

On the other hand, LaRose et al. use UGT to explain the use of the Internet by means of a socio-cognitive context in order to eliminate uncertainties resulting from the homogenization and use of the media as a result of gratification only. Furthermore these scientists created interventions for self-disparagement and the correlating of UGT to the negative effects of online actions, such as Internet addiction.

2.10.2 Magic Bullet Theory

The magic bullet theory is also referred to as model of transmission belt, hypodermic needle or hypodermic-syringe. According to this model, a recipient receives directly and completely accepts a message which is intended. The behaviorism of the 1930s is however deeply ingrained in this theory making it outdated in the contemporary world.

Most scholars disagree with the theory of communication effects which are directly influenced. The fact that nature of humans ideologies of the time form the basis of magic bullet theory instead of empirical findings from research, could largely be the reason. This model assumed that biologically-based instincts controlled people uniformly and that people react more or less uniformly to whatever 'stimuli' came along according to Lowery & De Fleur, (1995).

Another assumption of this theory is that, a message from media are “fired bullets” from a gun “the media” into the head of the recipient as argued by Berger, (1995) hence named magic bullet theory. According to this theory, the media injects its messages straight into the passive audience which in turn is then affected by those messages as argued by (Croteau, Hoynes 1997).

Croteau, Hoynes (1997) argue that the public is considered as a “sitting duck” because it cannot escape from the media's influence. The two models generally imply an existing vulnerability of the public from messages directed to it as a result of inadequate communication tools and limited research on the effects of media on the public as argued by Davis, Baron (1981).

2.10.3 Klapper Reinforcement or Limited Effects Theory

This theory was introduced by Joseph Klapper at Colombia University in 1960. Klapper got concerned that average people were exaggerating the power of media and created what he referred to as theory of Phenominist. According to Klapper, psychological and social factors for instance strongly held beliefs, education, group memberships, social status, among others are more powerful than media as it hardly impacts directly. The theory incorporates a key argument that primary media influence is to reinforce, but not to change existing behaviours and attitudes, hence the name Klapper reinforcement theory. The scholar argues that media in general, encourages people to continue behaving the way they are accustomed to already and maintain their usual beliefs by acting as agents of existing conditions as opposed to creating abrupt change and disrupting society. According to him, with exception to circumstances which are extremely strange, media has far too many barriers to influence the occurrence of any drastic changes.

Media, as argued in this theory, has no sufficient capacity to impact on the audience because its functioning usually takes place through and among an array of mediating influences and variables. It further argues that, while these mediating factors

typically render mass communication as a contributory agent, they are not the sole cause the process of reinforcing the existing conditions. Media is more likely to reinforce than to change irrespective of the condition or the effect in question be it individual or social.

What is more, the theory by Klapper holds that the functioning of media occurs in change service in which one of the two conditions which he outlines, can be in existence. Mediating factors which exist in inoperative condition is a direct effect while an impulsion towards change is the existing mediating factor in a reinforced condition. Klapper, however, does not exclude media from having direct effects on the audience. Mass communication seems to produce direct effects in certain situations by directly serving particular psychophysical functions.

