THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTHS IN KENYA:

(A CASE OF GITARU LOCATION, KIKUYU)

This Research Project Submitted For Partial Fulfillment of the Award in
Diploma In Public Relations of the University of Nairobi.

AUGUST 2013
DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been presented for examination or any other academic award in any other University.

Name: ___________________________ Sign: ___________________ Date: ________________

This work has been submitted for examination with the approval of a University Supervisor.

Name: ___________________________ Sign: ___________________ Date: ________________
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God for his plentiful blessings for the duration that I was undertaking the project.

Moreover my family members especially my parents for their moral and financial support that they have extended to me throughout my studies.

I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final level has enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject.

Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me including my fellow students through their encouragement during the completion of the project.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project is much a success through the support i got from my friends; my colleagues at the University for being around to discuss my ideas, as well as my family who have continued to encourage towards successful completion of the research.

I would also like to thank the academic and library staff at the University of Nairobi for their support throughout this year with research materials.

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the following people for their motivation, moral and financial support as well as their trust in me for the completion of this research.

1. Peter Njoroge Mburu
2. Sharon Sano Eshitera
3. Pius Njeru
4. Richard Mbugua
5. Naomi Mwaura
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**WAP**- Wireless Application Protocol

**GPRS**- General Packet Radio Services

**3G**- Third Generation

**ZPD**- Zone of Proximal development

**SNS**- Social Networking Service

**HTML**- HyperText Markup Language
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore both positive and negative effects of social media and how they have influenced the behaviours and attitudes of the youth in Gitaru location. Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social networking has become very popular during the past few years and it plays an important role in our day today life. The following were the research objectives for the study; to determine effective ways in which the young people in Gitaru location can use social media responsibly; to investigate some of the effects of social media on youths in Gitaru location; to investigate the skills that youths are developing, enhancing, or extending through the use of social media.

This study employs a descriptive survey aimed at investigating the effects of social media and how they have influenced the behaviours and attitudes of the youth in Gitaru location. The target population of interest consists of the youth Gitaru location, Kikuyu. This population consists of one hundred (100) youths. A sample of 86 youths is taken using stratified random sample which gives each item in the population an equal probability chance of being selected. The study therefore intends to examine a sample of 86 respondents. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaire included structured and unstructured questions and is administered through drop and pick method to respondents who are the management staff working in the bank. A descriptive analysis technique was used. Descriptive analysis was done quantitatively by use of descriptive statistics. This included use of descriptive statistical tools such as Ms. Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to generate frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations as well as tables, figures and charts.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social networks are about people using the internet by using interactive capacity to build new relationship. It concerns internet ability to enable people to share experiences by use of social media like Facebook, YouTube and Yahoo. Social networks targets 16-25years age group and gives them an opportunity to use online networks to reach their friends, generate new ones and share experiences, information and insights. Social network is helping to re-engineer the way in which part of the society link together and share information (Walmsley, 2007). Social media creates a platform whereby Kenyan youths in Gitaru location discuss issues that affects their welfare like music, religion, drug abuse, alcohol, teenage pregnancy, early marriages, premarital sex, rape, homosexuality, lesbianism etc.
children, has led to high incidences of youth violence and untoward behavior. However, the media content has not been entirely negative.

There are many effects of using social media as a tool for interaction and in this case the youths in Gitaru location have become more conversant with the new technology that has emerged. In Gitaru location, there are many well equipped computer schools which the young people join after clearing Secondary Schools. There are other primary and secondary schools which offer computer lessons at a fee therefore computer literacy among these youths has enabled them to operate the new manufactured computerized devices in the market.

Social networking has become very popular during the past few years and it plays an important role in our day today life. It helps us in every field in life such as political field, economic and educational field. Various gadgets like mobile phones have gained popularity in the past few years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I- Mobile subscription</th>
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<th>Apr-June 10</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Subscriptions (Million)</td>
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<td>20.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
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<td>Mobile penetration (%)</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>51.2</td>
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<td>100 inhabitants</td>
<td>150 inhabitants</td>
<td>200 inhabitants</td>
<td>250 inhabitants</td>
<td>300 inhabitants</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet penetration (% of population)</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Communication Commission of Kenya

1.2 Statement of the problem

Social networks have become widely used mode of communication among the youths in Kenya today. By the year 2013 social media has gone beyond being Facebook friends, sharing funny videos, tweeting and poking friends to a platform with the ability to change the world.

In Kenya the twitter community known as KON (Kenyans On Twitter) is particularly active, using this social media platform for online activism. Computers make work easier, faster and less costly. Young people in Gitaru town have gained computer skills due to cheaply available computer packages offered by many colleges. Therefore there has been a problem in controlling the use of social media among these youths. Initially social media was meant to connect friends, make new friends, share funny videos and photos. Unfortunately social networks have been misused and the youths have diverted its initial purpose and have used it as a tool for social crime like creating fake accounts and conning innocent people or engaging in immoral behaviours like pornography.

Social interactions come overwhelmingly online rather than face to face. Kenyan youths are showing severe lack of social skills. They are often more comfortable with technology than they are with talking to people. They have not learnt the proper communication and conversational skills on how to deal with interpersonal situation and how to date and get to know other people behind the screen.
This study therefore seeks to understand the relationship between the effects of social media and youths, and to determine in what way social media is interfering with youths' lives. This study highlighted some of the effects of the use of social media among the youths in Gitaru.

1.3 Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to explore both positive and negative effects of social media and how they have influenced the behaviors and attitudes of the youth in Gitaru location.

1.4 Objectives of the study
The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine effective ways in which the young people in Gitaru location can use social media responsibly.
2. To investigate some of the effects of social media on youths in Gitaru location.
3. To investigate the skills that youths are developing, enhancing, or extending through the use of social media.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the effective ways that the youths in Gitaru location who can use social media responsibly?
2. What are the social behaviors that the young people in Gitaru location adopted due to frequent use of social media?
3. What skills are youths developing, enhancing, or extending through the use of social media?

