

THE EFFECTS OF ONLINE INTERACTIONS ON THE YOUTH'S
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: A CASE STUDY OF DAYSTAR
UNIVERSITY- NAIROBI CAMPUS

by

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APPROVAL

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In accordance with Daystar University policies, this thesis is accepted in partial
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DECLARATION

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I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any
other college or university for academic credit.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Nicholas Nyaga

(14-1698)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at exploring the psychological effects of online interactions on the youth. This was because online interaction has increasingly assumed an important role in everyday life in the recent years. Reprehensibly, it has resulted to variety of effects in the lives of the youth. These effects are age dependent, and the effects depend on the amount of time spent online and the quality of the relations formed online. The study was conducted in Daystar University, Nairobi campus among the students aged between 18 and 35 years. Approximately, 140 respondents were selected through stratified random method from the various programmes and years of study. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to establish the psychological effects of online communication, to find out if these effects vary with social demographic characteristics, such as age, level of study, sex, and course being undertaken, and to recommend intervention measures for any negative effects. The research applied both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, using questionnaires and interviews. The findings revealed that the youth derived varied satisfactions from online interactions, such as self, social and security satisfactions. For this reason, the youth preferred the online interaction to the real-time face to face social interaction. The study also found that a 71.1% of the respondents spent up to 5 hours in an average day interacting online, which encouraged isolation and formation of superficial social interactions. Further, 98% of the respondents reported to be aware of the various psychological effects that might result from the incessant online interactions. Some of the effects suggested were dependence, decreased face to face interaction, poor academic performance, stress discontentment. Equipped with that information, recommendations were presented to the parents, caregivers, universities, university counselors, policymakers for right interventional measures to assist the affected young people.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved wife Rosemary and my two children Jude and Precious. It is also dedicated to my parents James and IddahNyaga, who have been very much concerned about my well-being, especially during the difficult moments.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS


CAK	Communication Authority of Kenya
CCK	Communications Commission of Kenya
HOD	Head of department
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
NACOSTI	National Council for Science and Technology
REBT	Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy
SNS	Social Networks Sites
SPSS (V19)	Statistics Package for Social Sciences, Version 19
SWLS	Satisfaction with Life Scale
U and G	Uses and Gratification theory
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
WHO	World Health Organization
WWW	World Wide Web

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Online interactions are communications where members relate virtually with each other primarily via the Internet. On this platform the people build an online community or virtual community among members who share similar interests and activities Boyd and Ellison adopt Sunden's, (2003). Individuals who wish to be a part of an online interaction usually have to become a member through a particular site and necessarily need an internet connection. Online interactions may encourage individuals to come together, feel like home, consisting of a family of invisible friends. Given the nature of the online interactions, individuals' relationships is through instant messaging, chat rooms, forums, e-mail lists, discussion boards and social networking sites, video games and blogs Boyd and Ellison's, (2007). The main features in online communities that attract people are a shared communication environment; relationships formed and a nurtured sense of belonging to a group, common space shared by people with similar ideas and interests.

According to Nielsen Company (2009) Kenya is among African nations with fastest growing internet markets and internet penetration increased from 7.5 % in 2006 to 28 % in 2011. By the end of June 2012, there were 14.032 million internet users. Much of this growth can be attributed to increased mobile internet connections, fibre cable distribution and intensified promotions on social media applications by mobile operators. A nationally representative survey conducted in 2011 by InterMedia in

Kenya found that while very few teenagers between the ages of 15 to 19 had internet access in their households or a personal computer, three quarters have a mobile phone in their household and close to half have a personal mobile phone, a factor which has made most Kenyans access online interactions. Kenyans have very limited restriction access to the social-networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter, Skype, the video-sharing site YouTube, and the bloghosting site Blogger. Social media metrics tracker Social Baker posited that, Kenya has 2,018,560 Facebook users, representing 5.04 % of the total population, and 19.24 % of the online population. The largest age group on Facebook in Kenya is the 18-35 year-old group. Consequently, if each successive generation of youths were to dedicate more and more time to online activities on these social networking sites, it would appear to weaken the ability of young people to engage in expressive, face-to-face interactions (JEPER, 2015).

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, justification, assumptions and the scope of the study.

The limitations and delimitations, significance of the study and definitions of terms in the study are also provided.

