

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ON INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG TEENAGERS.A CASE STUDY OF
MURANG'A EAST DISTRICT**

BY

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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

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DEDICATION

First, I thank the Almighty God for giving me the strength and sufficient grace while undertaking my studies.

I dedicate this project to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mwangi who inspired me to further my education and for their financial and moral support, my brother Peter and sister Susan for their moral support and love during the period of study at the University of Nairobi.

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ABSTRACT

The growth of social networking sites (SNSs) is rising among teen age students in Secondary Schools in Kenya. The most common social networking sites include Face book, Twitter, MySpace, 2go, Whats app, and LinkedIn among others. This paper examined if these social networking sites have any impact on interpersonal relationships among teenagers who most scholars argue that they are the most frequent users of the sites. It was guided by three main objectives i) To explore the extent of teenagers' exposure to SNSs.ii) To determine the nature/patterns of teenagers' interactions on SNSs and (iii) To determine the impact of SNSs usage on teenagers offline and online interpersonal relationships.

It also looked into different scholars' views on the impact of social networking on interpersonal relationships among teenagers. It has looked at the term social capital and its relationships with social networking sites; online communication has also been discussed in light to its effect on interpersonal communication.

A descriptive survey design was used which included administering of questionnaires and focus group discussions as research instruments. The research site was Murang'a East district where students in boarding schools were sampled because they have access to social networking sites while at home.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 250 respondents for the research. The selected students were from a population of students aged between 13-18 years of age. The 250 students were selected from five boarding secondary schools each with a sample of 50 students. The researcher analyzed the collected data by the use of computer software called SPSS.

The study found out that SNSs have an impact on interpersonal relationships among teenagers; they mostly improved their relationships among one another thus bridging and bonding social

capital. Teenagers prefer interacting via SNSs and they cannot imagine a world without SNSs since they have become part of their everyday activity. The study found that, although the SNSs have helped improve relationships among close teenagers as friends, they have also made the teenagers not to be able to build interpersonal relationships among other friends who are not close to them. They have inhibited the teenagers from being able to express themselves face to face especially to the members of the opposite sex. They are spending a lot of time on their mobile phones accessing the SNSs at the expense of going out to find friends to interact with face to face.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Teenager- is a young person whose age falls within the range from thirteen through nineteen (13–19)

Social media-refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social networking sites- virtual communities which mainly focus on ‘user relationships’ the members of this communities create profile pages of themselves which have information about one self ,their backgrounds and any vital information that may lead one to recognize another in these virtual communities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Background to the problem.

The Internet has enabled new forms of social interaction; this is due to its widespread usability and access. In most third world countries use of the internet has been made even more accessible by mobile phones.

Most people use the internet to access news, weather and sports reports, to plan and book vacations and to find out more about their interests. Today people are using the internet mostly to interact on social media, they chat, message, share photos and stay in touch with friends and relatives worldwide.

Among the new forms of social interactions that have been enabled by the internet are social networking sites. Social network sites (SNSs) such as Friendster, CyWorld, Face book and MySpace allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others. Participants may use the sites to interact with people they already know offline or to meet new people.

Each user of a SNS has a profile so as to enable him /her to be able to link up with other users. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, and interests with people in their network. (Wikipedia).Face book, for example enables its users to present themselves in an online profile, accumulate "friends" who can post comments on each other's pages, and view each other's profiles. Face book members can also join virtual groups based on common interests, see what classes they have in common, and learn each others' hobbies,

interests, musical tastes, and romantic relationship status through the profiles. (Ellison, N. et al 2007).

It is also possible to find existing acquaintances, to allow communication among existing groups of people. Sites like LinkedIn foster commercial and business connections. YouTube and Flickr specialize in users' videos and photographs. Teens mostly use the Internet for entertainment and for communicating with friends and family. They use social networking sites and to create profiles on those sites. (Jones, Fox, 2009). They send instant messages on chat and keep updating each other on what is happening in their circles of friendship

Social networking communities are here to stay .They have been popular since the year 2002 and have attracted and fascinated tens of millions of Internet users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). According to socialbakers.com the world has over 978 000 000 million users of Face book. One of the most popular social networking sites. In Kenya alone, 'there are 2,013,840 Face book Monthly Active Users (MAU).'

Due to their nature of allowing people to share common interests, photos and linking up acquaintances, people are spending many hours on the social networking sites. The most affected group is the youths and especially high school students who are in their teenage years. This research looks into the impact of the social networking sites on interpersonal relationships among teenagers. The terms teenagers, students and adolescents will be used interchangeably throughout the study. The sample was drawn from secondary school students in Murang'a East District who are aged between 13-18 years. It is an attempt to add to existing research on social

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Social technologies such as SNSs mediate a significant portion of teenage life. Youths use technology to keep in touch with friends, mediate romantic relationships, organize into social groups, support each other, and develop their own identities (Ito et al. 2010).

An increasing number of secondary school students have joined social networking sites and are actively using them especially when socializing with their peers. The students are spending a lot of time in the cyber cafes and on their mobile phones that are internet enabled accessing the SNSs while at home .They spend hours chatting with friends, improving their profiles and going through profiles of their friends. Given that significant role that SNSs are playing in teenagers' lives, adults and especially parents and teachers are understandably concerned whether these online communities have an impact on their interpersonal relationships, both online and offline .and this concern has prompted this research. It will look in to the impacts of these SNSs on the interpersonal relations among teenagers

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the extent of teenagers' exposure to SNSs.
2. Determine the nature/patterns of teenagers' interactions on SNSs.
3. Determine the impact of SNSs usage on teenagers offline and online interpersonal relationships

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study looks at the impact of Social networking sites on interpersonal relationships among teenagers, its findings will be relevant because they will inform parents, teachers, students and all the relevant stake holders on the impact of SNSs on the interpersonal relations among teenagers. The result of this study will make the students who in this study are being referred to as teenagers, to be aware of how SNSs influence their interpersonal relations. It will also help their teachers by suggesting some ways in order for them to relate with student's social activities especially with regards of using social networking sites. In line with this, teachers, as student's second parents, will know a way how to help the students if they will be encountering problems regarding the relationship of their students with other people.

The parents will be helped to understand their children's purpose of using social networking sites and for them to be aware of the influence from social networking sites that might affect their children. With enough knowledge, parents can think of possible preventive ways if their child is prone to develop a weak interpersonal relationship with other people because of too much usage and dependence of social networking sites. Finally this study will help the further studies of future researchers regarding the influence of social networking sites on the interpersonal relationship of students. This can serve as a reference for further improvements to be done in their study.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study is only limited to and within the reach of all those in the sample population who have access to the internet. It will also only cover students in boarding secondary schools because most of these students are from urban areas and they are familiar with SNSs.

These limitations are due to scarcity of resources both financial and human for the research preparation, data collection and analysis as well as lack of time due to the limited time schedule.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.

Social media is media for social interaction. It is the use of web based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. The term social media is broad and it covers a range of websites. There are basically six kinds of social media i.e. social networks, blogs, wikis, podcasts, forum, content communities and micro blogging. (Wikipedia). Social media are relatively newer forms of media, which allow its users to be more interactive with the content, as well as use technologies (both mobile and web-based) to create an interactive platform where individuals and communities share, co-create, and modify user-generated content (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). During the past decade, it has become far more interactive. Some important aspects of social media are presence, sharing, conversations, groups, reputation, relationships, and most importantly, identity (Kietzmenn et al., 2011).

This research looks into the impact of social networking sites on interpersonal relationships among teenagers and in this case secondary school students.

2.1 Technology and the Youths.

Technological forces like those of evolutions are strong forces that have shaken up everything, especially the internet in ‘all spheres of personal, social and professional human life. Right from the mere ways of interaction to the running of huge systems, ‘we are utilizing the conveniences provided by the existence of internet.’ (Ahmed and Qazi 2011)

Technology is changing the way that people interact and communicate. New technologies are providing more ways to communicate with others and especially among the youth.

Although some researchers argue that these technologies are just a new medium for youths to use and that their patterns of relationships and quality of communication remain the same as with other forms of communication, since they treat the online environment as just another place to interact with already existing friends (Lee & Sun, 2009), questions are still arising on the impact of these new technologies on the traditional modes of communication. The consequences of online communication especially through SNSs on interpersonal relationships among the youth and as this study aims to find out, among teenagers.

Social networking sites, as well as email, instant messaging, blogging, and online journals are among the technological changes that have completely changed the way that people interact and gather information. They can be classified under communication technology. Communication technology is a term that describes types of technology that are used for communication.

Discussions about youths today have differed considerably on the role that technology plays in their lives (Ahn 2011). Ahn adds that though the technologies used today by youths are new especially in terms of communication, 'the technologically mediated activities that youth participate in are similar to past generations.' There is nothing new with the way adolescents are behaving with the internet. Ito et al (2009) says that they 'hang out' in the internet as they used to in the shopping malls, to gossip share and support each other. Nothing has changed, just the venue. Therefore the SNSs have only helped the youth link up with their friends from far and this has made the hanging out more fun.