1.6 Significance of the study
This study provided insights to the organisation that target the young people on the most used social media, and can use them to reach their target audience for the benefit of increasing profits for their companies. Consecutively, the study could be used for academic benefit by the student conducting research on the social networking as a secondary material for their...
Moreover, from the research it will be of benefit to the one conducting it since it could enlighten the researcher on the social behaviour caused by continued use of social media by the youth and attempt to provide possible solutions of the findings.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

The researcher being a youth in the Kikuyu area made it easy to interact with the fellow youths in the area while conducting the research.

Financial and moral support from my family members made the study successful; support from friends with reading material and sharing their life experiences on usage of social media.

Frequent attendance of fun days enabled the researcher to conduct interviews with the youth in the Kikuyu during weekends and get the required materials for the study.

1.8 Limitation of the study

Firstly, financial constraint made it hard to conduct the study since social networking requires a lot of internet usage which is very costly. However, friends and family contributed towards the whole study to ensure it was completed successfully.

Power outage disrupted the research due to an operation of installing new electrical transformers during the time of the research. This challenge was overcome by changing the location with constant power away from the area affected by power outage, and having a backup of the research in various data storage devices.

Time aspect was a limiting factor because it was hard to cover all the geographical areas in Kikuyu because the area is quite large and some interior parts of Kikuyu have no effective infrastructures like road and electricity. For areas that were unavailable, the researcher used
the social media and searched for friends in those areas and sent Facebook request to them in order to request for information concerning this study.

Many youths were reluctant to answer the questions for the fear of being disclosed in the research despite of the researcher’s assurance of discretion. However, the researcher made friends with various youth groups in churches and social gatherings like PCA, Catholic and Anglican Churches within Kikuyu and organized a fun day whereby there was a lot of interaction and bonding to gain the trust of those youths and be able to conduct a discussion on how social media has affected those youths.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The study seeks to assume that the information given by the population of the youth in Kikuyu town is the true and honest information. The time allocated for this research study was sufficient to allow a thorough job to be done and eventually preparation of the research report.

1.10 Definitions of significant terms

**Media** – it is an instrument of communication.

**Social media** – it is a social instrument of communication which creates, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

**Mass media** – these are diversified media technologies that are intended to reach a huge audience by mass communication such as radio, television, recorded music etc which transmit information electronically.

**Social networking** – this is an online service, platform or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social network or social relations among people who share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections.
Internet - it is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard internet protocol suite to serve several billion users worldwide.

Computer - it is a general purpose device that can be programmed to carry out a finite set of arithmetic or logical operations since a sequence of operations can be readily changed, the computer can be solve more than one kind of problem.

Interaction – it is the communication of any sort eg two or more people talking to each other, or communication between groups organisations, nation or state etc.

Technology – it is making modification, usage and knowledge of tools, machines, techniques, craft, system and methods of organization in order to solve a problem, improve pre-existing solution to a problem, achieve a goal, handle an applied input/output relation or perform a specific function.

Online - A state of connectivity in regard to computer technology.

Digital - It is storing information such as sound or pictures as numbers or electronic signals.

WAP - Wireless Application Protocol

GPRS - General Packet Radio Services

3G - Third Generation

Mobile ubiquity - means portability of mobile phones ie meaning it is able to reach users at virtually any location at any time.

Online communities - this is a virtual community that exists online and whose members enable its existence through taking part in membership rituals by creating an online account.

Websites - It is a set of related web pages served from a single web domain.

Chat rooms - it is any technology ranging from real time, online chat and virtual interaction with strangers over instant messaging and online forums to fully immersive graphical social environment.
email - Electronic mail is a method of exchanging digital messages from an author to one or more recipients. This operates across the internet or computer networks.

Wireless networking - refers to any type of computer network that uses wireless radio waves for network connections.

Smart devices - it is an electronic device that is codeless and is capable of voice and video communication, internet browsing etc. eg mobile

Secondary data - Information collected from already existing data.

Electronics device - It is a machine or a piece of equipment that is powered by electricity to operate.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter one above entails the introduction of the study explaining some of the effects of social media on the youths. Additionally, the reason for research was set out with the objectives of the study clearly defined along with formulation of research questions that the study aimed at fulfilling. The significance, limitations, and delimitations are consecutively indicated.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
The prevalence of social media in the lives of young people has brought interest and concern about the role of education and the implementation of such tools without strong research to back up claims of social media’s effectiveness for skill development or enhancement and learning. Since very little research has been done on social media, this section included relevant literature reviews on the effects that arise from its use with regards to youth. The literature review added onto the already existing literature although concentrating more on effects that it has on youths.

Today’s youth are being corrupted by a new and powerful source. Social media has flourished in the age of the Internet. It offers a way to keep in touch with new and old friends, network, follow bands and companies, and offers a mini biography of each user’s life. When used responsibly and with caution, social networks can be a great tool. When used in an immature or careless manner, social networks can be a dangerous medium capable of great damage. Young people are often incapable of identifying when this tool is being used in a damaging manner as opposed to a constructive and useful new technology. Social media is corrupting today’s youth by promoting bullying, short attention spans, instant gratification, and a society based on popularity rather than accomplishment.

2.2 Theoretical review
The three current theories that can be applied to social media are: constructivism, situated learning, distributed cognition. Below are brief overviews of each theory and how social media ties into them.

2.2.1 Social Constructivism theory
The basic tenet of social constructivism is that the social environment is the facilitator of knowledge construction and that learning should not be disassociated from the environment (Schunk, 2004). In social constructivism, a key assumption is that learning is collaborative with meaning negotiated from multiple perspectives (Smith & Escue, 1999, p.12). Social
constructivism therefore places stress on the process of social interaction and collaboration among learners. Importantly, the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is essential for understanding proper instructional conditions (Schunk, 2004). Vygotsky defines the ZPD as the distance between the actual development level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

Social media's environments align with the learning principles of social constructivism in that social media provides a context that allows people to engage in authentic and collaborative environments. Social media gives individuals the opportunity to access multiple perspectives that are constantly being negotiated through collaborative and participatory activities.

Additionally, varying levels of expertise are offered in social media environments. Those with more knowledge often share their skills or understanding with those who are less knowledgeable about a certain topic or domain, generally to accomplish a task or to foster the lesser greater awareness in the community of practice in order for them to interact and participate at a deeper level (Ito, 2010).