Background of the Study

In our contemporary society technology is greatly influencing our way of doing things. Through online social media, distance has been greatly reduced as regard to communication. To relate with those people thousands of miles away from us is no longer a big issue. Precisely, almost every individual above eighteen year in Kenya, especially in the urban areas has used a modern technology as a means to

communicate. Given the freedom most of our youth are enjoying today, the online interactions have become so rampant especially among the youth. Most young people confront the problem of relationship; firstly as individuals and secondly as a group as they help their peers. Ferreira, Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2006) stated that professional helpers, such as, psychologists, counselors and by default tutors, may deal with the problem persistently as an essential part of their daily undertakings.

Having worked with several colleges in Nairobi as a tutor and administrator has exposed the researcher to many interaction issues that youths go through. This experience brought about an understanding of some issues that the youths are struggling with as a result of the online social media. Lorente (2002) held that the behaviour of youth is mostly the same all over the world and more so in relation to technology usage. For this reason, it is important to note that the effects of online interactions among the youth are experiencing in Kenya is similar to those in other parts of the world. Therefore, the researcher got interested in examining the effects of online interactions on the psychological wellbeing of the youth after coming across several cases of psychological distress or disorders amongst the youth due to online interactions.

Psychological well-being is usually conceptualized as some combination of positive affective states such as happiness and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life (Deci & Ryan 2008). According to Huppert (2009) psychological well-being is about lives going well. Looking into past related studies the researcher has appreciated that there are many psychological effects emanating

from internet-use among the young people. According to Walsh (2009) there are many constructive benefits from the online usage, however there are also widespread destructive effects. This study the researcher was interested in finding out psychological well-being hindrances, hence the motive for undertaking this research on the effects online interactions on the youth psychological wellbeing. To measure psychological well-being some instruments will be used without any having gained dominance as the best. For life satisfaction components by Diener Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS: Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 2003).

Youth are tech-savvy users; they are doing anything possible to get in the online social networks in order to whatsapp, instagram, tweet, or facebook their online friends. This brings about distraction that is likely to be reflected in some youths' academic or work performance (Walsh & White, 2007). Other youths are spending more time than necessary on online (James & Drennan, 2005) resorting to stealing money from home and from each other to get access online to where there is no free internet connections (Ray, 2010). Peer influence plays a major role in this behaviour. Some youth due to pressure from peers may end up following what the group is doing just to be in the social network. This involuntary conformity has affected many young people greatly; for some given their age, background and status (Campbell, 2005).

The researcher thought of carrying out this study on online interactions to compare the psychological and social effects of youth from the rest of the world to youth in Kenya. This is because the researcher found very limited documented data that addresses whether the online interactions affect the social maturity and psychological

wellbeing of the Kenyan youths, who either complement or replaced face to face interaction to the superficial relationships.

Problem Statement

An online interaction is an essential feature for young people's social learning and social reinforcement in real life situations regarding their psychological wellbeing (Pew Internet Report & American Life Project, 2004). However, a longer and incessant time spent online is likely to be a source of stress to young people leading to feelings of loneliness, affecting maintenance of self-esteem (Demir&Tarhan, 2001;Parkhaust& Asher, 1992). Further studies carried out in different parts of the world indicated that online interactions are displacing strong ties which are thought to lead to a better psychological outcome (Armstrong, Phillips,&Saling, 2000;Kraut&Mukopadhyay, 1999; Shaw& Gant, 2002).

Armstrong, Phillips and Saling (2000) examining internet use and self- esteem levels, and found that increased use of online interactions was associated with low esteem. Other authors suggest that online interaction may enhance the quality of existing offline relations and, thus, psychological wellbeing (Gross, 2004; Valkenburg, Peter,&Shouten, 2006). Conversely, some authors asserted that online contacts are superficial weak-tie relationship that lack quality of affection and commitment, thus reducing the quality of existing relations and thereby, their psychological wellbeing (Bryant, Sander-Jackson, & Smallwood, 2006).