2.2 Social Networking Sites.

Boyd and Ellison B, (2008) define social networking sites as web-based services that allow individuals to:

- (1) Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system,
- (2) Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and
- (3) View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

Buss and Strauss (2009) have also defined SNSs as virtual communities which mainly focus on ‘user relationships’ the members of this communities create profile pages of themselves which have information about one self ,their backgrounds and any vital information that may lead one to recognize another in these virtual communities. They ‘add friends, meet their friends and communicate in various ways, such as public messaging, private messaging and instant messaging. Popular examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and MySpace

SNSs help people to feel socially connected and part of a community, ‘even though they may be sitting home alone at their computer or with their mobile phones. Participants connect with other people they know through school, work, or an organization; they also meet complete strangers from all over the world’ (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008).

Boyd (2007) points out that social media today has had the potential to make known to larger audiences ‘age-old anxieties and rites of passage in ways that yesterday’s communications media did not’. What was considered as private is now open to a wide

community, people especially the youth are exchanging photos information of whatever kind about themselves or others for others to see and comment.

Social networking sites have today changed the way of human communications. They have become the source of change in different fields, supplemented traditional social interactions and even discussion of common interests; they have revolutionized people's interaction, communication, and even the way of thinking (Abdelraheem2013).

According to Mary Meeker, an influential Internet analyst, mobile Internet and social media are the fastest-growing areas of the technology industry worldwide, and she predicts that mobile Internet use will soon overtake fixed Internet use.

Meeker attributes social networking's success to the fact that most people own mobile phones and that a mobile phone is a "unified communications and a multimedia creation tool/repository in your pocket." In Kenya for example, most students especially those from urban homes own mobile phones that are internet enabled or have access to a computer that is internet connected. This gives them the opportunity to belong to SNSs of their choice especially Facebook and easy access to them.

In light of the foregoing discussions on the rapid adoption of the use of SNSs Nielsen Wire, 2010 raises important questions about the social implications of their usage. However, people can use SNSs in several different ways including accessing information, debating, socializing, or for entertainment (Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2009). Hence, the usage of such sites differs from person to person, and dissimilar patterns of usage might have different social implications (Brandtzæg & Heim, 2011).

2.3 Teenagers and Social Networking Sites.

As social media becomes a ubiquitous part of teenage life, SNSs have become central gathering spaces for teenagers to develop new media literacy skills (Jenkins, 2006). For example, Jenkins (2006) notes that various skills become vital in networked spaces such as the ability to: collaborate with others, adopt changing identities as one navigates through different communities, or explore new knowledge domains when one has access to vast repositories of information.

Researchers have found that teenagers find creative ways to gain access to new technologies, participate in various online communities that help them learn new skills, and delve into deep learning on topics that are personally interesting to them (Ito, et al., 2010). Teenagers also utilize social network sites to provide social support to peers, share creative work, and network with others (Greenhow and Robelia, 2009). Participating in communities such as Facebook or MySpace provide new venues through which individuals learn these new media skills. Systematic differences in access to these online communities may thus reflect opportunities, or lack thereof, for particular youth populations to cultivate these literacy skills.

Many of the popular questions surrounding youths and SNSs tend to ask what effects these technologies have on outcomes such as academic achievement or the development of social relationships (Ahn, 2011a). According to Ellison, *et al.*, 2007; Valenzuela, *et al.*, 2007 SNSs assist young people in developing better relationships, or social capital, with their network. Consequently, Social media tools may also facilitate negative and dangerous interactions for young people such as breaches of privacy and cyber bullying (Palfrey, *et al.*, 2009).

In the beginning years of personal computers and Internet access, websites were used primarily for information gathering and research, today, the internet is now the center of communication, as well as being their prime source of entertainment (Alexander & Salas, 2008) especially to teenagers. According to (Lin & Subrahmanyam, 2007), adolescents are the greatest consumers of the internet especially for accessing SNSs. These SNSs have changed the way the adolescents (students) interact and gather information (Raacke & Raacke, 2008).

Boyd (2012) highlighted how the adoption of SNSs for teenagers was very far from random. Teenagers use SNSs in various ways; they disclose personal information about their identities and tastes on their profiles (Livingstone, 2008). Teenagers also add or reject friend requests from their peers, navigating the complicated web of friendship practices (Ito et al., 2009). The interactions and feedback that one's network provides in SNSs—through wall posts and comments—show how complex social identity and peer influence processes occur in these online communities (Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008; Walther et al., 2008, 2009).

According to Charlene Li et al (2007) students' activity on social networking sites focuses on communicating with each other. 'The most popular activities done by students and users on social networking sites revolve around looking at profiles of one another, searching for someone here and there, updating one's own profile, and eavesdropping.'

Using the theory of Erikson (1953) Shahzad in his report on the impact of social networking sites on students defends the student in this case a teenager usage of SNSs only for interaction and not for academic purposes by arguing that at this stage the student has a conflict of identity and the SNSs provide him with a 'virtual life and friends which cannot let him (student) to be bored even for single moment.

2.4 Social Capital

According to Putnam 1995, social capital are features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Putnam (2000) distinguishes between bridging and bonding social capital. Bridging social capital is more suited to information diffusion, and is created through exposure to a heterogeneous network of largely weak ties. It is what network researchers refer to as "weak ties," which are loose connections between individuals who may provide useful information or new perspectives for one another but typically not emotional support (Granovetter,1982). Bonding social capital represents the kinds of benefits that arise from close relationships within an exclusive group - family and close friends - and is linked to emotional and social support as well as substantive tangible support like financial loans. (Steinfeld et al 2012) Bonding social capital is found between individuals in tightly-knit, emotionally close relationships, such as family and close friends.

2.5 Social Capital and the Internet

The Internet has been linked both to increases and decreases in social capital. Nie (2001), for example, argued that Internet use detracts from face-to-face time with others, which might diminish an individual's social capital. However, this perspective has received strong criticism (Bargh & McKenna, 2004). Moreover, some researchers have claimed that online interactions may supplement or replace in-person interactions, mitigating any loss from time spent online (Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). Indeed, studies of physical (e.g., geographical) communities supported by online networks, such as the Netville community in Toronto or the Blacksburg Electronic Village, have concluded that computer-mediated interactions have had

positive effects on community interaction, involvement, and social capital (Hampton & Wellman, 2003; Kavanaugh, Carroll, Rosson, Zin, & Reese, 2005).

In Putnam's (2000) view, bonding social capital reflects strong ties with family and close friends, who might be in a position to provide emotional support or access to scarce resources.

It is clear that the Internet facilitates new connections, in that it provides people with an alternative way to connect with others who share their interests or relational goals (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Horrigan, 2002; Parks & Floyd, 1996). These new connections may result in an increase in social capital; for instance, a 2006 Pew Internet survey reports that online users are more likely to have a larger network of close ties than non-Internet users, and that Internet users are more likely than non-users to receive help from core network members (Boase, Horrigan, Wellman, & Rainie, 2006).

2.6 Social Networking Sites and Social Capital

Individuals develop relationships in both online and offline settings, and increasingly the boundaries between these two spaces are blurred (Xie 2007; 2008). One platform that blurs these spaces is the social network site (SNS). Research suggests that these platforms may help users cultivate social capital in both online and offline relationships (Donath and boyd 2004; Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007).

Given that SNSs allow individuals to create larger social networks than they could offline, it seems logical that using an SNS could help adolescents build social capital (Moreno and Kolb 2012). A study in 2007 found that increased Facebook use positively correlated with bridging and bonding social capital in college students. Moreno and Kolb 2012 add that, there are several

hypothesized ways in which online social networks could bring benefit to adolescents. For instance, SNSs allow adolescents to access health information that they may be too uncomfortable to ask a pediatrician about, and they also allow adolescents with a chronic disease to join online support groups to help them deal with new diagnose or share stories with others who understand their situation in life. Additionally, SNSs give adolescents the benefit of being able to start and maintain relation-ships despite physical distance .The activities seen in SNS communities can be viewed as social grooming (Tufekci 2008). In offline settings, people groom their relationships through behaviors such as small talk and participation in social life .Social network sites facilitate relationship development and thus offer a natural link to social capital.

Researcher have consistently found that using social network sites is related to higher social capital (Burke, Kraut, and Marlow2011; Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007; Valenzuela,Park, and Kee 2009). Ellison,Steinfield, and Lampe(2007) surveyed a sample of college students and found that their intensity of Facebook use is positively related to both bridging and bonding relationships. In a similar studyof Texas student, researchers also found that Facebook use was positively associated with characteristics of social capital. Students who used Facebook more often reported higher levels of trust, and participated more in civic and volunteer groups (Valenzuela, Park, and Kee2009). Thus, we see that the existing literature on SNSs and social capital suggests that students who participate in online communities also report higher connection to their campus relationships. While research that has examined the relationship between SNSs and social capital offers consistent evidence of a positive relationship, most studies examine college-age or adult populations (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe2007; Valenzuela, Park, and Kee 2009).