2.2.2 Situated Learning theory

One advantage of social media is the potential for authentic situated learning experiences. Situated learning theory assumes that learning can be enhanced when it takes place within an authentic context and culture because situations can aid in co-producing knowledge through activity (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989), and “knowledge is assumed to accrue in meaningful actions” (Driscoll, 2007). Learning is therefore perceived as a situated and generative activity rather than acquisition of knowledge.

According to Brown, Collins, & Duguid (1989), the learning formula for situated learning must involve activity, concept, and culture. Proponents of situated learning argue that humans
use actual experience to think with; in other words, we think and learn by paying attention to our experiences of participation (Gee, 2010). It is not the private mind that learning occurs through but the world of experience and what we mainly experience is shared through social and cultural groups (Gee, 2010).

The ubiquitous access to social media environments fits in well with the learning assumptions of situated learning, such as the use of tools in authentic contexts, i.e. being able to edit wiki in situ. Many social media tools are spontaneous and flexible, allowing learners to “exploit small amounts of time and space for learning” (Traxler, 2009, p.8) within the context culture of the social media environment. Additionally, the use of social media applications requires that the learner will need to develop a conceptual understanding of its functions in order to navigate the environment successfully. Lastly, social media fits perfectly well with the concept legitimate peripheral participation, providing communities of practice that encompasses novices, where experts guide novices which gets reproduced into the environment.

2.2.3 Distributed Cognition theory

Distributed cognition is a psychological theory that knowledge lies not only within the individual but also in the individual’s social and physical environment. Distributed cognition refers to a process in which cognitive resources are shared socially in order to extend individual cognitive resources or to accomplish something that an individual agent could not achieve alone. Human cognitive achievements are based on a process in which an agent’s cognitive processes and the objects and constraints of the world reciprocally affect each other.

Social media tools are used in the context of the person plus the surround. Social media, in its very essence, is designed to easily re-distribute content. As such, the theory of Distributed cognition (Fusco, 1993) plays a key factor in the facilitation of social learning.
The theory of distributed cognition views knowledge acquisition as distributed beyond the compass of the organism; by involving other persons, relying on symbolic media, and exploiting the environment and artefacts (Perkins, 1993).

2.3 Theoretical review

2.3.1 Current Skills “Youths” Are Developing Through Social Media

This is aimed at answering the research question that regards skills that youths are developing, enhancing, or extending through the use of social media. Youths in Gitaru are developing numerous skills both negative and positive as a result of engaging in social media continuously. These skills that are developed are certainly affecting their lives within the society.

In order to bridge social media into formal learning environments, it is important to understand how youths are currently interacting in social media and what skills are being developed or enhanced by social media tools. Currently, there is a lack of specific research studies on the use of social media among young people and the skills being acquired, not because of an absence of interest, but perhaps because the evolution of social media technologies is ever changing; no one can say with confidence whether Twitter or Facebook will even be relevant in two years. Conducting such research may make researchers reluctant to focus their interest on social media technologies that continue to rapidly evolve (Crook et al., 2008). Following this; this study is conducted so as to understand some of the skills that young people in Gitaru are acquiring as a result of engaging in social media.

Currently, social media is providing young people with platforms for developing their identities, social skills, technical skills, and media literacies in informal contexts rather than in the formal context of school (Ito et al., 2008). Many of these social media platforms serve as a springboard into exploration and experimentation with digital media content, which can sometimes lead to more focused interest-driven practices where young people will engage...
with communities of experts. In essence, social media tools have created the modality for expression and teens have used these tools to define or redefine culture, identity, learning, and literacy.

One of the most notable studies was carried out by Ito et al. (2008; 2010), who conducted an ethnographic study on youth engagement with new media and the new forms of learning and engagement occurring in new media. The study found that there are generally three phases of participation that occur while young people engage in new media and networks. The researchers categorize these phases as ‘hanging out’, ‘messing around’, and ‘geeking out’ (Ito et al, 2008; 2010). Ito et al. (2008) also suggest that young people initially go into social media environments as a friendship-driven focus, primarily as a space to ‘hang out’ with their peers. ‘Hanging out’ in social media environments is often much like ‘hanging out’ in a physical space, where young people share music, stories, games, and other information, but this is done primarily through posting, linking, or forwarding.

‘Hanging out’ can sometimes lead to ‘messing around’, which Ito et al. (2008) refer to as “the beginning of a more intense, media-centric form of engagement”. ‘Messing around’ is viewed as the temporary or intermediary stage of ‘hanging out’, and is the interest-driven participation which involves tinkering, experimentation, and exploration with low investment and consequences. The practice of ‘geeking out’ ‘primarily refers to an intense commitment or engagement with media or technology; in addition to high levels of specialized knowledge attached to alternative models of status and credibility and willingness to bend or break social or technological rules’. In geeking out, the young person is “learning to navigate esoteric domains of knowledge”. In other words, geeking out is engaging in high level practices in a specialized community; whether it be in game design, music or video production, or fictional story writing. The important aspect of ‘geeking out’ is that young people are seeking experts in a domain.
Ito et al. (2008; 2010) concludes that by engaging in social media environments young people are participating in peer-based learning, which is driven by friendship and interest dynamics, and by doing so they are developing social competencies that they value. Young people are actively engaging, developing, shaping, and negotiating new media literacies. Additionally, young people’s participation in social media spaces is no different from the values found in those of adults, as young people are using the space to gain a sense of autonomy and self-efficacy, and to develop their status, identity and reputation among their peers. Ito, found that the skills and literacies young people acquire through social media environments involve negotiating and testing social norms, ethics, values of education, and customization of their learning process. All of these are necessary parts of adulthood. In the study of Gitaru location most of the youths have been pulled into the social media through peer influence where an individual feels the need to be like their peers who could be inciting others through discussing their experiences that they have had while using social media.