Several studies have researched the correlation between online communication and psychological wellbeing providing ambiguous data or mixed results (Moody, 2001;

Gross, 2004; Valkenburg, Peter, & Shouten, 2006; Lenhart and Madden, 2007). Hardly any literature was found based directly on online social involvement regarding how increased online social interactions affect the Kenyan young people psychologically. It is not known whether online interactions affect the youth psychological wellbeing. Therefore, this study aimed to fill this knowledge gap by establishing if the online interactions affected youth development towards psychological well-being; that is, social maturity aspects as regard to their thoughts, attitudes, behaviours and social conduct.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of online interactions on the youth psychological wellbeing.

Objectives of the Study

In carrying out the research, the researcher was guided by the following specific objectives to:

1. Establish the psychological effects of online communication.
2. Find out if these effects varied with social demographic characteristics (age, level of study, sex, course being undertaken)
3. Recommend intervention measures if there were any negative effects.

Research Questions

The study determined whether youths in universities have been affected by incessant online interactions psychologically, the following were the main questions of concern:

1. What psychological effects did the youth get from the online communication?
2. Did these psychological effects of continuous online interactions vary with demographic characteristic (age, level of study, sex, course being undertaken)?
3. What were the interventional measures if there are any negative effects?

Justification of the Study

Young people are among the majority in online interactions (Lorente, 2000) may be due to the time at their disposal. According to Australian Research Council (2007), the majority of online technology users are youth at the age of 35 years and below. As a result of fascination derived from the online interactions, the youth may spend too much time online, which could lead them to being psychologically affected. Online interactions have great influence on youth in the way they develop psychosocially. The way youths are connected to these online interactions is both a frightening prospect for parents and policy makers. There is no comprehensive knowledge of the kind of interactions Kenyan youths do online and their effects on the youths' wellbeing. Most of the youth are spending too much time online, replacing face to face interactions. According to Erikson's theory, if young person development is impaired one is at risk for a weak sense of self and a less mature identity.

Studies from other part of the world have found that prolonged online interactions by the youth have affected their psychological well-being (Demir&Tarhan, 2001; Armstrong, Phillips & Saling 2000 and Shaw& Gant, 2002). Failure to have this knowledge in our context means that we might be leaving our youth to be

psychologically affected as they spend most of their time on online interactions. This study therefore sought to specifically investigate if the youth who are perpetually on online interactions are psychologically affected and then give a appropriate recommendations. The reason for concentrating on the students in Daystar University in Nairobi was because most of them have easy access to online social sites. Additionally, it helped to shed some light to the psychological effects that may befall those engaged in continuous online interactions. As a result, it brought to the fore the psychological challenges affecting the youth due to online interactions.

Significance of the Study

The study would be importance to the young people and all significant others in their lives. The outcome of this research would provide useful information to parents, counsellors, administrators and other concerned parties in the lives of the young people. As such they would be in a better position to understand the psychological effects the continuous online interactions have got in the lives of the youth. This is important for it would enable them to help the youth appropriately on issues related to online interactions. The findings would also be useful to the youth as it informs on consequences that could arise from unrelenting use of online interactions. This is intended to help them to realize the various useful aspects from online interactions that can make them see it as a tool that could be beneficial to them in academic or career work and other related social matters.

Given the many psychological issues that are attributed to the online interactions among youth such as anxiety, stress, weak social ties, time wastage, lower self-

esteem, loneliness, online addiction, and other such psychological anomalies; then the effects of online interactions is a concern of everyone in the society (James & Drennan, 2005 and Walsh & White, 2007). Therefore, this study is assumed to be useful to professional psychotherapists and policy makers as they strive to address the issues that emanate from online interactions among the youth. Informed by the finding of this research, professional psychotherapists would be better prepared to handle technological advancement issues and also equipped to conduct preventive psychotherapies. In exploring the possible psychological effects of online interactions, the study would be useful to the parents, practitioners, policy makers and academic world as they get equipped with information on how to curb some of the adverse effects that comes with online interactions. On the other hand, the policy makers would be supported by these research findings in their daily endeavours of addressing various challenges related to the communication technology and its complexity.

Assumptions of the Study

There are various assumptions that were predicted during the research:

1. The respondents were honest in disclosing their information to the researcher.
2. The respondents were actually psychologically affected by constant online interactions.