According to Ahn 2012, high school students are also more connected to their community when they participate in social network sites. Ahn concludes that adolescent who uses social network sites will also report higher levels of social capital (both bonding and bridging). despite the fact that much of the media and education discussions focus on the negative aspects of SNSs, particularly the ways in which youths use these tools to bully their peers (Hoffman 2010).

Early research on youths and SNSs suggests that teenagers primarily use social network sites to interact with known friends (Boyd 2008). Ahn 2012 writes that while teenagers might communicate primarily with known friends in SNSs, they are also exposed to the larger world through their interactions. As members share links, ideas, and media, they are connected to a broad array of information. As previous scholars have hypothesized (Donath and Boyd 2004; Williams 2006), it is possible that teenagers' use of SNSs helps them feel connected to the broader world beyond their school and home. Such relationships are related to the concept of bridging social capital.

2.7 Online Communication and Interpersonal Relationships

An interpersonal relationship is defined as an association between two or more people that may range in duration from brief to enduring. This association may be based on inference, love, solidarity, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment. Interpersonal relationships are formed in the context of social, cultural and other influences. The context can vary from family or kinship relations, friendship, and marriage, relations with associates, work, clubs, neighborhoods, and places of worship. They may be regulated by law, custom, or mutual agreement, and are the basis of social groups and society as a whole. (Wikipedia)

Interpersonal communication is considered to be the most important use of the internet sites, (Cummings, Butler & Kraut, 2002). The Internet is the latest in a series of technological breakthroughs in interpersonal communication, following the telegraph, telephone, radio, and television. It combines innovative features of its predecessors, such as bridging great distances and reaching a mass audience John A. Bargh and Katelyn Y.A. McKenna

In recent years, much of the communication that occurred face-to-face has moved to computer-mediated communication. Computer-mediated communication has had and continues to have an effect on all people around the globe especially teenagers who mostly use SNSs to communicate, and its effects on interpersonal communication have many benefits as well as many drawbacks.

Several scholars have contended that Internet communication is an impoverished and sterile form of social exchange compared to traditional face-to-face interactions, and will therefore produce negative outcomes (loneliness and depression) for its users as well as weaken neighborhood and community ties. Media reporting of the effects of Internet use over the years has consistently emphasized this negative view (McKenna & Bargh 2000) to the point that, as a result, a substantial minority of (mainly older) adults refuses to use the Internet at all (Hafner 2003). Other scholars feel that, CMC lacks tone, postures, gestures, or facial expressions, and this causes the richness of communication to be depleted, due to the lack of these non-verbal cues that help clarify a verbal message, computer-mediated communication loses “richness” and in essence the message that comes across is seen as “leaner”. These lean messages become harder to interpret with confidence. Things such as irony or humor can easily be taken the wrong way and because of this, these messages are extremely ambiguous. (Bower 1998).

By contrast, others feel that, Computer-mediated communication has increased interpersonal communication by making it easier. Since face-to-face communication is not always feasible, using the Internet helps connect those who are not able to physically. Computer-mediated communication has also increased the levels of self-disclosure, with many people saying things through the Internet that they wouldn't normally say in person (Adler, et al. 2010), especially among teenagers. Others believe that the Internet affords a new and different avenues of social interaction that enable groups and relationships to form that otherwise would not be able to, thereby increasing and enhancing social connectivity.

2.8 Effects of Social Networking Sites on Interpersonal Relationships among Teenagers.

Adolescence is a stage that is associated with a strong need for friendships and peer-group affiliations along with the need for person-to-person communication (Lee & Sun, 2009). The changing dynamics of communication within the adolescent population especially those in their teenage years, have important implications on their social relationships and communication in real life. SNSs act as a mediator between real and virtual communication, leading directly to the individual's virtual interpersonal relationship (Lin, Sun, Lee, & Wu, 2007).

According to Mikami, Szewo, Allem, Evens, & Hare, 2010, the presence of higher positivity and lower negativity in a peer interaction in early adolescence each predict a greater number of friends on their social networks (2010). This in turn keeps them logged into their SNSs to chat with the increasing number of friends they have online ,impacting in one way or another on their interpersonal relationships both offline and online.

With peer-based connectedness, being so important to teenage adolescents, their interactions with others enhance their sense of belonging and help them understand their individual self and

others (Boneva, Quinn, Kraut, Kieler, & Shklovski, 2006). This explains the long hours they spend logged in their SNSs

Worldwide, adolescent lives have become so busy and full of activities that their time to interact with friends is becoming more limited (Lee & Sun, 2009), they adapt these new technologies to continue improving and sustaining their relationships. SNSs have in fact helped the teens to be more connected to their social groups and maintain relations as they also expand their network of friends. By staying connected to their social groups, they are defining their self-identity (maintaining individual friendships) and their social-identity (belonging to peer groups) (Lee & Sun, 2009).

According to Asilo et al 2010, Students develop two possible types of interpersonal relations that is stronger interpersonal relationship with their friends, teachers, and parents. They are always updated with the status of their close friends, teachers, or even their parents that are in the friends list of the social networking sites. It is easier for them to know when will be the birthdays of their friends and so they get in touch with them, even if they are apart with less time and effort. Asilo 2012 also adds that, students, also, tend to develop weaker interpersonal relationships with their friends, teachers, and parents. This is due to too much dependency of students to the internet and computer as a medium of communication with their friends, teachers, and parents. Sometimes, students can only tell what they want to other people whenever they are chatting, or when they post comments on the wall of a person's account or profile. If they do this over and over again, this develops into a habit and become used to it until the time comes that they only depend on the internet and computer on telling what they want. Through this, a person can't express his/her emotions well and that results to an unhealthy relationship with other people.

A study investigating the influence of the Internet on social connections among Internet users in twelve major cities in Iran shows that; far away from alienating people from their richer relations, the Internet has not changed the relationships among its users but, it has increased their social contacts with different groups (Bastani and Zarandi.).This Iranian study was inclusive of even teenagers.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

2.9.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and gratification theory is a vital theory in today's mass communication research. Uses and gratification theory is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media. This research seeks to find the impact of social networking sites especially Facebook on students' social interaction and academic performance. The theory will be useful because it will help understand why students spend hours on SNSs, what gratification do they seek and whether that gratification is obtained. The theory will help understand what effects a gratification obtained have on the user of the media. Park et al. (2009) found the major uses and gratification factors of SNS users to be: socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information LaRose and Eastin (2004) found similar factors like the need for information-seeking, entertainment, and social needs to be the most prevalent.

2.10 Summary

As social media sites continue to grow in popularity it is our belief that technology is a vital part of today's student success equation. Many researchers have been diving into a considerable amount of research on how social media influences student retention in schools. An increasing number of scholars have sought to study and measure the impact of social media (such as the

Museum of Social Media). A 2010 study by the University of Maryland suggested that social media services may be addictive, and that using social media services may lead to a "fear of missing out," also known as the phrase "FOMO" by many students.

Socializing via the Internet has become an increasingly important part of young adult life (Gemmill & Peterson, 2006). Relative to the general population, adolescents and young adults are the heaviest computer and Internet users, primarily using it for completing school assignments (46%), e-mail and/or instant messaging(36%), and playing computer games 38%; (DeBell & Chapman,2006). With the many discussions on the effects of SNS on students, it is evident that these SNSs have an impact on interpersonal relationships among students. This arguments form a basis for the above research topic. The researcher intends to add to the existing knowledge on social media.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter deals with the research methodology that the researcher used when carrying out her research. This includes the research designs, description of the sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, and data analysis procedures.

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This is because the methods supplement each other by holistically providing statistical data and in-depth explanations and descriptions of the phenomenon in question (Mugenda 2003). Quantitative research include designs, techniques and measures that produce discrete numerical or quantifiable data, in this case, the researcher used questionnaires .Qualitative method on the other hand enabled the researcher to get–in-depth data (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003:2003) more often, the data is in form of words and these words are often grouped into categories. In this case, the researcher used focus group discussions.

3.1 Research Design.

3.1.1. Descriptive Survey Research Design

Descriptive survey research is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to sample individuals (Orodho, 2003). It can be used when collecting information about people’s attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues like use of social networking sites. (Orodho and Kombo, 2002).

3.2 Research Population

Population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic (Mugenda, 2003). The population in this research was secondary school students in Murang'a East District.

3.3 Sample and Sampling procedure

A sample is a smaller group obtained from the accessible population (Mugenda 2003). It is part of the population that has been picked for the study and contains in itself elements that are representation of the whole population.

The target population of the study was 250 students from 5 secondary schools in Murang'a East District. A sample size of 50 students per school was sampled randomly from each form in the 5 secondary schools. Boarding schools were preferred because they have a large number of students from urban homes that are familiar with social networking sites.

Sampling involves selecting the subjects that are involved in the study. The researcher used simple random sampling to get the required sample size. The students were asked to pick numbers randomly and the students who corresponded to the numbers picked were included in the sample.

3.4. Data Collection Methods.

Data Collection is gathering specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. (Kombo and Tromp 2006:99). The Study employed both secondary and primary methods to collect data. In secondary data collection, the researcher used the available documents. In

primary data collection, the researcher collected original data from the respondents through focus group discussions and questionnaires.

A questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample (Kombo and Tromp 2006:89). The questionnaires were used on the respondents because the information needed was to be given in a straightforward manner. The questions were both structured and unstructured.

Focus group discussions are a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards a concept or idea. Responses in a focus group are spoken, open-ended, relatively broad, and qualitative. They are also useful because one can observe nonverbal communications in group interactions.

3.5 Research Instruments.

Research instruments are the items that the researcher uses to collect data. In this study, questionnaires and focus group discussions were the research instruments.

Focus group discussions gave in-depth information regarding the object of research which was not possible with rapid methods based on questionnaires. The focus group discussions were moderated by the researcher. Questionnaires were preferred to other methods of data collection because of their ability to collect information of a large group in a short span of time, and also because their objectivity. They were self-administered questionnaires.

3.6 Data Analysis.

The data collected from the field was both qualitative and quantitative but much of it was qualitative. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences).It was presented in pie charts, bar charts and graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

These chapters sought to measure and analyze data using various statistical tools for different constructs and variables in the study. The results from the study were summarized and discussed in this chapter. Questionnaires' data was organised, coded, analysed and converted into quantitative summary reports using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. Data was entered into the program under specific category from which analysis was run to obtain descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Using content analysis technique, data was put into theme categories and tallied in terms of the number of times it occurred. Qualitative and quantitative data were linked to enable elaborate analysis of variables.

4.2 Response rate

Response rate in a research context refers to the extent to which the collected set of data includes all sample members of the targeted population (Fowler, 2004). Response rate is calculated by the number of questionnaires collected or the number of people with whom interviews are completed divided by the number of the entire sample. In this study, data was collected from 250 students from 5 secondary schools in Murang'a East District. A sample size of 50 students per school was sampled randomly from each form in the 5 secondary schools. All of the five sampled schools accepted to participate and responded to the questions. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed and 196 were returned. This represented 78.4% response rate. According to Babbie

(2002), a response rate of above 50% is adequate for analysis and therefore, a 78.4 % response rate, was considered as being very good for analysis.

4.3 Demographic Information of the Respondent.

The research sought to find out if data was obtained from the relevant respondents. This section presents the findings in terms of the respondents' profiles.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents.

The respondents were asked to state their gender. Figure 4.1 shows that 52% of the respondents were male while 48% were female. However, the gender of the respondent is not expected to influence the findings of the study since the questions asked were not gender sensitive.

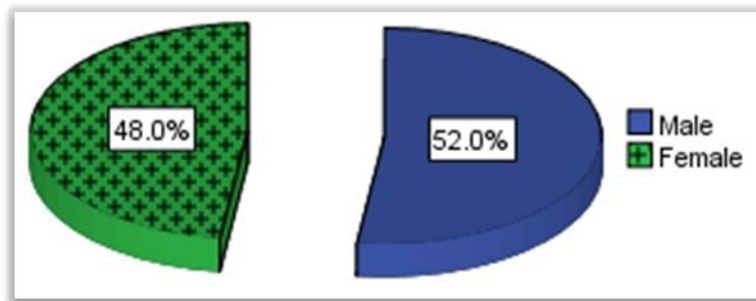


Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondent

4.3.2 Age of the respondents

Figure 4.2 below shows the age categories of the respondents. An overwhelming majority of 90.8% were between 15-19 years old while 9.2% were between 13-14 years old. This indicates that all of the respondents belonged in the teenage years, with majority falling between mid and late teenage. Jenkins (2006) states that, as social media becomes a ubiquitous part of teenage life, SNSs have become central gathering spaces for teenagers to develop new media literacy skills.

According to Lin & Subrahmanyam (2007), adolescents are the greatest consumers of the internet especially for accessing SNSs. These SNSs have changed the way the adolescents (students) interact and gather information (Raacke & Raacke 2008).

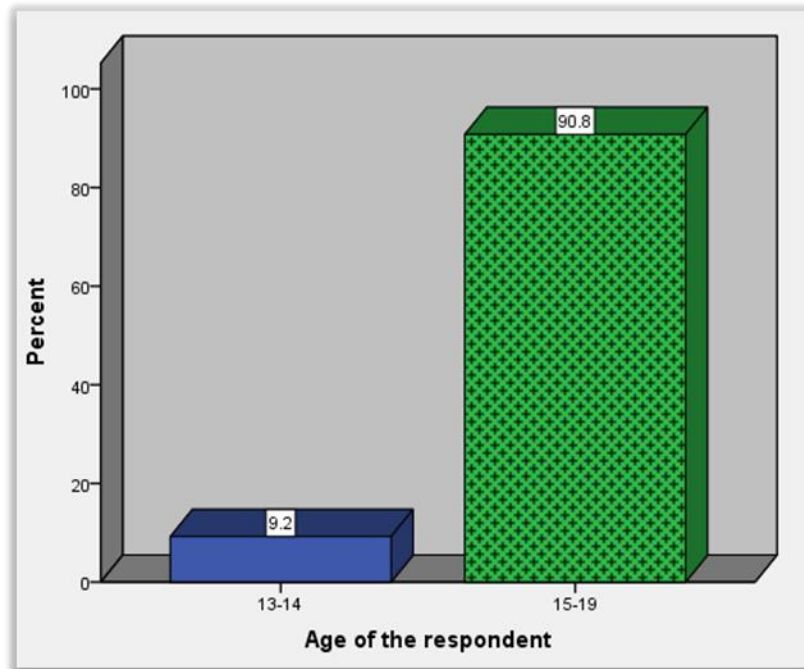


Figure 4.2: Age of the respondent

4.4 Extent of Teenagers' Exposure to Social Networking Sites (SNS).

The study went out to find the extent to which teenagers are exposed to SNS. This section presents the findings of the study.

4.4.1 How the respondent get access to their favorite social networking sites.

The study went out to find how the respondents got access to their favorite social networking site. Table 4.16 shows the findings. Majority of the respondents i.e. 55.7% said they own mobile phones, 20.8% said they used cyber cafes, 15.3% said they used laptops and 8.2% said they used their parents' mobile phones.

Device used	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Own mobile phone	102	55.7	55.7
Parents mobile phone	15	8.2	63.9
Cyber café	38	20.8	84.7
Laptop	28	15.3	100.0
Total	183	100.0	

Table 4.1 How the respondent got access to their favorite social networking site

4.4.2 The social networking site the respondents had an account with.

The respondents were asked the social networking sites they had accounts with. Table 4.1 shows the findings. (39.4%) of the respondents said they had accounts on Facebook. 20.2% said they had an account with Twitter, 19.7% said they had an account on Whatsapp, 10.4% said they had an account YouTube, 8.8% said they had an account on Google+ and only 1.6% of the respondents said they had an account on other social media such as Qeep, Myspace and Viber.

Social networking site	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
YouTube	20	10.4	10.4
Twitter	39	20.2	30.6
Facebook	76	39.4	69.9
Whatsapp	38	19.7	89.6
Google+	17	8.8	98.4
Others	3	1.6	100.0
Total	193	100.0	

Table 4.2: The social networking site the respondents had an account with.

4.4.3 Favorite social networking site of the respondents.

The respondents were further asked their favorite social networking site. As is indicated in table 4.2, 69.5% of the respondents cited Face book as their favorite social networking site, 11.9% cited Whatsapp, 7.3% mentioned Twitter, 6.2% mentioned Google+, and 4.5% mentioned YouTube and only 0.6% of the respondents cited HI 5 . This shows that Face book is the most popular among teenagers among the listed social networking sites.

Social networking site	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
YouTube	8	4.5	4.5
Twitter	13	7.3	11.9
Facebook	123	69.5	81.4
Hi 5	1	.6	81.9
Whatsapp	21	11.9	93.8
Google+	11	6.2	100.0
Total	177	100.0	

Table 4.3: Favorite social networking site of the respondents

4.4.4 Frequency of visiting a social networking site

The respondents were asked how often they visited some of the listed common social networking sites. Table 4.3 shows a summary of the findings where **F** and **%** represents Frequency and corresponding Percentage respectively. Considering the daily column, Face book was the most visited with 75.1% and it was closely followed by Whatsapp with 63.6% of the respondents visiting it daily. Twitter had 37.4% daily visitors and YouTube had 36.5%. Other social networking sites had 44.6% daily visitation by the respondents.

	Daily		Once a week		Twice a week		Thrice a week		Fortnightly		Once a month		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Facebook	139	75.1	9	4.9	4	2.2	22	11.9	6	3.1	5	2.6	100.0
Twitter	34	37.4	20	22.0	11	12.1	21	23.1	4	4.4	1	1.1	100.0
YouTube	31	36.5	20	23.5	10	11.8	16	18.8	5	5.9	3	3.5	100.0
Whatsapp	49	63.6	12	15.6	4	5.2	7	9.1	4	5.2	1	1.3	100.0
Others	25	44.6	7	12.5	4	7.1	12	21.4	4	7.1	4	7.1	100.0

Table 4.4: Frequency of visiting a social networking site

4.4.5 Time spent when the respondents visit a social networking site while at home.

The study wanted to find out time spent by the respondents when they visit a social networking site while at home. Table 4.4 shows the findings summary. 45.1% said they spent at least sit one hour on Facebook, 39.8% said they spent at least one hour on Twitter, 39.1% said they spent at least one hour on YouTube. 36.6% said they spent at least one hour on Whatsapp and 45.1% of the respondents said they spent less than 30 minutes on other social networking sites.