Greenhow and Robelia’s (2009) study found that students’ use of social networking services (SNS) such as MySpace has helped them develop twenty-first century competencies, especially in regards to technological fluency and digital citizenship. The authors found that students were developing communication, creativity, and technology skills while participating in online social networks because SNS sites facilitate the engagement of web page designs. This requires the ability to know how to use basic HTML to work with images, videos, and audio files, and to be able to troubleshoot and manipulate information. These are cognitive activities that help students develop their own conceptual knowledge and sense of competency (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Young people’s engagement with identity work such as identity formation, self-discovery, and identity presentation not only helps them gain technological fluency, but also is an important aspect of digital citizenship as they begin to explore what their roles and responsibilities are within a digital space.
Selwyn (2009) looked at students’ education-related information postings on Facebook and found that students posted only a minor amount of education-related information. However, when education-related information did appear, students used the social networking site primarily to recount or reflect on their university experience, share practical information about courses (e.g., schedules, location of lectures), share academic information (e.g., display supplication and moral support with regards to assessment and learning), and banter about their academic in competencies and disengagement. On the surface, it may appear that students were not developing any essential skill sets, but Facebook provided the students with a situated learning experience in the identity politics of being a student, one in which they could express their identity of being a student, challenge and question academic authorities, and articulate, work out, and understand the role conflicts they have as students, all within a space among peers who have a shared understanding (Selwyn, 2009). Developing skills such as conflict resolution of student role and identity within an educational system is useful because when students leave school and enter the workplace, they have practiced articulating, understanding, and handling role conflicts in a rational and effective manner.

Selwyn (2009) explored the use of Web 2.0 technologies in and out of school among young learners and found that students were predominantly engaged in social activities such as sharing photos, music, sharing with personal profiles, entertainment, and so forth. (Selwyn 2009) felt that there was more evidence of daily passive and low creative activities occurring with students’ use of Web 2.0 technologies. Although the study did not find any significant skill sets being developed, it should not be denied that students are still engaging in content creation and socialisation with their peers, skills that are important to develop for the twenty-first century. Clark et al. (2009) suggest that Web 2.0 technologies still have great potential for skill development and that schools ought to guide students towards using
beyond the obvious functionality of technologies. Since Web 2.0 technologies are so much a part of young people’s everyday life, education should find pedagogically useful Web 2.0 tools in order to help students become aware of the potential benefits in using such tools. It is evident that social media has the potential to be useful tools when students are guided in how to appropriately use and look for the affordances and advantages that social media tools have to offer for skills development (Clark et al., 2009; Ye et al., 2008). However, successful implementation cannot occur if young people and educators’ attitudes and perception of social media tools in formal education have not been taken into consideration. Hence, though such technologies as web 2.0 play a great role in enhancing technological skills of youths in Gitaru location as a result of the great skills acquired. These youths have gained skills like typing fast and effectively due to frequent chatting via mobile phones or computers. These are some of the importance of engaging in social media to the youths of Gitaru.

2.3.3 Cyber Bullying as witnessed in the Social media

Cyber-bullying has been described as an aggressive intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.

Bullying has been a part of human life for all of recorded history, but social media is sparking a frightening increase. This disturbing trend is becoming more prevalent as social media becomes a part of everyday life. Other, social media is blamed, as the victim has been attacked repeatedly on sites like Facebook and Myspace. Some claim that this attack on social networking is unfair and the sites are easy culprits. O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson, doctors in the American Academy of Paediatrics, disagree saying “cyber bullying is quite common, can occur to any young person online, and can cause profound psychosocial outcomes including depression, anxiety, severe isolation, and, tragically, suicide” (O’Keeffe...
Because of the ability for a bully to attack at any time now, as opposed to just at school or the playground, the pressure on the victim has greatly increased. Plenty of factors are responsible for the short attention spans of society in recent times. Mass media feeds the world news in small loud doses, consumers are constantly bombarded with quick advertisements on television, and companies rarely look past the next quarter. Social networking certainly has a hand in this. Users are encouraged to post status updates and, in return, read the status updates of others. These updates are typically short, and often devoid of any critical thinking.

Young people have suggested that cyber-bullying is one of the main challenges they face in the digital world (Cross, 2009). A survey by the charity Beatbullying (Cross, 2009) found that nearly one third of all 11-16 year olds have been bullied online, and for 25% of these the bullying was ongoing. It has been argued however, that not all young people who engage in cyber-bullying are aware of what they are contributing to; what is perceived as a joke or idle remark by the perpetrator may be taken extremely seriously by the target (Cross, 2009).

(Cross, 2009) shows that young people subjected to verbal abuse at school can have this abuse supported by a number of spectators and bystanders. When this verbal abuse follows the young person into cyber-space in the rapid way it does, it continues at home. Not only are young people then victims of bullying in what should be perceived to be a safe environment (Cross, 2009), but its rapid arrival into cyber-space means that an infinite number of supporters can join in the bullying. Many of these supporters would not usually engage in the abuse face-to-face and might not understand the impact it can have on the victim while they hide behind their computer screens. In Gitaru location, the youths have continually experienced cyber-bullying through instances where one updates a post for instance on Facebook or Twitter which does not please other people and then there is a backlash aimed at
This could lead up to insults from the youths and is mostly likely to multiply to larger boundaries, in some cases some youths were reported to have closed their accounts as a result of some posts they had made on their accounts. Also some youth in Gitaru area who engage in cyber bullying get the perception that if they bully someone they can get more famous or become a celebrity by engaging in bullying the weak who cannot engage in the negative conversation.

2.3.3 Young People's Attitudes and Perceptions

Recent studies show that on average youths are spending between one and six hours per day on social networking sites. Each youth has on average between 400 and 500 Facebook friends. A very worrying statistic is that a quarter of children aged 11–16 state that they communicate online with people who they have never met in real life. The biggest attraction of Facebook and other online media sites for young people is the social aspect of them and the easy access they give teenagers to friends, photos and games. For a young person the most important thing is their friends, and social media sites is where their friends are.