Scope of the Study

The study targeted the university students in Daystar University, Nairobi campus who were using social network sites to interact online. Most of these students were self-

employed or working either in private or public sectors. Precisely, the research aimed at the young people aged between 18-35 years in the university who had been affected psychologically as a result of unrelenting online interaction as opposed to face to face interaction. They included both the undergraduates and postgraduate students from diverse backgrounds, status, religious denominations and may provide wide information necessary for this study. The researcher took into account the nature of the university programmes and schedules. The sampled students were from all programmes in the campus, either in day or evening programs.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

There were several limitations that the researcher came across in carrying out this research.

1. Some respondents were not willing to explicitly talk about the effects they were experiencing as a result of incessant online interactions. To overcome this limitation, the researcher encouraged them to share freely by assuring them confidentiality for all their disclosures.
2. Some respondent were not aware of effects the unrelenting online interactions had on their psychological wellbeing. To deal with this limitation, the researcher used instruments and tools that enabled students identify and recognize possible effects continuous online interactions had on their psychological wellbeing.

3. Due to diverse schedules that the students had, it was difficult to form focus group discussions which would have been ideal data collection method. To address this limitation, the researcher opted for questionnaires and interview guides instead.
4. Issuing questionnaires to respondents to fill at leisure resulted in loss and wastage. To address this limitation, the researcher and the research assistants gave the questionnaires to the respondents, asked them to fill in promptly and collected them right away. This was possible because the researcher made advantage of gatherings like during lunch breaks, after chapel, discussion groups and so on.

Definition of Terms

Apprehension: Feeling tense, uneasy, worried, anxiety and vulnerable but based on an unclear threat (Coon & Mitterer, 2007). In this study, apprehension, anxiety and worry was used interchangeably.

Discontent: A common condition characterized by depressed mood, loss of interest, feeling of guilt or low self-worth, and poor concentration (WHO, 2010). In this study, despair meant the discontent low moments students experienced due to their continuous online interactions.

Online dependency: This is a habitual compulsive use of online social media for interpersonal interactions (Gross, 2004). The term dependency was used synonymously with addiction in this study.

Online interactions: These are virtual large groups of individuals in the social media who share common interest and activities online (Bryant, Sander-Jackson, & Smallwood, 2006). Online interactions in this study meant a networking through social media sites where young people share common information of their interest.

Psychological well-being: In the context of this study psychological wellbeing referred to mental or emotional happiness, welfare or safety of one's life in general (Diener, Lucas, Smith, & Suh, 1999). The psychological effects results from online interactions, thus altering face to face nature of social interaction.

Stress: In this study stress meant the psychological distress the youth experienced due to unrelenting online interactions. According Coon and Mitterer (2007), stress is a mental and physical illness that may occur when one has adapted to an environment.

Strong or weak ties: In this study face to face interactions are seen as social strong ties that enhance interactions and online contacts as weak tie interactions that lack feelings of affection and commitment as defined by Lloyd (2007).

Social network sites: These are internet social networking sites, which enable users to make and modify personal profiles with files, information, photos and videos. In a public social media friends and others can communicate by browsing and post messages with ease (Davis, 2010).

Youth: These are people who are not far advanced in age (Crowther, 1995). In this study participants were young people, youth, and students in Daystar University aged between 18 – 35 years.

Summary

This chapter introduced the study and then examined the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the objectives, and the significance of the study. The justification, assumptions, limitation and delimitations of the study were also provided. The next chapter lays the theoretical basis for the study by reviewing the relevant literature.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the psychological effects of online interactions among the university students. The theoretical framework is to be presented first, then the typical features and history of online interactions is discussed briefly for clear understanding of the development of the online interactions. It presents a general idea of how the online virtual interactions or communities emerged. This is later followed by the general overview of the online social interactions, their possible effects. Thereafter, the conceptual framework is also discussed.

Theoretical Framework

According to Guosong (2009), in the understanding of user-generated media: a uses and gratification perspective, an increasing amount of individuals are looking to the internet and social media to fulfill cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative, and tension free needs. The Uses and Gratification theory, according to Leung and Wei (2000) look into how people use different media for psychological or social needs. With internet technology as a supplement to satisfy needs, it is in turn affecting everyday life, including relationships, school, church, entertainment, and family. The Uses and Gratification theory has been the most preferred theory in understanding the reasons for using a certain technology and its outcomes (Walsh, 2009). In this study the research was aware that in recent years the online usage has

increasingly assumed an important role in aspect of the society. But for the purpose of this study the researcher focussed on the online social relationships in the light of how these interactions affect the wellbeing of youth who are being ushered to the adult society.