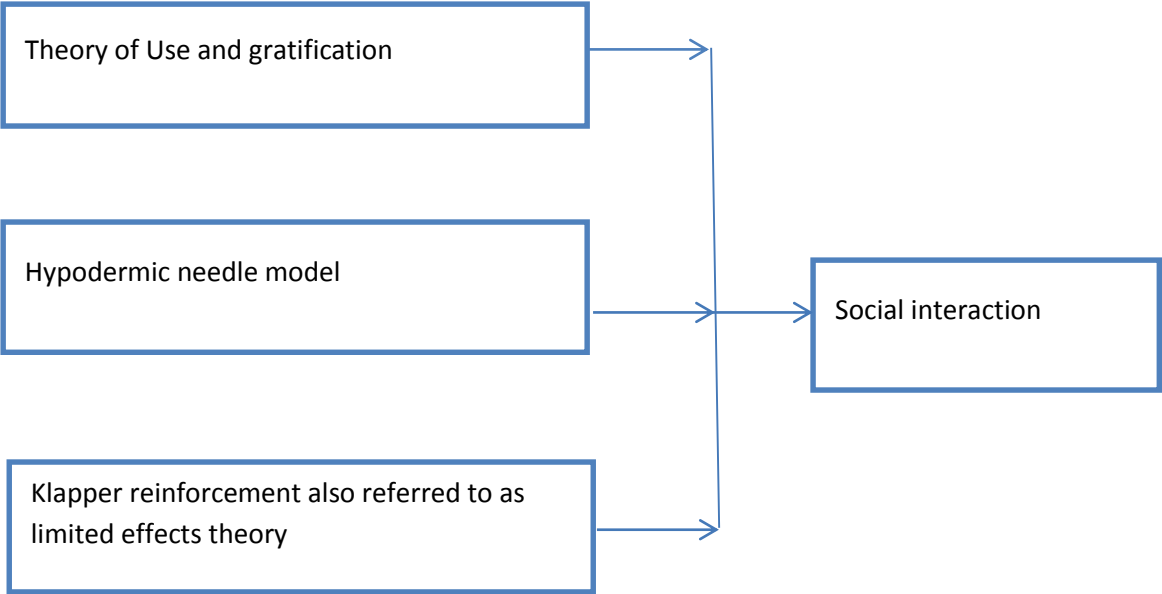


Figure 2. 1 Theoretical Framework on the Theory of Uses and Gratification
The impact of Social Networking Sites is illustrated by Figure 2.1 above, which shows what gratification is sought by users of media and if that gratification is actually obtained. Moreover, this theory helps to understand the effects resulting from a particular

gratification, have on the media user. According to Park et al. (2009), information, socializing, entertainment and self-seeking status are the major uses and factors of gratification for users of SNS. Similar factors such as need for socializing, entertainment and seeking information are also outlined by LaRose and Eastin (2004) as the most prevalent.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

In this chapter, an analysis was carried out on the research methods employed by the researcher. The methodologies covered include sample definition and sampling, forensic tools, test design and data analysis procedures. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were employed. Such two research approaches are uniform because they establish harmonious economic data, specific observations and suggestions of the trend being treated according to the Mugenda (2003).

Measures, methods and designs generating quantifiable or discrete numerical information are applied in quantitative analysis. The researchers in this study used questionnaires. On the other hand, by applying a qualitative approach, the researcher may obtain comprehensive data. The data obtained by qualitative research are often classified in terms of words, as argued by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). For the purposes of this study, the researchers used focus group discussions.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1. Descriptive Survey Research Design

Orodho, (2003) explains descriptive survey research as an information collection method through administering questionnaires or interviewing individuals from the selected sample. This method is commonly used to collect information regarding people's habits, opinions, attitudes, or any other type of social or education issues such as the use of SNS as argued by Orodho and Kombo, (2002).

3.2 Research Population

According to Mugenda, (2003), a population can be explained as a group of individuals, objects or events which have a common characteristic that can be observed. In this research, the population to families and households within Limuru town.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

For the purposes of this study, the population comprised of 250 households in within Limuru town. A sample comprising of 50 households which were selected by the use of simple random sampling method was used.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

In this Study, primary methods of collecting data such as questionnaires and personal interviews, were employed. The researcher was able to capture original, first hand data from the responses of the interviewees.

3.6 Research Instruments

Analysis instruments refer to the data collection objects used by the researcher. In this study research methods were used as focus group discussions and questionnaires. Due to their objectivity and their ability to gather information from a large population as easily as possible, questionnaires were given priority over other methods of data collection. The researcher used questionnaires that were self-administered.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Descriptive statistics was applied to the data collected in this study. In explaining social media impact on social interactions within households, variability and measures of central tendency were deployed. To illustrate the types of variability, bar charts, frequency tables and graphs were used.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

In this chapter, data analysis and presentation was dealt with. The main objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between social media within households and its influence on social interactions between individuals within Limuru town. The researcher used figures and tables which summarized the collective views and reactions of the respondents, in order to simplify the discussions.

4.2 Response Rate

A target group of 50 participants was used in the analysis. Of the respondents, 43 completed and returned their questionnaires at 86.0%. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) claim that a 50% response rate is optimal for analysis and reporting; 60% is decent and 70% and higher is very strong. The response rate for this study was therefore excellent based on this assertion and was therefore suitable for interpreting and analysing data.

Table 4. 1 Response rate

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percent (%)
Response	43	86.00%
Non-response	7	14.00%
Total	50	100.00%

4.3 Pilot Test Results

In order to develop validity in order to determine how each item is important as a research instrument with respect to goals, the research instrument was provided to two experienced social media experts. In scale 1 (very relevant) to 4, the research instruments are classified (not very relevant). The Validity Index (CVI) was applied to assess validity. The CVI was gathered by the experts by taking the total number of items 3 and 4 to be

determined and then divided by the total number of items. There was a CVI of 0.747. The coefficient of validity of at least 0.70 is appropriate as a legitimate research according to Oso and Onen (2009). The adopted research instrument is therefore valid in this review.