Easily accessible through the phone, iPad, desktop and Wii, the over-use of social networking has become a serious threat to study habits. Youths in some cases are checking in compulsively all through study time at home and are unable to stay on task for more than a few minutes at a time. Parents/guardians and teachers have a right to be worried. The overall impression that we get from parents/guardians is that they have serious concerns about social networking. They want to have some control over their son’s use of social networking but don’t know how. They don’t want to ban them from the site completely, (there is little point in trying this anyway), but they worry about the impact it is having on their study time. Parents/guardians want to balance the priorities of study and social life for teenagers and they realise that social networking is a huge part of life for teenagers today.
Youths in Gitaru are spending numerous times on social media. This is certainly likely to affect their school work, along with homework that their parents could have assigned them. This will lead towards conflict with the parents along with the teachers in the two cases. In addition these young people get the perception that exposing their profile on social media will earn them publicity hence they give their most confidential details to persons with hidden agendas such as using the information in their profiles in destructive ways.

2.3.4 The Impact of Social Networks on youths today

Let's look at the youths of today; modern day life in the city at times restricts physical social interaction among these young people. Long school hours, commuting times and threat of rising crime combined together act as a compelling factor which keeping many youth at home for long hours. As a result, those with Internet access turn to online social networks which enable not only instant communication with friends but also enable the sharing of similar interests. In that sense, social networks represent an effective platform for teenagers to interact and socialise.

These social networks have also been responsible for bringing together like-minded people in a quick and efficient manner that would be difficult to duplicate without the Internet. There have been claims that the Internet is impersonal and reduces social contact between people but that assumption is being proven wrong as social networks where it often leads to real world activities. For example, a group of Malaysian outdoor lovers set up the Malaysian Outdoors Trekking, Hiking, Snorkel Facebook Group. Within a year of setting up, the group had attracted more than 5000 members and volunteers had organised numerous outings all over Malaysia.

Consecutively, there is an impact on education too. Social networks are also being used by teachers and students especially in the West as a communication tool. Teachers and
preferences are forums and groups to extend classroom discussions. Some of them routinely use Twitter to communicate announcements and information to their students. It is a two-way process as students too are using these mediums to share feedback to their teachers.

People today are still being overwhelmed by the tremendous amount of news and information online, which has led to this natural mechanism to shut off all the news and take in only short headlines of most news that comes in, content that this is “sufficiently informative” for them and reading further only when a piece of news is of deep personal interest. Social platforms and networks reinforce this further. Twitter in particular, with its 140 character limit on each tweet, means that whatever needs to be communicated must be summarized.

While social networks generally are having positive impact on the society, especially youths, there are also negative impacts on the society.

Perhaps the biggest repercussion of social media is children grow up thinking that popularity is the most important asset in life. Popularity and being liked are certainly advantages in life, but not nearly as essential as being genuine, skilled, and courteous to others. Social networking teaches the opposite, as shown in research by Kleck et al. that Popularity, pleasantness, heterosexual appeal, and confidence of the profile owner were greater when there was a high number of “friends” on an individual’s profile than when the lower coefficients were displayed (Tong, 2008). This demonstrates to children that the most important thing is to have as many “friends” as possible, regardless of the depth of the relationship. This is a slippery slope, as there is a tipping point. After a point, too many connections may result in negative judgments (Tong, 2008). This type of imbalance can be hard for an adult to manage. To expect children to balance this while they are still learning about relationships has potentially devastating consequences, while also discouraging true bond
on personal achievement. When children don’t learn how to be genuine, skilled, and courteous, they won’t be able to truly reap the power of their network and succeed in life.

Successively, most of the young persons are not aware of the website policies when setting their profiles and they may not be even aware of disclosing the information to the third parties like the advertisers. Most of the teenagers like to post their information publicly which will affect them when the business or people with cruel intentions may use their information for wrong purposes.

Social media has many pros and cons and is quickly becoming a hot topic of debate for various issues. When handled with care and maturity, I believe that social networking is an ingenious invention that is extremely useful, but the most frequent users of social networking are the youth of the world. These sites are fraught with danger for young people who have not yet built the important social skills for life. Youths need to emphasize developing critical skills first, before focusing on building a vast network of contacts via social networking. A tool of great power, social networking is unfortunately corrupting today’s youth, rather than promoting a society based on personal growth, accomplishment, and meaningful relationships.

Moreover, making friends has become easier with these social networking sites like facebook, google+ and twitter etc. In older days it was a bit tough to make friends unless and until one has personal interest of going out and making friends. Later after in the decades of 70’s and 80’s mobile phones helped in connecting and improving conversation with people. And now the exploration of social networking sites sprang up and it has changed the whole idea of making friends once more and forever. Youths can make unlimited friends worldwide and chat with them without any time limit and even at free of cost. Nowadays youths can have a video chat which is also available for free of cost. This can be considered as one of the best advantages of having social networking sites. Youths can connect with friends whom we missed out in out childhood.
Everybody is becoming so busy with their lives that they don’t even have time to communicate with their family members. Our time is getting thinner and thinner with busy work schedule and family commitments. Social networking sites give the young people a chance to communicate in a speedy and effective manner. Writing in face book, Google+ and twitter will reach as many people as they want just in a span of seconds and with no cost. These sites will allow the young people to live a life which is unhindered with a small talk. Not only communicating with friends within the circle but young people can also make friends worldwide easily. They can build a network of friends and can share ideas, photos and videos through these sites. Through this they have updated news of friends and family members.

2.4 Conceptualization

![Figure 2.4 Conceptual Framework](image-url)

**Figure 2.4 Conceptual Framework**

- **Cyber Bullying**
- **Acquiring of New skills**
- **Attitudes and perceptions**
- **Youths’ in the social media**
- **Rapid communication**
- **Lack of Privacy**

- Low self esteem
- Developing violent behaviour towards others
- Enhance understanding of technology
- Developing loner personality
- Keeping with many people and old friends
2.5 Summary of Variables

Privacy – Most of the young people are not aware of the website policies when setting their profiles and they may not be even aware of disclosing the information to the third parties like the advertisers. Hence they are greatly affected where for instance, they may post their information publicly which will affect them when the hackers or people with cruel intentions may use their information for wrong purposes.

Moreover, popularity and being liked are certainly advantages in life, but not nearly as essential as being genuine, skilled, and courteous to others. To the young persons the most important thing is to have as many friends as possible, regardless of the depth of the relationship. This can be deemed as a slippery slope, or there is a tipping point. After a point, too many connections may result in negative judgments.