	Less than 30 minutes		At least one hour		At least 2 hours		At least 5 hours		More than 5 hours		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Facebook	18	9.8	83	45.1	49	26.6	16	8.7	18	9.8	100.0
Twitter	23	26.1	35	39.8	18	20.5	9	10.2	3	3.4	100.0
YouTube	31	33.7	36	39.1	17	18.5	5	5.4	3	3.3	100.0
Whatsapp	25	30.5	30	36.6	12	14.6	6	7.3	9	11.0	100.0
Others	23	45.1	13	25.5	7	13.7	5	9.8	3	5.9	100.0

Table 4.5: Time spent when the respondents visits a social networking site

4.4.6 Number of Face book friends.

The research went out to find the number of friends the respondent had on Facebook. Table 4.6 shows the summary of the findings. 28.3% said they had more than 400 Facebook friends, 21.2%

said they had 101-200, 15.2% had 301-400 friends, 14.1% had 201-300 friends, 12.0% had 50-100 friends and 9.2% had 50 or less than 50 friends.

According to Mikami, Szwed, Allem, Evens, & Hare, 2010, the presence of higher positivity and lower negativity in a peer interaction in early adolescence each predict a greater number of friends on their social networks (2010). This in turn keeps them logged into their SNSs to chat with the increasing number of friends they have online ,impacting in one way or another on their interpersonal relationships both offline and online.

Number of friends	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
50 or less	17	9.2	9.2
50-100	22	12.0	21.2
101-200	39	21.2	42.4
201-300	26	14.1	56.5
301-400	28	15.2	71.7
More than 400	52	28.3	100.0
Total	184	100.0	

Table 4.6: Number of Facebook friends the respondent had

4.4.7 Number of days per week a respondent used a social networking site.

The study sought to find out the number of days per week the respondents used social networking sites. Table 4.7 indicated that 62.2% of the respondents used Facebook 7 days in week, 21.2% used Twitter 3 days in a week, 24.7% used YouTube 7 days in a week, 50% used Whatsapp 7 days in a week, and 42.0% actually never used HI 5 any day of the week.

	7		6		5		4		3		2		1		0		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	%
Facebook	117	62.2	15	8.0	14	7.7	7	3.7	20	10.6	9	4.8	4	2.1	2	1.1	100.0
Twitter	16	16.2	9	9.1	12	12.1	15	15.2	21	21.2	6	6.1	13	13.1	7	7.1	100.0
YouTube	22	24.7	7	7.9	8	9.0	7	7.9	15	16.9	10	11.2	12	13.5	7	9.0	100.0
Whatsapp	46	50	5	5.4	9	9.8	3	3.3	3	3.3	8	8.7	4	4.3	14	15.2	100.0
HI5	9	18.0	0	0	3	6.0	2	4.0	4	8.0	3	6.0	8	16.0	21	42.0	100.0

Table 4.7: Number of days per week a respondent used a social networking site

4.4.8 Discussion.

From the findings, it's evident that teenagers are highly exposed to social networking sites, with Facebook being the most popular among the teenagers. This could be attributed to the fact that it was among the first social networking sites to be introduced. It is closely followed by Whatsapp, and this is also due to the fact that the two SNSs offer many features for interactivity.

Teenagers also spend a lot of time on SNSs with a daily visitation of 75.1 % for Facebook and 63.6 % for Whatsapp.

4.5 Nature/Patterns of Teenagers' Interaction on SNS.

The study sought to find out patterns of teenagers' interaction on SNS. This section discusses the findings of the study.

4.5.1 What the respondent used the social networking sites for.

Researchers have found that teenagers find creative ways to gain access to new technologies, participate in various online communities that help them learn new skills, and delve into deep learning on topics that are personally interesting to them (Ito, et al., 2010).

As is indicated in table 4.7, 13.8% of the respondents said they use social networking sites for chatting with friends, 9.7% said they used them for sending messages to friends, 10.3% said they used them for commenting on friends updates .

11.3% said they used social networking sites for sharing photos and videos. 4.6% said they used social networking sites for making plans with friends/social groups, 6.7% said they shared updates with friends.

5.1% said they used social networking sites for interacting with celebrities, 4.6% said they used social networking sites for sharing interests similar to theirs. 9.2% said they used social networking sites to find new friends, 1.0% said they posted interesting links for the people in their lives.

5.1% said they used social networking sites for keeping up with news and events, 2.1% said they used it for dating, 5.1% said they used social networking sites for keeping up with events in their friends lives,.

6.7% said they used social networking sites for keeping up with trending topics and 4.6% said they used them for linking up with family members.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Chatting with friends	27	13.8	13.8
Sending messages to friends	19	9.7	23.6
Commenting on friends updates	20	10.3	33.8
Sharing photos and videos	22	11.3	45.1
Making plans with friends/social groups	9	4.6	49.7
Sharing updates with friends	13	6.7	56.4
Interacting with celebrities	10	5.1	61.5
Share interests similar to mine	9	4.6	66.2
Find new friends	18	9.2	75.4
Post interesting links for the people in my life	2	1.0	76.4
Keeping up with news and events	10	5.1	81.5
For dating	4	2.1	83.6
Keeping up with events in my friends lives	10	5.1	88.7
Keeping up with trending topics	13	6.7	95.4
Linking up with family members	9	4.6	100.0
Total	195	100.0	

Table 4.8: What the respondent used the social networking sites for

4.5.2 Number of times the respondents check their social networking sites per day.

The respondents were asked the number of times they checked their social networking sites per day. Table 4.10 shows that a majority of 32.6% checked their social networking sites 2-5 times a day. 26.0% checked their social networking sites 6-10 times a day, 16.0% said checked their social networking sites more than 30 times a day, 10.5% checked their social networking sites 11-15 times a day, 6.1% said they checked their social networking sites 16-20 times a day, 5.5% said they checked their social networks 21-25 times a day and 3.3% said they checked social networking sites 26-30 times a day.

Number of times they checked their social networking sites per day.	Frequency	Percent
2-5	65	35.9
6-10	76	42.0
11-15	19	10.5
16-20	11	6.1
21-25	10	5.5
Total	181	100.0

Table 4.9: Number of times the respondents checks their social networking sites per day

4.5.3 Discussion

What the teenagers use SNSs for, can be summarized into three categories i.e. social networking, sharing information and entertainment. 58.9% said they used SNSs for social networking, 17.4% for entertainment and 23.7% for gathering information.

This findings support Charlene Li et al (2007) views that students' activity on social networking sites focuses on communicating with each other. 'The most popular activities done by students and users of social networking sites revolve around looking at profiles of one another, searching for someone here and there, updating one's own profile, and eavesdropping.'

This can also be seen with the number of times the students checked their SNSs per day, with most of them checking more than ten times, so as to make sure they did not miss out on any important event that might be taking place.

4.6 Social Networking Sites and Interpersonal Relationships.

The research went out to find what impact SNS usage had on offline and online interpersonal relationships of teenagers.

4.6.1 Emotional connection of the respondent to Facebook

The study went out to find the emotional connection of the respondents to Facebook. 65.6% agreed that Facebook is part of their everyday activity, 76% agreed that they felt out of touch when they had not logged into Facebook for a while and 79.4% said they felt they were part of the Facebook community, as is indicated in table 4.11.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	Facebook is part of my everyday activity	78	41.9	44	23.7	33	17.7	13	7.0	18	
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while	83	46.4	35	19.6	26	14.5	17	9.5	18	10.1	100.0
I feel I am part of Facebook community	92	46.9	54	29.5	16	8.7	6	3.3	15	8.2	100.0

Table 4.10: Emotional connection of the respondent to Facebook

4.6.2 Social networking sites and how they have helped the respondents.

As is shown in table 4.12, 94.8% said that social networking sites have helped them keep in touch with friends they didn't see regularly, 62.2% said social networking sites have helped them get to know other students at school better, 82.4% said social networking sites helped them to connect with people whom they shared common interest, 95.7% said social networking sites helped them meet new friends and 86.4% said that social networking sites have helped them socialize with people they would not have been able to communicate with.

	Yes		No		Not Sure		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Helped keep in touch with friends you can't see regularly	181	94.8	5	2.6	5	2.6	100.0
Helped get to know other students at school better	115	62.2	40	21.6	30	16.2	100.0
Helped connect with people whom you share common interest	154	82.4	11	5.9	22	11.8	100.0
Helped you meet new friends	177	95.7	6	3.2	2	1.1	100.0
Helped you socialize with people you would not have been able to communicate with	159	86.4	13	7.1	12	6.5	100.0

Table 4.11: Social networking sites and how it helped the respondent

The findings above support the statement that the Internet facilitates new connections, in that it provides people with an alternative way to connect with others who share their interests or relational goals (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006; Horrigan, 2002; Parks & Floyd, 1996). These new connections may result in an increase in bonding and bridging social capital.