Scale-like objects on which the questionnaires were answered were used. By applying the SPSS to the reliability review, Cronbach's alpha was determined. Factors derived from dichotomous sources can also be explained in terms of reliability (questions with two possible answers), multi-punkt or rating scales (scale: 1 = bad, 5 = excellent).

More exact produced size is a higher value. Coefficient 0.7 is sufficient according to Cooper & Schindler (2008). Questions from 13 respondents were included in this study. It was concluded that the testing tools had a reliability coefficient that was fair, provided that all the alpha coefficients were larger than 0.7.

Table 4. 2 Reliability Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Social media reliance and usage	0.79	9
Nature and patterns of social media usage	0.77	17
Social networking sites and interpersonal relationships	0.78	13

4.4 Demographic Information

The research also attempted to determine whether demographic information affect social connections between people who use social media. The key demographic details of the interviewees applied in this study were gender, education and age.

4.4.1 Gender of respondents

The demographic details by gender is shown in Table 4.3 below. Idioming the gender of the participants was essential in the studies to examine whether gender stability existed in the positions identified by respondents. The results are presented in the following table. The study found that most participants were 72.09% male and 27.91%

female equal to 72% and 28 were rounded to the next highest total. Therefore, the use of SNS in Limuru was developed in men.

4.4.2 Age Bracket of the respondents

The investigator wanted to establish whether the participants were old sufficient to deliver important answers referring to relationships between social media in residential communities and their effect on social interactions among individuals.

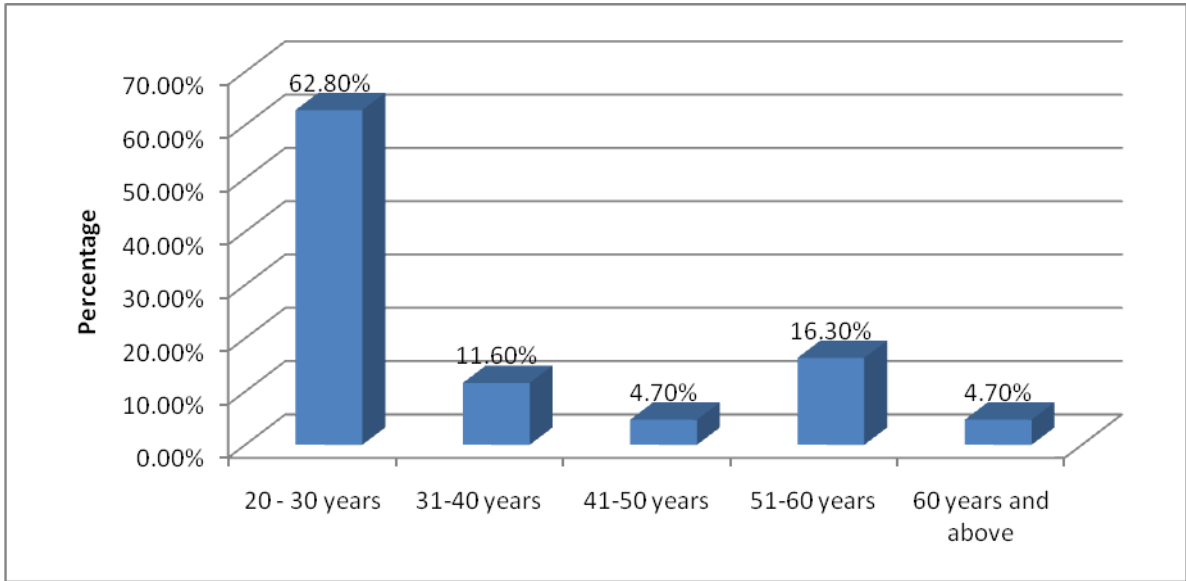


Figure 4. 1 Age Bracket of the respondents

The respondents were required to indicate their age where the research findings indicated that majority of the respondents at (62.8%) were in the age bracket of between 20 - 30 years. Majority of the respondents at 16.3% were found to be between 51 and 60 years, while those aged between 31- 40 and above made up 11.6%. Those aged 41 – 50 years and 60 years and above made up the remaining 4.7% respectively. According to the findings, it was indicated that the respondents were old enough to provide responses which were not only valuable but also those that pertained to the relationship between

social media usage within households and its influence on social interactions between individuals.

4.4.3 Level of education of the respondents

The table below shows the respondents level of education.