Rapide communication – Since every person is becoming so busy with their lives that they don’t even have time to communicate with their family members. The time of the young people is getting thinner and thinner with busy work schedules and family commitments. Social networking sites give us a chance to communicate in a speedy and effective manner.

Writing in face book, Google+ and twitter will reach as many people as we want just in a span of seconds and with no cost. These sites will allow us to live a life which is unhindered with a small talk. Through these sites the youths can build a strong relationship with friends and relatives. This can help foster friendship and make bonds strengthen them. Because friend is the only person with whom they can share everything related to their life.

Connecting with groups will help in improving one’s own business, thus creating profits.

Professional sites like LinkedIn will have many groups based on different criteria. Through LinkedIn young people get jobs and some promote their business.
New attitudes and perceptions—youths are spending more time on social media such that between one and six hours per day one is on social networking sites. Moreover, they youths are believed to send not less than a hundred texts a day, leading to 3000 texts a month.

Acquiring of New skills—social media is providing young people with platforms for developing their identities, social skills, technical skills, and media literacies in informal contexts rather than in the formal context of school. Many of these social media platforms serve as a springboard into exploration and experimentation with digital media creations, which can sometimes lead to more focused Internet-driven practices where young people will engage with communities of experts. In essence, social media tools have created the modality for expression and youths have used these tools to define or redefine culture, identity, learning, and literacy.

Not only communicating with friends within the circle but youths can also make friends worldwide easily. They can build a network of friends and can share our ideas, photos and videos through these sites. Through this youth can have updated news of friends and family members.

Cyber Bullying—Usage of social media may cause a chance for emotional distress in getting frightening, irritating and degrading communication from another teenager. It's been proved that cyber bullying will build advanced levels of depression and anxiety for victims and also resulted in youth suicide. It has been noted that most of the families become victims of this cyber bullying.

Young people have suggested that cyber bullying is one of the main challenges they face in the digital world. Because of the ability for a bully to attack at any time now, as opposed to just at school or the playground, the pressure on the victim has greatly increased. Moreover,
young people subjected to verbal abuse in the cyber space can have this abuse supported by a number of spectators and bystanders.

2.6 Summary

Chapter two constitutes the literature review of the previous studies where the researcher looks at other studies. The researcher used the previous studies to try and bring out the effects of social media on youths and specifically to the youths of Gitaru location in Kenya.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains research design, targeted population, sampling procedure and data collection instrument that were used in the study towards accomplishing the research objective and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This research was a case study. In research, a case study refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves. The researchers used a case study because this places more emphasis on a full contextual analysis of few elements and conditions and their interrelations which relies on qualitative data (Jessop, 1998). The case study was chosen for the study because it enabled the researchers to get more detailed information about the youths in the area.

This study used both Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative approach: This is the use of non-quantifiable method to collect, to evaluate and analyze data (Borg and Gall, 1993). The reasons for this approach are: permit the researchers to study selected issues, cases, or events in depth and detail. Also, Data collection is not constrained by predetermined categories of analysis, allowing for a level of depth and detail that may not be provided by the quantitative approach (Borg and Gall, 1993).

On the other hand, quantitative approach involves the use of structured questions where the response options have been predetermined. The researchers sought to use this approach because it is more objective and it helps in achieving high levels of reliability and a higher degree of objectivity.
3.3 Target Population

Target population is defined as universal set of the study of all members of real or hypothetical set of people, events or subjects to which an investigator wishes to generate this result (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The target population for this study consisted of a sample of 100 youths from the study area. Consecutively, the sample size for the study was 86 youths from Gitaru location. Gitaru location is situated in the Kiambu in the central region of Kenya. Respondents were randomly selected from Gitaru location to enhance efficiency of the case study undertaken.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the process by which a relatively small number of individual, object or event is selected and analysed in order to find out something about the entire population from which was selected. A sample is a small proportion of targeted population selected using some systematic form.

Stratified random sampling design was used in the study. Kombo and Tromps (2006) points out that it involves dividing entire population into homogenous sub groups and then taking a simple random sample in each sub group. The stratified random sampling method which is best suited in this research because the population consists of different people. This method was appropriate because it was able to represent not only the overall population but also the key sub groups of the populations. The method was best because it minimises biasness. The general procedure for taking a stratified sample was to a stratified population, that defined a number of homogeneous partitions through sample size, and then the researcher combined the results to obtain the required stratified sample. The sample therefore was drawn from each stratum where respondents were selected.
Non-probability sampling procedures were also used through purposive sampling techniques in order to capture information from a knowledgeable group of respondents. Orodho (2003), states that purposive sampling is handpicking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of one's judgment of their typicality.

Table II-Target population and sample size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 to 21 years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 29 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 to 35 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Methods of Data Collection.

Questionnaire was administered to all the respondents in the sampling groups. The questionnaire was constructed with both open and closed ended questions to enable for quantitative and qualitative analysis respectively. The questionnaire containing 10 questions were both closed and open-ended questions in almost equal proportions. The closed questions were restrictive so as to facilitate the coding exercise while the open-ended questions sought for considered answers and opinions and give freedom to the respondents. This aided in obtaining honest answers since the respondents might find challenged to exercise their mind and participate freely in the exercise and this makes them gain confidence. Answers to the open-ended questions acted as a check on those closed ones to ensure that there is consistency on the part of the respondent.
A number of literature sources were consulted based on the objectives of the study. These sources allowed extraction of data on the past trends on the effect of social media on youths, type of studies and data collection methods to be used and how problem was viewed, answer some of the research questions, make necessary comparisons and handled in different cultural contexts (Mugenda, & Mugenda, 1999).

3.6 Validity and reliability

The methods used for research in this study such as questionnaire provided surety of data validity since it was administered by the researcher on the respondents. Where clarifications were needed, the responder would provide clearance on the issues that arose. Consequently, the questions administered were short, clear and precise. Hence the method used was valid and reliable for the study.

3.7 Operational definition of variables

Privacy – Most of the young people are not aware of the website policies when setting their profiles and they may not be even aware of disclosing the information to the third parties like the advertisers.

Rapid communication – through social media one can engage with friends in far distances who they could see frequently or had contacted some time back.