4.6.3 Impact of social networking sites on interpersonal relationships of the respondents

Table 4.14 shows that, 52.6% strongly agreed that they found it easier to keep in touch with friends online than offline, 43.5% either agreed or strongly agreed that social networking sites take away their face to face socializing time with friends and family. A simple majority of 38.4% either agreed or strongly agreed that they often get into trouble with their parents for social

networking when they are together. On whether they get angry with their peers who use social networking sites when they are together, 42.4% strongly disagreed. 60.2% either agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easier to express themselves on social media than while talking face to face, findings confirmed by those of Adler, et al. (2010), who posited that computer-mediated communication has increased the levels of self-disclosure, with many people saying things through the Internet that they wouldn't normally say in person especially among teenagers. 43.7% either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt closer to their friends who were on social media than those who were not on social media, 41.8% strongly agreed that they liked discussing trending issues with their friends on social media.

51.4% strongly agreed. 68.2% strongly disagreed that they are willing to voice anything about their personal life on social networking sites, 41.3% either agreed or strongly agreed that using their social networking site often distracts them when they should be paying attention to the people that they are with. 46.3% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that using their social networking sites have taken away from time they could be spending with friends in person, 63.8% strongly disagreed with the statement that sometimes they wish they could go back to when there was no social media. 47.0% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that social networking sites take away their time for face to face socialization.

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total %
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
	I find it easier to keep in touch with friends online than offline	12	6.3	9	4.7	20	10.5	49	25.8	10	
Social networking sites take away my face to face socializing time with friends and family	45	24.5	21	11.4	38	20.7	45	24.5	35	19.0	100.0
I find it easier to express myself on social media than while talking face to face	51	27.4	11	5.9	12	6.5	37	19.9	75	40.3	100.0
I am willing to voice anything about my personal life on social networking sites	122	68.2	13	7.3	23	12.8	7	3.9	14	7.8	100.0
Using my social networking site often distracts me when I should be paying attention to the people that I am with	33	19.1	27	15.6	37	21.4	37	21.4	39	19.9	100.0
Social networking site takes my personal time for socialization	46	27.4	33	19.6	37	22.0	26	15.5	26	15.5	100.0

Table 4.12: Extent of agreement or disagreement with statements about social networking sites and interpersonal relationships of the respondents

4.6.4 If social media has affected the respondent’s relationship with friends

The respondents were asked if they thought social media had affected their relationships with their friends in any way, Figure 4.3 shows the findings. 55.0% said yes their relationships with their friends were affected by social networking sites. 45.0% said that their relationship with the friends was not affected by social networking sites. They were further asked to state how their relationships were affected by the social networking sites. Table 4.15 shows the findings.

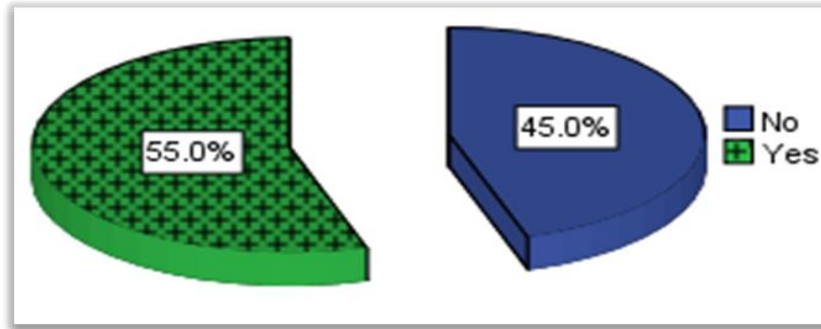


Figure 4.3: If social media has affected the respondent's relationship with friends

4.6.4.1 How social media has affected the respondent's relationship with friends

Of those who said yes in section above (figure 4.3), 80% of the respondents said that social networking sites had improved their relationships with their friends, as is indicated in table 4.15. 8.6% said social media brought about disagreements with their friends. 2.9% said that in social media there was too much distraction and as such they could not focus on one or few friends. 4.3% said that many of their friends spent time on social media when they were hanging out and another 4.3% said that they did not have time for physical friends because they were always chatting with their online friends.

How social media has affected relationship with friends	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
It has improved	56	80.0	80.0
Disagreements now and then	6	8.6	88.6
There is too much distraction on social media.	5	7.2	91.8
There no time for face to face interaction with friends because am always chatting with my online friends	3	4.2	100.0
Total	70	100.0	

Table 4.13: How social media has affected the respondent’s relationship with friends

4.6.5 If the respondents have ever been in conflict with friend(s) and they expressed it on social networking sites.

The study sought to find out if the respondents had ever been in conflict with their friend(s) and they expressed it on social networking sites. 59.4% said no ,while 40.6% said yes ,as is indicated in figure 4.4. Those who said yes were further asked if they ever talked about it with the friend(s). Figure 4.4 shows the findings.

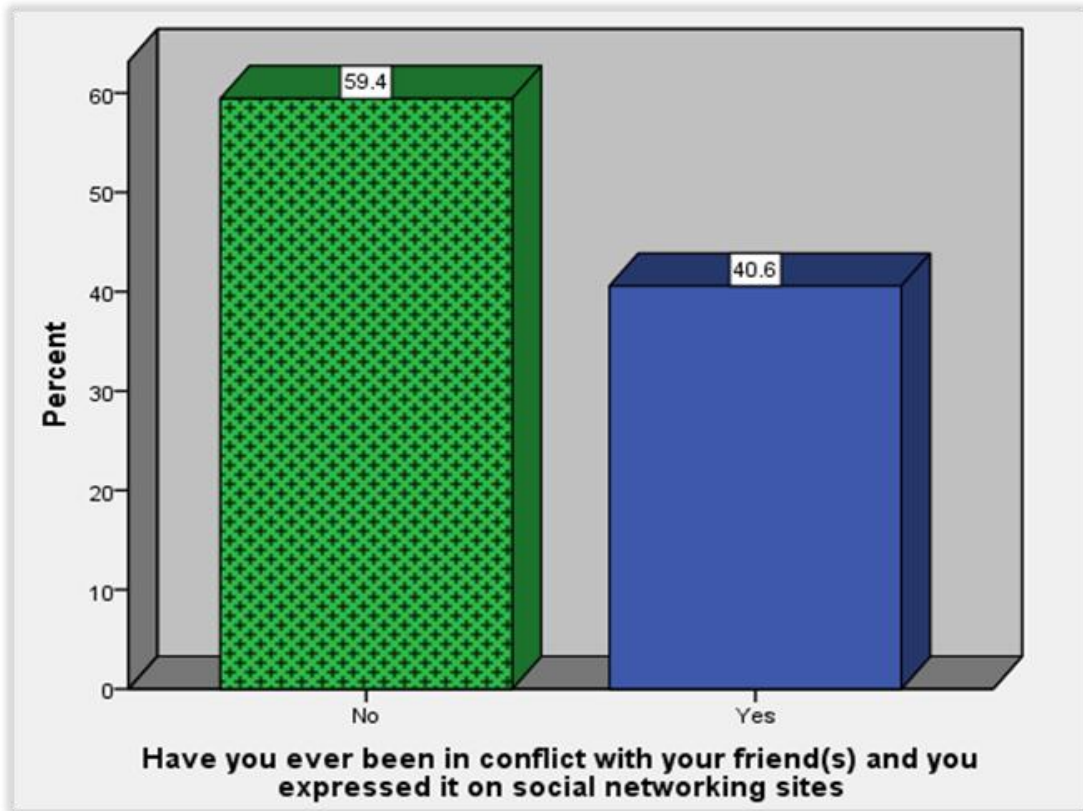


Figure 4.4: If the respondents has ever been in conflict with friend(s) and they expressed it on social networking sites

4.6.5.1 If the respondents ever talked about the conflict

Figure 4.5 shows that 66.1% said yes, they talked about the conflict with the friend(s) while 33.9% said no, they never talked about it.

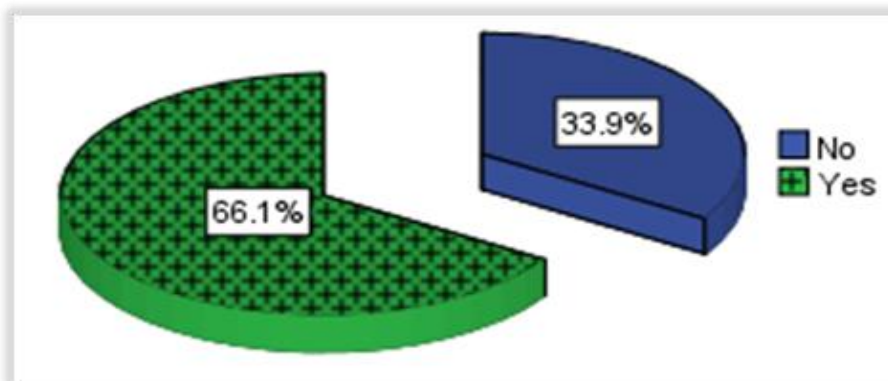


Figure 4.5: If the respondents ever talked about the conflict as in above

4.6. 6. If the respondent had friends on social media who they did not know in the real world

Figure 4.6 shows that 96.7% of the respondents said yes they had friends on social media whom they did not know in the real world. Only 3.3% said that they did not have friends on social media whom they did not know in the real world. It is important to note that the respondents mostly interacted with members of the opposite sex. This information was gathered from the focus group discussions.