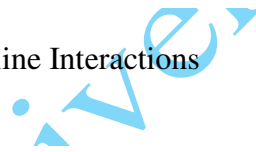
A firm basis for psychologically mature adults relationships lay in proper friendship and peer pressure belongingness is salient to psychological development of the young people. The theory was pertinent in ascertaining the motive behind the online interactions obsession among the young people. The model used in this study was to correlate between gratifications people received from online interactions and development of certain behavioural tendencies (Walsh, 2009). This is because it gives a very clear comparison between the users of a given technology and the technology as a service (Guo, 2009). This study will derive from the model of reasons people embrace diverse technologies. This was used to describe how the young people had been on continuous online interactions and how this technology had affected their psychological health.

History of Online Interactions

Online social interaction on the World Wide Web (www) began in the form of generalized online communities such as Geocities in 1994, Theglobe.com in 1995, Tripod.com in 1995 and PlanetAll which started in 1996. The focus of these early virtual communities was on bringing people together to interact with each other through chat rooms, and encouraged users to share personal information and ideas via personal webpages by providing easy-to-use publishing tools and free or inexpensive

web space. In the late 1990s new communities like Classmates.com emerged; who assumed a different perspective by having people relate to each other through email addresses. By the end of the 1990s, newer generation of social online networking methods began to flourish. Such sites included, SixDegrees.com in 1997, Makeoutclub in 2000, Hub Culture and Friendster in 2002. These sites have special features for users to find and manage interactions. Most of these methods currently combine with other American based widely used worldwide services such as Facebook, Google+, Instagram, and Twitter.

General Overview of Online Interactions



According to Grieve et al. (2013), online interactions are growing at a very high rate all over the world. Most online interactions first grow slowly due in part to the fact that the strength of motivation for participating is usually proportional to the size of the community. As the size of the potential audience increases, so does the attraction of writing and contributing. Thus the option of being in touch with members becomes a vital issue to most young people. As more people begin to participate, however, the aforementioned motivations will increase, creating a virtuous cycle in which more participation begets more participation. This could be the reason for the students to find online relations as liberating and expressive than the face to face one, (Island, 2010). This is because there is no one who monitors what they do with their online friends, as it would be if they were relating offline.

According to Skinner (2011), the advancement in features for users to find and manage friends, makes it easy for the youth to have the privacy to access even the

strictly adults-only sites. Cotton (2008) stressed that the university students are now the most elite technology savvy generation; they actually rate high in the use of online social networks. Mainly university students may be using their online social interactions to keep in touch with their friends more than the significant family members. According to Jenkins, Henry (2006) in an educational setting, online social relation is seen by many instructors and educators as a frivolous, time-wasting distraction from academic work, and it is not uncommon to have them banned in colleges and university computer labs.

The current generation of young people seem very egocentric; they do not consider feelings of other people and would like to spend more time with their peers who seem to understand lifestyles. Actually, various theories of development have shown that peers play a major role in the social and psychological development of young people. Young adulthood stage in stages of development by Erikson are presented as a time that one is likely to establish love and intimate friendship with others (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Hence, young people use social media sites mostly for meeting new friends, finding old friends, or locating people who have the same problems or interests as they have.

However, there are more and more interactions and friendships that are being formed online and then carried to an offline setting opening doors to bullying, invasions of privacy and sexual predators. These have become an issue of concern with online interactions, particularly in the developing countries like Kenya, where online interactions are viewed as a major distraction from academic performance. According to Livingstone and Bober (2012), the UK Children Go Online survey of 9-19 year

olds, found that a third had received sexual and bullying comments online. Since the online social interactions enables individuals to keep in touch as friends, it may follow that young people may be so dependent to their online or virtual communities as the friendship grows deeper, making it a challenge for them on matters of important life domains like school and job to do without them (Boehm et al. 2011). In contrast, however, 70% of social media using teens and 85% of adults believe that people are mostly kind to one another on social network sites (Lenhart& Madden, 2007).