Attitudes and perceptions – youths are spending more time on social media such that between one and six hours per day one is on social networking sites. This could lead to development of new behaviours that could change them either in a positive or negative manner.

Acquiring of New skills – social media is providing young people with platforms for developing their identities, social skills, technical skills, and media literacies in informal contexts rather than in the formal context of school.
3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

For the Qualitative analysis, the data received from the open ended questions were summarized to form themes, responses and explanations. Then the data was analysed using content analysis (Chambers, 1983). For the quantitative analysis, the feedback was directly collected from the questionnaires, which was coded and organized for analysis.

All the information was then put together and the researchers came up with a conclusion, recommendation and suggestion for future study.

3.9 Summary

This chapter explained the research design, the targeted population, sampling procedures and data collection instrument that were used in the study towards accomplishing the research objective and data analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter gives the analysis of the study findings which were collected and analyzed by the
researcher by use of stated method to enable better understanding of study findings. The
objective of this study was to examine the effect of social media on youths in Kenya while at
the same time looking at identify situations in which youths perceive the use of social media
with regards to their daily lives.

4.2 Analysis and Interpretation

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 4.1 Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 shows that 60% of the respondents represented male while 40% of the respondents
were female. This indicates that a large sample of the respondents were male.

Age of respondents

Table 4.2 Age Groups Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 give the age group sample that shows the respondents that responded to the questionnaire that was administered. Of the 86 youths, 40 youths were between the ages of 17-23, 35 were ages 24-29, and 13 were ages 29-35.

### 4.2.2 Social platform widely used

Table 4.3 Social platforms widely used by youths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social platforms used</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My space</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 2.0 technologies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1 Age group sample
Table 4.3 was used to investigate the platforms that were mostly used by youths in Gitaru location. From the study 46% of the respondents indicated that they used Facebook as a social platform, 40% of youths were using Twitter, 10% used MySpace and 4% of the respondents were using Google+ as their medium of social media communication.

### 4.2.3 Skills developed, or enhanced through use of social media

From the respondents of the study, they attested to have developed numerous skills as a result of continuously engaging in social media. From their response it could be classified that through social networks youths have developed a together like-minded thing, where people contact each other in a quick and efficient manner that would be difficult to duplicate without the Internet. Consecutively, some respondents indicated that the internet use had led them to being more impersonal and reduced social contact between people. This was a result of the fact that an individual uses so much time on the phone or device that he or she is using for communication such that there is no time for people who are around him or her.

Nonetheless, respondents stated that social networking sites gave them a chance to communicate in a speedy and effective manner. This involved even people that were in far distances hence closely keeping in touch with their loved ones whom they did not see often. Moreover, from the respondents the young people's engagement with identity work such as identity formation, self-discovery, and identity presentation not only helped them gain technological fluency, but also they viewed it as an important aspect of digital citizenship as they began to explore what their roles and responsibilities are within a digital space.
4.2.4 Various effects on youths in the process of using social media

### Table 4.4 Extent of effects on youths using social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects on youths using social media</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of similar interests</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing social contact with people</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced interaction with family members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced connection with old friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved communication with family members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 above shows the extent to which youths were affected as a result of social media use. 25% of the youths stated that they to a great extent shared information of similar interests among themselves. 26% of the respondents felt that through social media use they were reduced social contact with people due to the fact that they were constantly on their social media device. 21% agreed in a moderate manner that there was reduced interaction in the families since almost everyone was busy using a phone for instance when they are seated together in the evening. 23% of the respondents strongly agreed that as result of social media, there was increased interaction with old friends whom they had no physical contact.

Conclusively, only 5% of the respondents felt that social media enhanced communication among their families.
4.2.5 Skills developed

Table 4.5: Skills developed in various contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill developed</th>
<th>Formal context</th>
<th>Informal context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing your identities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical skills</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media literacy</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 displays some of the skills that were developed as a result of the two contexts, the formal context such as schools and the informal context involving schools. From the respondents, it is clear that most of the skills were developed in the informal context, and not many skills are developed in the formal context such as schools.

4.2.6 Cyber bullying while using social media

Table 4.6 Cyber bullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cyber bullying</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 4.5 and figure 4.2 shows that cyber bullying is rampant with the use of social media.

From the study, 61% of the respondents stated that they had experienced cyber bullying while 39% responded that they had not experienced it.

From the study it was noticeable that most of the victims of cyber bullying were the females who responded more to have experienced cyber bullying as a result of using the social media in one way or the other.
4.2.7 The range of hours that you use in social media averagely per day

Table 4.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of hours on social media</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 1 hour</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to two hours</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to three hours</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to six hours</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above six hours</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.3 showed the time that youths spend on social media averagely in a day. A large pool of the respondents, 54% said that they used social media for more than six hours a day; 26% spent three to six hours, while 11% responded to use it two to three hours a day, and 6% and 3% for one to two hours and zero to one hour a day respectively.
4.2.8 Ban from using a social platform

From the study it was evident that numerous youths using social platforms had their account terminated, closed temporarily or received warnings from the various platforms that they were using. This indicates that the respondents had either not read the signup policy or were ignorant of the consequences that would befall them.

4.2.9 Use of social media forums and groups as a source of communication by teachers

Table 4.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of social media forums and groups as a source of communication by teachers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses: Yes vs. No]
Table 4.8 and Figure 4.4 indicate that 74% of the respondents had either used a group or another platform that their teachers in different learning institutions had used to either post announcements or even assignments for the youths that were students.

4.3 Summary

The findings above were analysed from the information that was collected from the area of study along with the employment of recent literature that had been conducted on youths and their social media use.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The study was carried out in order to assess the effect of social media on youths in Kenya. The general objective of the research was to explore both positive and negative effects of social media and how they have influenced the behaviors and attitudes of the youth in the study location.

This chapter includes the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

5.1 Summary

From the study, it is evident that in the present world social media is providing young people with platforms for developing their identities, social skills, technical skills, and media literacies in informal contexts rather than in the formal context of school. We can come to a conclusion that young people are actively engaging, developing, shaping, and negotiating new media literacies. Additionally, young people's participation in social media spaces is no different from the values found in the adults, as young people are using the space to gain a sense of autonomy and self-efficiency, and to develop their status, identity and reputation among their peers.