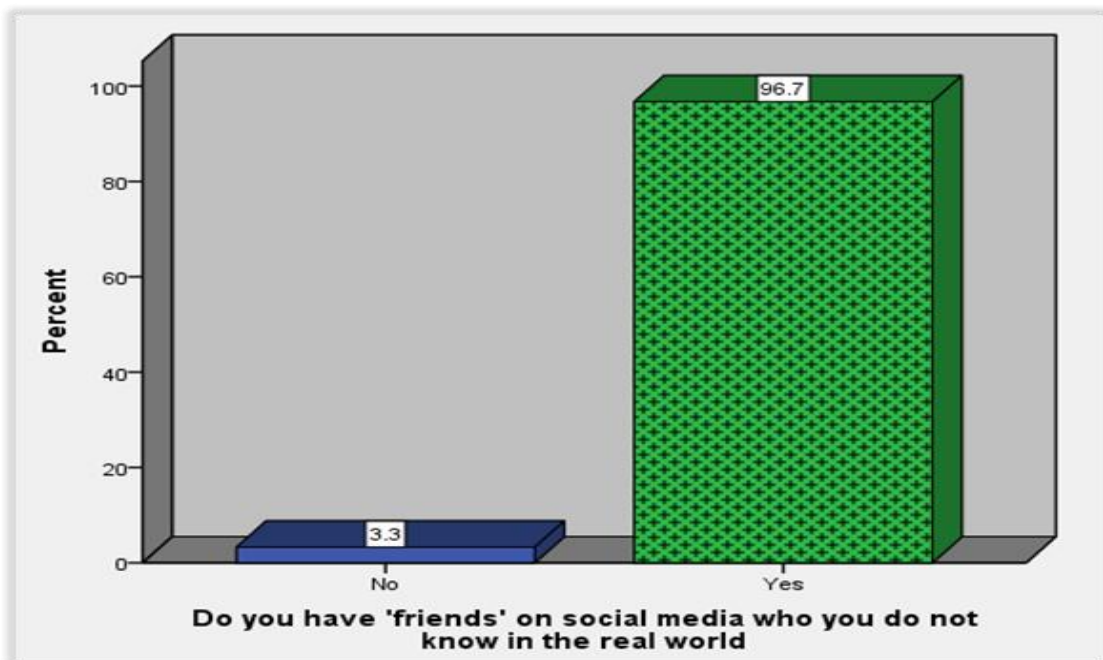


Figure 4.6: If the respondent had friends on social media who they did not know in the real world

4.6.6.1 Frequency of interaction with friends on social media who the respondents do not know in the real world

On how frequently they interacted with friends on social media who they did not know in the real world, 19.9% said quite often, 30.7% said often, 19.3% said somewhat often, 13.6% said somewhat rarely and 16.5% said rarely, as is shown in table 4.17.

Frequency	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Quite often	35	19.9	19.9
Often	54	30.7	50.6
Somewhat often	34	19.3	69.9
Somewhat rarely	24	13.6	83.5
Rarely	29	16.5	100.0
Total	176	100.0	

Table 4.14: Frequency of interaction with friends on social media who the respondent does not know in the real world

4.6.7 Impact of social media on social life in terms of the negative or positive effects it has on the respondents as a student.

93.5% said social media has had positive impact on their social life as a student while only 6.5% said social media has negative impact on their social life.

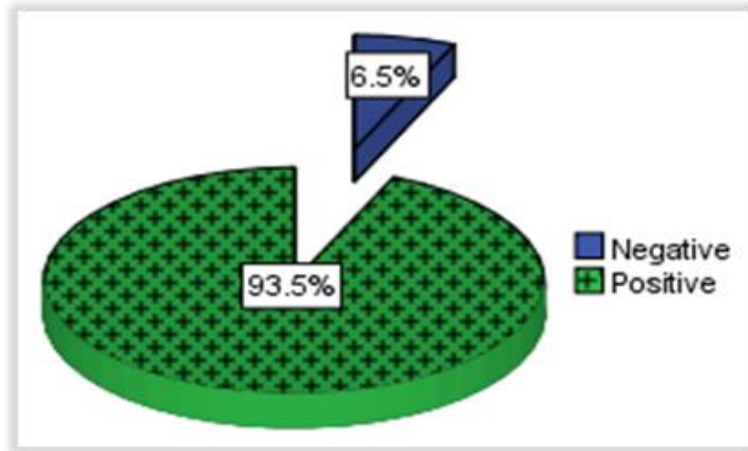


Figure 4.7: Impact of social media on social life in terms of the negative or positive effects it has on the respondents as a student

4.6.8 Impact of social media on education in terms of the negative or positive effects it has on the respondents as a student.

60.1% said social media has had positive impact on their education as a student while 39.9% said social media has negative impact on their education.

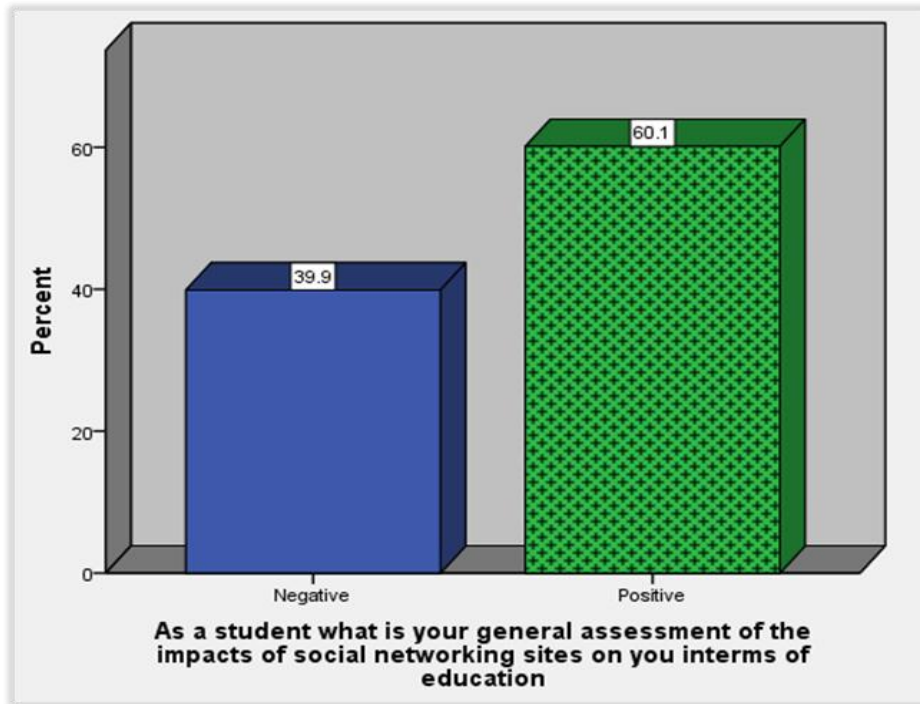


Figure 4.8: Impact of social media on education in terms of the negative or positive effects it has on the respondents as a student

4.6.9 Discussion.

These findings on table 4.12 confirm Lee & Sun, (2009), observation that worldwide, adolescent lives have become so busy and full of activities that their time to interact with friends is becoming more limited.

Teenagers are finding it easier to express themselves on social media than face to face and this means that their interpersonal relationships are affected because they are so busy on their phones thus interfering with their time for physical interactions. Face to face interaction which is filled with many nonverbal cues is not preferred by teenagers and this is due to the fact that although one is able to see the nonverbal cues when they are conversing face to face, it inhibits the teenager when he/she wants to express himself/herself especially to the opposite sex members.

They fear facing face to face rejection especially if the conversation is about relationships. The findings also show that although the teenagers prefer expressing themselves more online than face to face, they are cautious of how they express themselves, they do not voice personal/private matters on social media. Even when they get into conflict with their friends, the teenagers do not express it on SNS, and the few that do as is shown in figure 4.5 they talk it over with the parties concerned.

The above findings from table 4.13 shows that SNSs have actually improved the teenagers relationships among each other, especially those that belong to the same social circle, this does not put into account the fact that they also sometimes alienate the teenagers from the real world especially due to the fact that they spend a lot of time interacting with their virtual communities online.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study sought to investigate the impact of social networking sites on interpersonal relationships among teenagers; a case study of Murang'a East District. This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study. It offers a summary on the data collected, analysis of data, discussions of the findings on each research objective and the logical interpretation emanating from the findings. Finally the chapter makes recommendations on possible areas for further research.