Possible Positive Effects of Online Social Interactions

The online interactions can have both positive and negative effects to the life of an individual depending on how it is used. According to Grieve et al. (2013), in a research study conducted by Australian researchers it is demonstrated that there are some positive psychological outcomes are related to online relationships. These researchers found that people can obtain a sense of social connectedness and belongingness in the online environment. Particularly, this online social connectedness was associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety, and greater levels of personal wellbeing. One psychologist and University of Hamburg professor Erich H. Witte says that interactions which start online are very likely to succeed. Witte ascertained that online socializing will be the predominant way for people to start relationships. Users do not necessarily share with others the content which is of most interest to them, but rather that which projects a good impression of themselves (Byrne, 2012).

Despite the fact that many people believe that online interactions have a significant impact on social interaction, there are some disparity as to whether the nature of this impact is really positive. Researchers have done studies on the negative effects of online communication; and they have asserted that online interaction is a displacement face-to-face social interaction. Therefore, it generates harmful outcomes such as loneliness and depression for users who rely entirely on unceasing online interactions. Exclusively engagement on online communication, interactions between communities, families, and other social groups leads to weakened social ties (Bargh & McKenna, 2009). From these findings it can be suggested that the nature of online interactions determines the outcomes of online social network use.

Psychological Effects of Online Interactions

According to Kessler (2011), online interactions can promote many positive qualities, like interactions without regard to race, religion, gender, or geography, but they can result to several problems too. Online interactions can lead to problems of preoccupation, distraction, detachment, and desensitization to an individual. Among the youth online communities have lethal potential threat in life. These virtual interactions may seem safe to the users but people must be careful and remember that to feels safe does not mean it is necessarily so, (Kazeniak, 2009). Online social relations can affect the extent to which a person feels lonely. They may provide people with a false sense of connection that ultimately increases loneliness in people who feel alone. John T. Cacioppo, a neuroscientist at the University of Chicago, claims that online interactions can promote false sense of connection, which can lead

to loneliness, (Cornblatt, 2009). The researchers found that online social networking activities that do not facilitate face-to-face interactions tend to erode trust, and this erosion negatively affect individual well-being, (MIT Technology Review, 2015).

Other psychological effects of online social interactions include;

Social Overload: The university students remain in contact with their families and friends even when they are in different geographical places or in different educational institutions. The increasing number of messages and social interactions fixed in online connections also increases the amount of social information demanding a reaction from online users. To remain connected the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) formerly Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK), notes that internet connections have become inexpensive and easy to access through Wi Fi connections, (CCK, 2008). Online users perceive they are giving too much social support to other online friends. It is caused by the extent of usage, number of friends, subjective social support norms, and type of interactions. The psychological and behavioral consequences of social overload include perceptions of social network sites (SNS) exhaustion and low user satisfaction (Maier, Eckhardt, & Weitzel, 2014).

Breaking up: Given the ability to get in touch with the people concerned in subjective life, these makes online interactions sites popular avenues of ending relationships. Instead of the face-to-face interaction between individuals, people are now starting to end relationships by simply posting a message on sites like Facebook. The problem here is that one is left with no closure and the entire online world now knows your relationship has been broken. This can be very distressing, to an extent of affecting students' self-esteem, self-perception and academic performance (Gershon, 2010).

Privacy Invasion: This is another issue that has raised concern among users on the dangers of giving out too much personal information and the threat of sexual predators. Online social sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter often include a lot of personal information posted publicly, and many believe that sharing personal information is a window into privacy theft. Many service providers may not take adequate steps to protect user privacy, and third parties can use information posted on social networks for a variety of purposes. Once a forum has settings for social interaction easy access, then the posted content can be reviewed by anyone with an interest in the personal information of the user (Gershon, 2010).

Access to crucial information: On the same perspective, some service providers can provide users with a choice of who can view their profile. This prevents unauthorized users from accessing their information. For this reason caregivers who want to access their child's MySpace or Facebook account have a big problem with youth who do not want their profile seen. By making their profile private, youth can select who may see their page, allowing only people added as friends to view their profile and creating a structural barrier between their private life and their caregivers (Schaar&Ziefle, 2013).