Table 4.3 Level of education of the respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary education	17	39.50%
Diploma	5	11.60%
Bachelor’s degree	13	30.20%
Master’s degree	10	23.30%
Total	43	100.00%

The purpose of the study was to determine students' educational levels. The study findings were as shown in the above table 4.3. From the results, majority at 39.5 percent had secondary education followed by 30.2 percent who indicated that they had bachelor’s degree, 23.3 percent indicated that they had attained master’s degree and those with diplomas were at 11.6 percent. Majority of the respondents, based on the findings, had attained sufficient education levels to appropriately answer questions about social media usage within households and its influence on social interactions between individuals.

4.5 Social Media Reliance and Usage

The researcher aimed to establish if the respondents use SNS in order to determine the relationship between social media usage within households and social interactions among individuals. From the research findings, all the respondents indicated to using SNS as it was a major requirement for the respondents in this study to be social media users.

The study also intended to identify the social media platforms which the respondents use

normally or have an active account with.

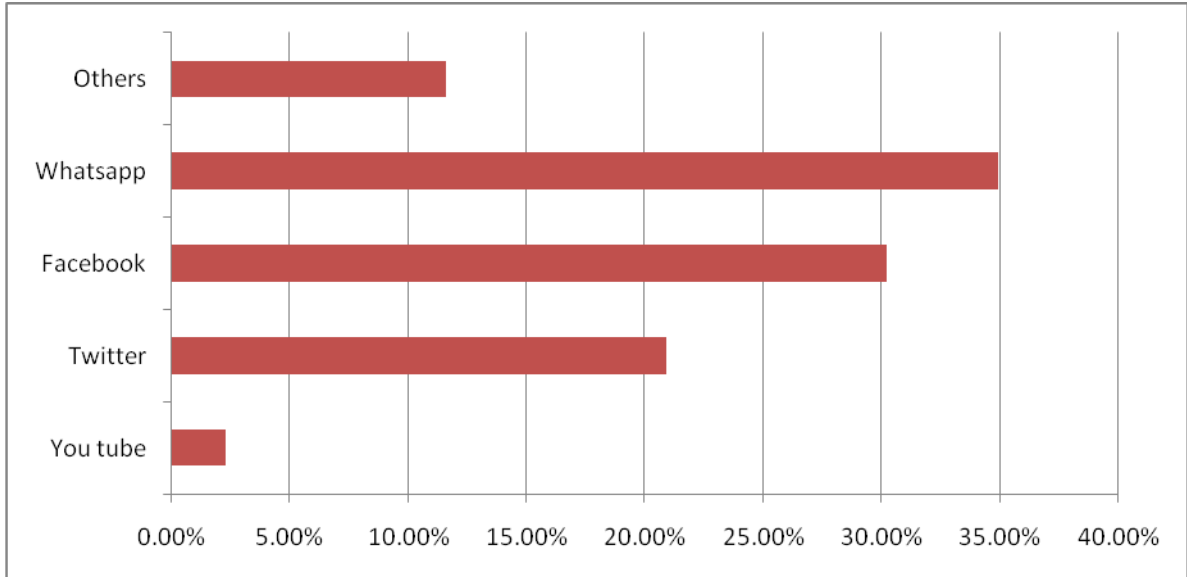


Figure 4. 2 Social Media Usage

According to the findings in figure 4.2 above, most of the respondents at 34.9% use WhatsApp as their social networking site, 30.2% of the respondents have a Facebook account, 20.9% of the respondents have a twitter account, 2.3% of the respondents have a YouTube account while the remaining 11.6% of the respondents indicated that they were using other social networking sites such as Badoo, LinkedIn and Togo.

From the findings, it was therefore concluded that majority of the respondents were using SNS and were able to give answers regarding to the relationship between social media within households as well as its influence on social interactions between individuals. The findings also indicated that despite having multiple social media applications on their phones, and computers, their favorite SNS was WhatsApp. In addition, the researcher wanted to investigate how often the respondents use online platforms when they are at home. The findings showed that the respondents use social

media platforms daily since they have access to the applications in their phones and computers at their places of work.

It was also established that most social media users spend most of their time online depending on the gadget type they are using, according to the research findings. Majority of the respondents spend up to one hour online socializing and talking to other people. The few who were working would spend at least five to ten minutes to just check for updates before logging out from their computers at work. Most respondents indicated that the major motivation for using social media is to keep up with the latest trends, get information as well as communicate with family and friends.