The ability of young people's engagement with identity work such as identity formation, self-discovery, and identity presentation was evident in the study where it could be viewed to not only help them gain technological fluency, but also as an important aspect of digital citizenship as they begin to explore what their roles and responsibilities are within a digital space. This could be termed as a positive for youths in the location since they are developing technological and educational wise.
Additionally, from the study it is evident that youths use a lot of time on social media which could have been used for other productive activities. While they are outside the social world most of the youths are busy getting the latest news, while updating and reading updates of other individuals.

Even with the fact that students in Gitaru who are youths stated that they used social media as a platform to check on announcements from schools; from the study after surveying students' education related information postings on Facebook, it was found that students posted only a minor amount of education related information. Nonetheless, when education related information did appear, students used the social networking site primarily to recount or reflect on their university experience, share practical information about courses (e.g. deadlines, location of lectures), share academic information (e.g. display suppli-cation and exam support with regards to assessment and learning), and to boast about their academic accomplishments and disengagement.

From the study young people have suggested that cyber-bullying is one of the main challenges they face in the digital world. Consecutively, most youths in the study had in one way or the other engaged in cyber bullying, either they were aware of what they were contributing to, or perceived it as a joke or idle remark. The biggest attraction of Facebook and other online media sites for young people is the social aspect of them and the easy access they give teenagers to friends, photos and games. The study indicates that for a young person the most important thing is their friends and social media sites is where their friends are.

Use of social media is accompanied by policies that ought to be strictly followed which if not one face disciplinary measures. The study showed that most of the youths were ignorant of these policies although they were meant to protect them from issues of security among others.
5.2 Conclusion

From the study, it is evident that social media plays a great role on the development of youths and has a great effect on their behaviours. Parts of the skills acquired are very beneficial since the world is turning to technology and one could significantly apply what is learned to real world scenarios. For instance, teachers using Facebook or Twitter to post announcements is a healthy and helpful way for the youths. Nonetheless, some of the skills acquired are not very helpful to the youths rather they could be negative and lead them to practising things that are not very helpful.

The fact that they engage in social media all day long shows the level to which they perceive its importance. Parents are not playing their role of monitoring their children as they should hence the youths are being influenced by other people in the society. Cyber bullying is rampant among the youths of Gitaru either being bullied or being involved in the bullying as their friends. It is a growing trend in social media which ought to be tackled in a great way or it will lead to larger destruction than it is already doing.

Youths ought to have better knowledge of the rules and private policies that come along with social media and adhere to them. This is so because youths are so ignorant of the policies and go ahead violating them either unknowingly or with knowledge that they are making mistakes.

With the continuous use of social media youths are developing some attitudes such as one being lonesome where one does not need to socialize with people rather they spend a lot of time on their phones hence abandoning the fact that they should live socially with other people.

5.3 Recommendation

The following are recommendations based on the findings of this study:
3) Parent’s involvement and participation has a significant effect on the behavior of the students hence parents ought to be very much involved with the activities of the youth so as to guide them.

4) Youths ought to be given the right advice on the use of social media with them being informed on both the positive and negative effects of it through being taught.

5) Teachers in collaboration with parents could organize some platforms where youths could meet up with counselors to guide them on the use of social media platforms as well as their relationships on the social media and taught against bad practices like cyberbullying.

6) Youths ought to ensure that they use social media for benefits that are positive and can influence them positively.

5.4 More Research

There are still a lot of future research still needs to be done on the long-term effects of the mobile phone and social relationships. Something that should be looked at is how the mobile phone affects relationships over time, as well as what the long term health effects are, and how the access and use of cell phones varies through different socioeconomic classes.

However, you can see how in its short history, cell phones have already had a huge impact on the way individuals interact with one another.
REFERENCES


Educational Researcher, 18(1), pp. 32-42


Cock et al. (2002). Web 2.0 technologies for learning: The current landscape – opportunities,
disadvantages, and tensions.


APPENDICES I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick within the boxes and fill the structured questionnaire with applicable answer to enable the study to be a success.

1. Gender

   Male
   Female

2. Highest Education Level Attained

   Primary
   Secondary
   College
   University

3. Which social platforms do you widely use?

   Facebook
   Twitter
   MySpace
   Web 2.0 technologies
   Google+

4. What are some of the skills that you have developed, or enhanced through the use of social media

   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................
3. Indicate to what extent the following statements can be viewed to have an effect on you in the process of using social media.

Indicate the level of agreement with 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of similar interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing social contact with people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduced interaction with family members</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhanced connection with old friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved communication with family members</td>
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</table>

6. Social media platforms help youths in developing their identities, social skills, technical skills, and media literacies. Indicate in which contexts, either informal or formal contexts such as schools do the social platforms have an effect on you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill developed</th>
<th>Formal context</th>
<th>Informal context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing your Identify</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Literacies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7. Have you experienced cyberbullying while using social media?

Yes
No

If yes, to what extent can you state to have experienced it?

To a great extent
Moderate extent
Minimal extent

8. Have you engaged in cyberbullying yourself while using social media?

Yes
No

9. What is the range of hours that you use in social media everyday per day?

0 to 1 hour
1 to two hours
Two to three hours
Three to six hours
Above six hours

10. Have your parents ever banned you from using your social platform?

Yes
No
If Yes, Please indicate a reason


11. Do teachers in your area institutions use social media forums and groups as a source of communication to the student?

Yes □

No □

12. Do you read the website policies while setting up a profile in the social media?

Yes □

No □
### APPENDIX III: SCHEDULE OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

#### Table II: Schedule of Research Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (weeks)</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Proposal Writing</td>
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<td>2. Pilot study</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Collecting data</td>
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<td>4. Analyzing data</td>
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<td>5. Compiling the final copy</td>
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## APPENDIX IV: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>UNIT COST</th>
<th>AMOUNT IN KSH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>1 ream of paper</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duplicating</td>
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<td>1600</td>
<td>1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel and meals</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>3000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text books</td>
<td>Proposal and Thesis Writing (Kombo and Tromp)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contingencies</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>