5.2 Summary of the study

The objectives of the study were formulated in chapter one. The instruments used in collection of data included questionnaires and focus group discussions. Quantitative data was coded and inputted in statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20. The results were then carefully analyzed and well presented to represent the actual situation on the ground. Qualitative data was put into theme categories and tallied in terms of the number of times it occurred. Qualitative and quantitative data were linked to enable elaborate analysis of variables. The data was then presented making relevant citations in comparison with the studies that had been done earlier and that related to the topic of study. Summary and conclusions were derived from the findings of the study.

5.3 Major findings of the study

The study sought to find out that the extent to which teenagers are exposed to social networking sites. 39.5% of the respondents were on Facebook which again happened to be their favorite at 69.5%. The findings further indicated that teenagers visited some social networking site on daily basis. For instance, Facebook was the most visited with 75.1% visiting it daily and it was closely followed by Whatsapp with 63.5% visiting it daily as indicated in table 4.3. On time spent on social media, Facebook and Whatsapp were the top most ranked with 45.1% respectively. This is due to the fact that Facebook and Whatsapp have the most features in terms of enabling interactivity.

The motivating factors for teenagers visiting social networking sites were mostly for social networking, entertainment and getting information. Majority of the respondents had more than 400 friends in their Facebook profiles indicating that the teenagers have a greater online presence which broadly implies that they are well exposed to social networking sites.

The study also found out that Facebook and Whatsapp were visited 7 days in a week. And as mentioned above, they use the site for social networking, gathering information and for entertainment on average they spent either 2-4 or 4-6 hours a day chatting with online friends as is shown in. The study further revealed that majority of the respondents checked the social networking sites either 2-5 or 6-10 times a day. Basically, all this information indicates an up and growing pattern of social media usage or teenagers' interaction on social networking sites.

The study further revealed that social networking sites had various impacts on offline and online interpersonal relationships of teenagers. For instance, the respondents generally agreed that they were emotionally connected to Facebook. Some agreed that it has become part of their daily

activity. The study went on to reveal that social networks majorly helped them in bridging and bonding social capital with their online friends and family, they are able to keep in touch with friends and people they could not see on regular basis and they have been able to meet new people and connect with the people they shared common interest with. It is also indicated that social networking sites helped improve relationship between the respondents and their friends who belonged to the same social circle.

The findings also revealed that social networking sites had major impacts on the interaction of the teenagers. Majority agreed that they found it easier to interact or keep in touch with the friends online than offline and others found it easier to express themselves on SNS than talking face to face. 80% of the respondents said that social networking sites have improved their relationship with their friends. Majority of the respondents further said that they use their own mobile phones to access social networking sites. This enabled them to connect anytime and anywhere there was a network.

Finally the study revealed that social media impacts on the respondents' social life and education were positive in both cases. However, in education it needed approaching with caution as one could end up wasting their time on other things other than for educational purposes.

5.4 Conclusion of the study

The study set to examine the impact social networking sites had on interpersonal relationships among teenagers. In view of the above summary, it was evident that social networking sites impacted majorly on interpersonal relationships among teenagers. The study showed that teenagers were to a great extent exposed to social networking sites with most of them having

over 400 Facebook friends and having a daily online presence through their mobile phones mostly.

The study further showed that social networking sites had various impacts on the interpersonal relationships of the teenagers both online and offline. For instance, some of them would rather chat with an online friend than stage a face to face talk, this is because face to face may inhibit the teenagers from expressing themselves openly especially to members of the opposite sex.

The study also concludes that, although the SNSs have helped improve relationships among close teenagers as friends, they have also made the teenagers not to be able to build interpersonal relationships among other friends who are not close to them. They have inhibited the teenagers from being able to express themselves face to face especially to the members of the opposite sex because they are spending a lot of time on their mobile phones accessing the SNSs at the expense of going out and finding friends to interact with face to face. The research showed that teenagers have become addicted to social networking sites that some feel they would not survive without social networking sites.

5.5 Major recommendations from the study

1. Teenagers need to be taught on controlled usage of the social networking sites. So as not to rely heavily on SNSs.
2. There is also need to carry out more research to analyze the positive effects of the social media, particularly social networking sites, on education since this research did not address this adequately.

3. The Parents/ Guardians of teenagers should monitor closely their children's SNSs usage. If possible the parents should also join SNS so as to find out what actually happens in these sites.
4. Teenagers should also be guided on how to balance SNSs interactions with face to face interaction so as not to miss out on the fundamentals of face to face interactions.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

1. The study focused on teenagers, similar study can be done on other stages of human development such as young adults within their twenties.
2. The study generally focused on impacts the social networking sites had on interpersonal relationships among teenagers. A similar study can be done specifically on the positive impacts or the negative impacts of the social networking sites.
3. The study focused only on Murang'a East District. Similar study ought to be done elsewhere either nationally or internationally.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire for an academic study on the impact of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) on teenagers' interpersonal relationships. Your consent and participation is highly appreciated. Your answers will be held in utmost confidentiality and used only for the purpose of this study.

Eligibility criteria:

- i) Only those between 13 years and 19 years.
- ii) Must belong to a SNS.

A SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1. Gender i) Male ii) Female
- 2. Age a) 13-14 years ii) 15-19 years

B SECTION TWO: SOCIAL MEDIA RELIANCE AND USAGE

1. Do you use social media/social networking sites?

- i) Yes ii) No

2. Which of the following social networking sites do you normally use or have an account? Tick all that apply

- i) You tube ii) Twitter iii) Facebook iv) Hi 5 v) Whatsapp vi) Others specify -----

3. Which of the ones stated above is your favorite social networking sites.....

4. Approximately, how often do you normally use the following social networking sites while at home?

	daily	Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice a week	fortnightly	Once a month
Facebook						
Twitter						
YouTube						
whatsapp						
Others						

5. How much time do you spend each time you visit these sites?

	Less than 30 minutes	At least one hour	At least 2 hours	At least 5 hours	More than 5 hours
Facebook					
YouTube					
Twitter					
whatsapp					
Others					

6. What is your major motivation/reason for visiting/using social networking site? (List them below)

- i) -----
- ii) -----
- iii) -----
- iv) -----

7. About how many Facebook friends do you have?

- i) 50 or less ii) 50-100 iii) 101-200 iv) 201-300 v) 301-400 vi) More than 400

C. SECTION THREE: NATURE AND PATTERNS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

1. How many days in a week do you use the following Social networking Sites to get in touch with friends and family while at home? (Tick where appropriate)

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

2. What do you use social networking sites for? (Tick any applicable).

Chatting with friends		Find new friends	
Sending messages to friends		Post interesting links for the people in my life	
Commenting on friends updates		Keeping up with news and events	
Sharing photos and videos		For dating	
Making plans with friends /social groups		Keeping up with events in my friends lives	

Sharing updates with friends		Keeping up with trending topics	
Interacting with celebrities		Linking up with family members	

3. Approximately, how many hours per day do you spend with?

	0-2 hours	2-4hours	4-6 hours	Never
Friends online				

4. Emotional connection to Facebook

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (Tick where appropriate)
 Use a response scale in which **5=Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree**

	5	4	3	2	1
Facebook is part of my everyday activity					
I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while					
I feel I am part of Facebook community					

D. SECTION FOUR: SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. Do you think that social networking sites have?

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Helped you keep in touch with friends you can't see regularly?			
Helped get to know other students at school better?			
Helped connect with people whom you share a common interest?			
Helped you meet new friends?			
Helped you socialize with people you would not have been able to communicate with?			

2. What have Social networking sites done to your relationship with the following? (Tick where appropriate)

	Strained	Improved	No effect
Parents			
Friends			

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (Tick where appropriate) Use a response scale in which **5=strongly Agree 4=Agree 3=neither Agree nor Disagree 2=Disagree 1=strongly Disagree**

	5	4	3	2	1
I find it easier to keep in touch with friends online than offline					
Social networking sites take away my face to face socializing time with friends and family.					
I often get into trouble with my parents for social networking when we are together.					
I get angry with my peers who use social networking sites when we are together.					
I find it easier to express myself on social media than while talking face to face.					
I feel closer to my friends who are on social media than those who are not on social media.					
I like discussing trending issues with my friends on social media.					
I feel left out if my friends know something that I don't and it's on social media.					
I am willing to voice anything about my personal life on Social Networking Sites					

4. Do you think social media has affected your relationship with your friends?

i) If yes, explain how.....

E: INTERPERSONAL DISCUSSION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Have you ever expressed your frustrations on social networking sites after a friend offended you?.....

.....

i) If yes, did you ever talk about it?

2. How do you get access to your favorite Social networking site? (Tick where appropriate)

i) Own mobile phone ii) Parents mobile phone iii) Cyber café iv) Laptop v) others (please indicate the device) -----

3. Do you have ‘friends’ on social media who you do not know in real world?

i) If yes, how often do you interact with them?.....

4. As a student what is your general assessment of the impact of social networking sites on you in terms of; (positive and negative)

Social life.....

Education.....