4.5.1 Number of WhatsApp friends

Investigations of number of WhatsApp friends the respondents have are shown in

Table 4.5 below:-

Table 4. 4 Number of WhatsApp friends

No. of Friends	Frequency	Percentage
50 or less	3	7.00%
50-100	4	9.30%
101-200	7	16.30%
201-300	13	30.20%
301-400	11	25.60%
More than 400	5	11.60%
Total	43	100.00%

The research findings showed that majority (30.2%) of the respondents have between 201 to 300 friends. Respondents who have 301 to 400 friends were at 25.6%, those with between 101- 200 friends were at 16.3%, while respondents with over 400 friends were at 1.6%. Respondents with between 50-100 friends were at 9.3% . The remaining 7.0% of the respondents indicated that they have 50 or less friends in their social networks.

4.6 Nature and patterns of social media usage

The researcher wanted to find out the nature and patterns of social media usage among the respondents and its influence on social interactions between individuals. Initially, the researcher decided to find out how many days in a week social networking websites are used by the respondent to connect at home with friends and family.

Table 4. 5 Number of Days in a week the respondents use social media

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	none
Facebook	19	9	5	6	4	0	0	0
Twitter	11	7	12	9	4	0	0	0
YouTube	1	0	3	5	0	0	7	27
WhatsApp	39	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

According to the research findings, majority of the respondents indicated to using SNS every day of the week mainly WhatsApp. Some respondents indicated using social media networks six days a week while others indicated to not using some social media platforms at all such as You-tube. Most respondents indicated that they do not use You-tube at all.

The researcher also wanted to find out what the respondents use social media networking sites for. The findings are as indicated in the table below.

Table 4. 6 Use for social media

Chatting with friends	100%	Find new friends	76.70%
Sending messages to friends	100%	Post interesting links for the people	88.40%
		in my life	95.30%
Commenting on friends updates	90.70%	Keeping up with news and events	86.00%
		For dating	%
Sharing photos and videos	62.80%	Keeping up with events in my friends	48.80%
		lives	%
		Keeping up with trending topics	90.70%
Sharing updates with friends	95.30%		%

Interacting with celebrities	44.20 %	Linking up with family members	95.30 %
------------------------------	---------	--------------------------------	---------

The findings of the study indicated that the respondents use social media for so many different reasons. From the findings majority of the respondents indicated that they use social media for messaging friends (100%) to chat (100%), to comment on updates (90.7%), share photos and videos (72.1%), Make plans (62.8%), Sharing updates (95.3%), search for new friends (76.7%) and posting links to my contacts (88.4%).

The findings also indicated that respondents use social media to keep tabs on events and news (95.3%), to date (86.0%), follow trending topics (90.7%) and Linking up with family members (95.3%). However, very few respondents indicated that they use social media for interacting with celebrities at (44.2%) and those who use it to follow events in the lives of friends at (48.8%).

Lastly, the researcher wanted to determine the amount of time respondents spend hourly with their friends online.

Table 4. 7 Time Spent With Friends in a day

Time	0-2 hours	2- 4 hours	4-6 hours	None
Friends online	37.20%	30.20%	32.60%	0

The findings of the study as shown in Table 4.7 above indicate that majority of the respondents spend between 0 to 2 hours a day with their friends online as indicated by 37.2%. On the other hand, 32.6% of the respondents indicated using 4 to 6 hours with their friends online while the remaining 30.2% indicated that they spend between 2 to 4 hours with their friends online.

4.7 Interpersonal Relationships and Social Media Platforms

The researcher wanted to find out what the respondents thought of these statements concerning social networking sites.

Table 4. 8 Social Networking Sites

Social Networking Sites	Percentage
Helps to contact friends that you can't meet every time?	97.70%
Helps to know fellow students better?	86.00%
Helps to connect with people with similar interests	95.30%
Helps in making new friends?	86.00%
Helps in socializing with contacts you would otherwise been unable to reach?	100%

The findings of the study indicated that social networking sites helps them to contact friends that they can't meet every time at (97.7%), that it helps them to know fellow students better at (86.0%), It helps them connect with people with similar interests (95.3%), helps in making new friends (86.0%) and lastly, it helps in socializing with contacts they would otherwise been unable to reach at (100%). The researcher also wanted to investigate how social media platforms impact on family relationships.

Table 4. 9 Social Media Impact on Family Relations

Social Media Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Strained	10	23.30%
Improved	29	67.40%
No effect	4	9.30%
Total	43	100.00%

The study found that the majority of respondents agrees 67,4% that the relationship with their family has changed in the social media, 23,3% of the respondents say that the social media has tightened their ties, while the remaining 9,3% said the social media has no impact on their family's relationship. The researchers also tried to find out how much they agree to the claims on the effect and interpersonal relationships of social networking sites.

Table 4. 10 Social Media Impact on Interpersonal Relationships

Social Media Impact	Mean	Standard deviation
Contact friends more online than while offline	4.51	1.027
Remove physical socializing time friends and family	4.18	0.734

Frequent conflict with parents for using social media during family time	3.13	0.597
Disagree with friends for being online when we meet.	3.64	0.802
I'm able to express myself easily online than face to face communication.	3.97	0.971
Social media brings me close to my virtual friends as opposed to those who don't use online platforms	4.32	0.879
I discuss latest trends and topics online with friends.	4.03	1.003
I fear not knowing what my friends know on social media.	4.52	0.956
I am free to open up about my secrets online	3.71	1.192

The findings of the study indicated that majority of the respondents are able to contact their friends more online than while offline (4.51). They also strongly agreed that SNS take away their face to face socializing time with friends and family (4.18). The respondents, however, disagreed to be in frequent conflict with parents for using social media during family time. The respondents at 3.64 also moderately indicated that they disagree with friends for being online when they meet.

The respondents also strongly agreed that it is easy for them to express themselves online than in face to face communication 3.97, that social media brings them close to their virtual friends as opposed to those who are offline (4.32) and they often discuss latest trends and topics online with friends (4.03). Respondents indicated fear of not knowing what their friends already know on social media (4.52) and that they are free to open up about their secrets online as indicated by a mean of 3.71.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This contains the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestion for further research. It is a synthesis of the entire study.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

It summarises the results of the research based on the study's main objective of exploring the relationship between social media in households and how social interaction within the culture of Limuru affects social media in households, whether it takes people into one another and increases social interaction among themselves. It summarises the results of the research.

5.2.1 Reliance and Use of Social media

The survey showed that while Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts are open, most respondents use WhatsApp as a social network platform. The results also reveals that respondents are using other social media sites such as LinkedIn, Togo and Badoo. Results concluded that a majority of the respondents were customers of social media outlets, which may offer answers on the connection between their household's use of social media and their effect on social interactions between people.

The study also shows that while respondents have multiple social network apps on their telephones and devices, they tend to use WhatsApp as their most favoured SNS. The findings also show that most people use social media everyday so they can easily access their communication gadgets such as telephones and computers at work through applications.

Concerning the amount of time spent on SNS, the findings showed that most social media users spend most of their time online depending on the type of gadget they use. For instance, respondents who use the phone to access SNS spend up to one hour talking to

other people and socializing online. Only a handful of a few people who were working could spend at least five to ten minutes checking for updates before logging out. Most respondents indicated that their main motivation for using social media is to get information, keep up with upcoming trends and to communicate with family and friends.

5.2.2 Nature and Pattern in Usage of Social Media

The findings of the study indicated that people use social networking sites every day of the week especially WhatsApp. Some respondents indicated using social media networks up to six days a week while others indicated that they do not use social media at all especially You-tube. Majority of the respondents indicated that they do not use you tube at all. Additionally, the findings showed that respondents use social media for diverse reasons for instance: for messaging friends, to chat, comment on updates, share photos and videos to make plans, sharing updates, search for new friends, posting links to their contacts, to keep tabs on events and news, to date, follow trending topics and interact with members of family.

However, very few respondents indicated to using social media to interact with celebrities follow events in the lives of friends. It also indicated that majority of the respondents spend between 0 to 2 hours a day chatting with their friends online

5.2.3 Interpersonal Relationships and SNS

According to the research findings, Social Networking Sites enable users to know fellow students better, contact friends that they can't meet every time, in socializing with contacts they would otherwise been unable to reach, connect with people with similar interests. Although social media has improved the relationship between the respondents and members of their families, the findings established that it has also strained family

relationship, while some SNS have no effect on the relationship of the respondents with their families.

The study found that it is easier for respondents to stay in contact with friends online rather than offline. It also noticed that SNS takes their face to face with friends and relatives, socialising time. The respondents, however, disagreed to be in frequent conflict with parents for using social media during family time. The respondents also strongly agreed that it is easy for them to express themselves online than in face to face communication, that social media brings them close to their virtual friends as opposed to those who are offline, they often discuss latest trends and topics online with friends and also indicated fear of not knowing what their friends already know on social media. Lastly, the respondents agreed to being free to open up about their secrets online.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes that majority of the respondents use WhatsApp as their Social Networking Sites, even though they have Facebook, YouTube and Twitter accounts. The study also found that some residents of Limuru town also use other Social Networking Sites such as Badoo, LinkedIn and To-go. Therefore, the findings concluded that most respondents were using social networking sites and could give answers pertaining to relationship between social media within households and its influence on social interactions between individuals.

Moreover, the study found that, despite having multiple social network applications on their phones and computers, the respondents' favourite social networking site was WhatsApp. Concerning the time spent on the social network sites, the study found

that majority of social media users usually spend most of their time online depending on whichever gadget they use.

Most people using phones spend up to 1 hour online chatting and socialising with other people. Just a few people who worked could spend five to ten minutes searching for updates just before signing out. The research concluded that social media uses mainly to connect, to keep up with the trends, and to be updated with family and friends. The results revealed that every day of the week people are mostly using WhatsApp social networking sites. Some respondents reported that they are using social networks six days a week while others reported that they are not using social media, particularly You-tube. Most of the respondents stated that the You-tube channel is not used.

The results of the study indicate that participants are using the media for speaking with their friends, sending messages to friends, updating friends, sharing images and videos, preparing friends and society organizations, sharing updates with friends, finding new friends, and posting interesting links for people in life. Respondents also use social media for news and activities, dates, trendy issues and connections with family members. They also use social media.

5.4 Recommendations for using Social Networking Sites

The study recommends that people should use social networking sites and the findings could also be used to give answers pertaining to relationship between social media within households and its influence on social interactions between individuals. Moreover, this study reveals that despite having multiple social network applications on their phones and computers, majority of people have a preference for WhatsApp. The study also recommends that people should use social networking sites every day of the

week especially WhatsApp considering that most people use social media networks for six days in a week while others indicated others do not use some social networking sites at all for example the Youtube-channel.

The study also recommends that respondents use social media to talk with their own friends. They send messages to their friends. They share updates with their friends. they share photos and videos. They make plans for friends / social groups and share updates with their friends. They often use social media to maintain news and activities, to date, to keep up with trends and to communicate with family members.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Research

Social media network usage has grown by leaps and bounds in recent times especially with the emergence of Covid-19-pandemic, which has seen an upsurge in online interactions due to limited social interactions. That said, there still gaps which future research can address for instance why individuals prefer some social networking sites over others, the impact of social media network usage on gender among others.

REFERENCES

- Aarsand, Pål André.(2007). "Computer and Video games in Family Life: The Digital Divide as a Resource in Intergenerational interactions." *Childhood*.
- Aarsand, Pål André and Karin Aronsson.(2009). "Gaming and Territorial Negotiations in Family Life." *Childhood*.
- Bovill, Moria and Sonia M. Livingstone.(2001). "Bedroom Culture and the Privatisation of Media Use" [online]. London: LSE Research Online.
- Buckingham, David. (2000). *After the death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Limited.
- Cheal, David J. (2002). *Sociology of Family Life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Church, Kate., Jenny Weight, Marsha Berry, and Hugh MacDonald. (2010). "At Home with Media Technology." *Home Cultures*.
- Cowan, Ruth Schwartz. (1976). "The "Industrial Revolution" in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20th Century." *Technology and Culture*.
- DiMaggio, Paul.,EszterHargittai, W. Russell Neuman and John P. Robinson. (2001). "Social Implications of the Internet." *Annual Review of Sociology*.27:307-336.
- Ellison, Nicole B., Charles Steinfield and Cliff Lampe.(2007). "The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. 12(4):1143-1168.
- Emanuela D., (2011) La Rete, strumento di partecipazione, mobilitazione e lotta, Gnosis – RivistaItalianadintelligence, vol. 2/2011, Roma.
- Kirkpatrick, D. (2011), *The Facebook Effects*. Oaks Publishers NY
- Lalor, Kevin, Áine de Róiste and Maurice Devlin.(2009). *Young People in Contemporary Ireland*.Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Lin, N.,Ensel, W. & Vaughn, J. (1981). Social resources and strength of ties. *American Sociological Review*, 46, 393-405
- Mesch, Gustavo S. (2006). "Family Relations and the Internet: Exploring a Family Boundaries Approach." *The Journal of Family Location*.
- Moore, Shaun. (2000). *Media and Everyday Life in Modern Society*.Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- O'Connor, Pat., Amanda Haynes and Ciara Kane.(2004). "Relational Discourses: Social Ties with Family and Friends." *Childhood*.11(3):361-382.
- O'Carroll, Aileen (2008). "Busy Ireland". Pp. 245-256 in *Belongings: Shaping identity in Modern Ireland*, vol. 6, *Irish Sociological Chronicles*, edited by M. P Corcoran and P. Share. Dublin: Institute of public Administration.
- O'Reilly, Tim. (2005). "What Is Web 2.0." O'Reilly Media.
- Pahl, Ray and Liz Spencer (2004). "Personal Communities: Not Simply Families of 'Fate' or 'Choice'." *Current Sociology*. 52(2):199-221.
- Plowman, Lydia., Joanna McPake and Christine Stephen. (2010). "The Technologisation of Childhood?Young Children and Technology in the Home." *Children & Society*.
- Scott, Christopher F., Richard A. Fabes and Patricia M. Wilson.(1989). "Family Television Viewing: Implications for Family Life Education." *Family Relations*.
- Turtiainen, Pirjo.,SakariKarvonen and OssiRahkonen. (2007). "All in the Family?The Structure and Meaning of Family Life among Young People." *Journal of Youth Studies*.

- Venkatesh, Alladi and Nicholas Vitalari. (1985). "Households and technology: The Case of Home Computers-Some Conceptual and Theoretical Issues." *Marketing to the Changing Household*.
- Wellman, Barry.,AnabelQuanHaase, James Witte and Keith Hampton. (2001). "Does the Internet Increase, Decrease, or Supplement Social Capital?" *American Behavioral Scientist*.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Hello my name is MARY WANGARI NYAMBURA. I am a Masters of Arts (MA) Degree at The University of Nairobi, School of journalism. I am conducting research on the ‘Influence of Social Media (WhatsApp) on social interactions in families and households’. This will approximately take between 15-25 minutes of your time. Total confidentiality of yours answers is assured.

SECTION A:

GENERAL INFORMATION

By the means of tick (√) kindly indicate an option that best describes you where appropriate. Also fill in the blanks where necessary.

1. Gender

- a) Female ()
- b) Male ()

2. Age Bracket

- a) 20 - 30 years ()
- b) 31 – 40 years ()
- c) 41 - 50 years ()
- d) 51-60 ()
- e) 60 and above ()

3. Level of Education

- a) Secondary Education ()
- b) Diploma ()
- c) Bachelor’s Degree ()
- d) Master’s Degree ()

SECTION 2: Reliance and Use of Social media

1. Do you use social media platforms? i) Yes ii) No

2. Which social media platform do you use or have an active account with among the ones listed below? Tick the ones that apply.

- i) WhatsApp
- ii) Facebook
- iii) Twitter
- iv) Youtube
- v) Specify others -----

3. Which is your favorite social media platform among those listed above.....

4. How frequently do you normally use the following social media platforms at home in approximation?

	daily	Once a	Twice a	Thrice a	fortnightly	Once a
--	-------	--------	---------	----------	-------------	--------

		week	week	week		month
Facebook						
Twitter						
YouTube						
WhatsApp						
Others						

5. How long do you take on each site when you log in?

6. What are your reasons for using social media platforms? (List them as indicated below)

- i. -----
- ii. -----
- iii. -----
- iv. -----

7. Approximately how many friends do you have on WhatsApp?

- i) 0 - 50
- ii) 50 -100
- iii) 101-200
- iv) 201-300
- v) 301-400
- vi) Over 400

SECTION 3: NATURE AND PATTERNS IN USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1. How many days weekly do you spend on the following Social Media Platforms interacting with family and friends while at home? (Tick appropriately)

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Facebook								
Twitter								
YouTube								
WhatsApp								

2. What purpose do you use social media platforms for? (Tick where applicable)

Chatting with friends		Search for new friends	
Messaging friends		Post interesting links for the people in my life	
Comment on updates		Keep tabs on events and news	
Share photos and videos		For dating	
Making plans with friends or social groups		Follow events in the lives of freinds	
Sharing updates with		Keeping up with	

friends		trending topics	
Interacting with celebrities		Interact with members of family	

3. Approximately how long do you take hourly in a day on social media platforms with with:

Hours	0-2	2- 4	4-6	Never
Friends				

SECTION 4: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

1. In which way do you think social media assists you?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Helps you to contact friends that you can't meet every time?			
Helps you to know fellow students better?			
Helps you to connect with people with similar interests			
Helps in making new friends?			
Helps you in socializing with contacts you would otherwise been unable to reach?			

How has Social Media Platforms affected your family relationships? (Tick appropriately)

- a) No effect
- b) Strained
- c) Improved

Using a scale of 5 4 3 2 1 to respond in which 5= Strongly Agree 4= Agree 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree 2=Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree indicate the extent of your agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements? (Tick where applicable)

	5	4	3	2	1
It is easy to contact friends more online than while offline					
Social media platforms replaces the time spent interacting physically with family and friends					
I am in frequent conflict with parents for using social media during family time.					
I disagree with friends for being online when we meet.					
It is easy for me to express myself online than in face to face communication					
Social media brings me close to my virtual					

friends as opposed to those who are offline					
I often discuss latest trends and topics online with friends					
I fear not knowing what my friends already know on social media					
I am free to open up about my secrets online					