Risk for child safety: Parents and other stakeholders in the society are concerned with misuse of online social interactions by teenagers and young adults in relation to their safety. Overuse of online social interactions can make youth more vulnerable to depression and anxiety. Research suggests that young people can end up with psychological difficulties like depression, and anxiety because of internalizing problems (Steinberg, 1993). Many of the issues that effect from online interactions can

make student not to talk them out with people offline; hence, they will end up turning them inward. In the process, they might end up affecting the individual in a great way by making the person get stressed, depression and anxiety, (Cassell&MegCramer 2008).

It is suggested that young girls are more at risks because they are often represented in transgressive poses because they often manipulate other users online by making themselves look older than what they actually appear which can attract sexual predators. Girls are also at a higher risk than boys since they are more vulnerable and naive to becoming victims of assault or harassment from any sexual predators online. Many parents of teenage girls worry about their safety online because of the many manipulations there are online and on social networking sites (Gershon, 2010).

Trolling and harassment: Online harassment is very common problem with online interactions. It means posting threatening or offensive content, for the fun of it, aimed at known friends or strangers through ways of online technology (Gulraiz, 2009). Trolling can be done in order to harm others for the gratification of the person posting. It can occur in many different forms, such as, name calling, defacement, playing online pranks on volatile individuals and controversial comments with the intention to emotionally abuse individuals. Basically, the motivation for such posters is the sense of power and exposure it gives the abuser (King, 2010). Online harassment tends to affect young people the most due to their risk-taking behavior and decision-making processes.

According to cognitive psychological theories, anxiety and depression is considered to result from thought disorder that brings about disturbed mood. If the issues will not be addressed, there is a likelihood of them resulting to psychological problems like anxiety and depression. This may result if the issues disturbing the individual are not addressed suitably (Miller, 2005). Anxiety might result from the fears that may accompany some of the wrong behaviours one could end up with like watching pornography materials, masturbation, and dependency due to over indulging with online social networks. Anxiety and depression resulting from these can lead one to seek for negative ways of dealing with the problem. Negative ways of coping may include, abusing alcohol and other drugs. These behaviours can end up becoming complex issues for the person to deal with because of other difficulties related them (Palfrey, 2010).

A study by Australian Research Council (2007) stated that young people in this age bracket are the majority subscribers of social networks sites and it is therefore likely for them to get affected in their over indulgence with online interactions. The researcher tried to find out if some of these psychological issues associated with continuous online interactions found among students in other parts of the world were there among students in the Kenyan universities. The importance of this was to assist in planning appropriate psychological interventions.

Conceptual Framework

In this study there were main variables that were given consideration. The online interactions could be having certain fulfilments to the young people which could bring

about some influence in their daily lives. Therefore, it was necessary to explore the way these fulfilments impacted on the youth online relationships and the psychological effects on their health. In the structuring of a conceptual framework, the researcher considered using Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy. Corey (2005) stated that cognitions, emotions, and behaviours are all interconnected in reciprocal cause-and-effect interactions. A key idea in REBT model is that emotional disturbances are an outcome of the way people think and perceive difficulties. Using the A-B-C theory of personality the emotional and behavioural consequences can be explained clearly. The continuous online interaction in this context was considered to be the activating event (A); while perceived satisfaction gained from online interaction was the belief or views (B) among the youths. To sum up:-the psychological effects, that is, the emotional and behavioural consequences (C) from increased online social involvement. This interconnectedness presented incessant online interactions in a diagram as follows.

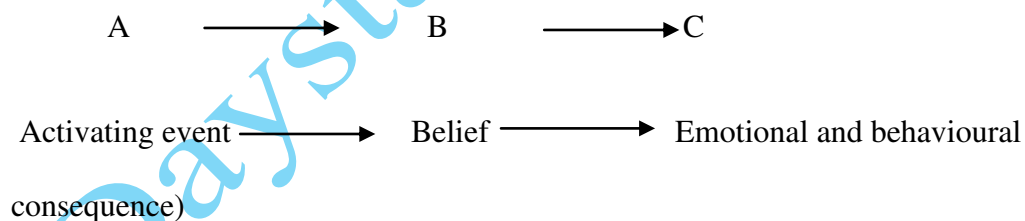


Figure 2.1: A-B-C theory

Source: Corey (2005)

In the conceptual framework below, online interactions was assumed to influence the satisfactions and beliefs. The reverse to this would lead to the either positive or

negative psychological effects. This is represented diagrammatically in the conceptual framework:

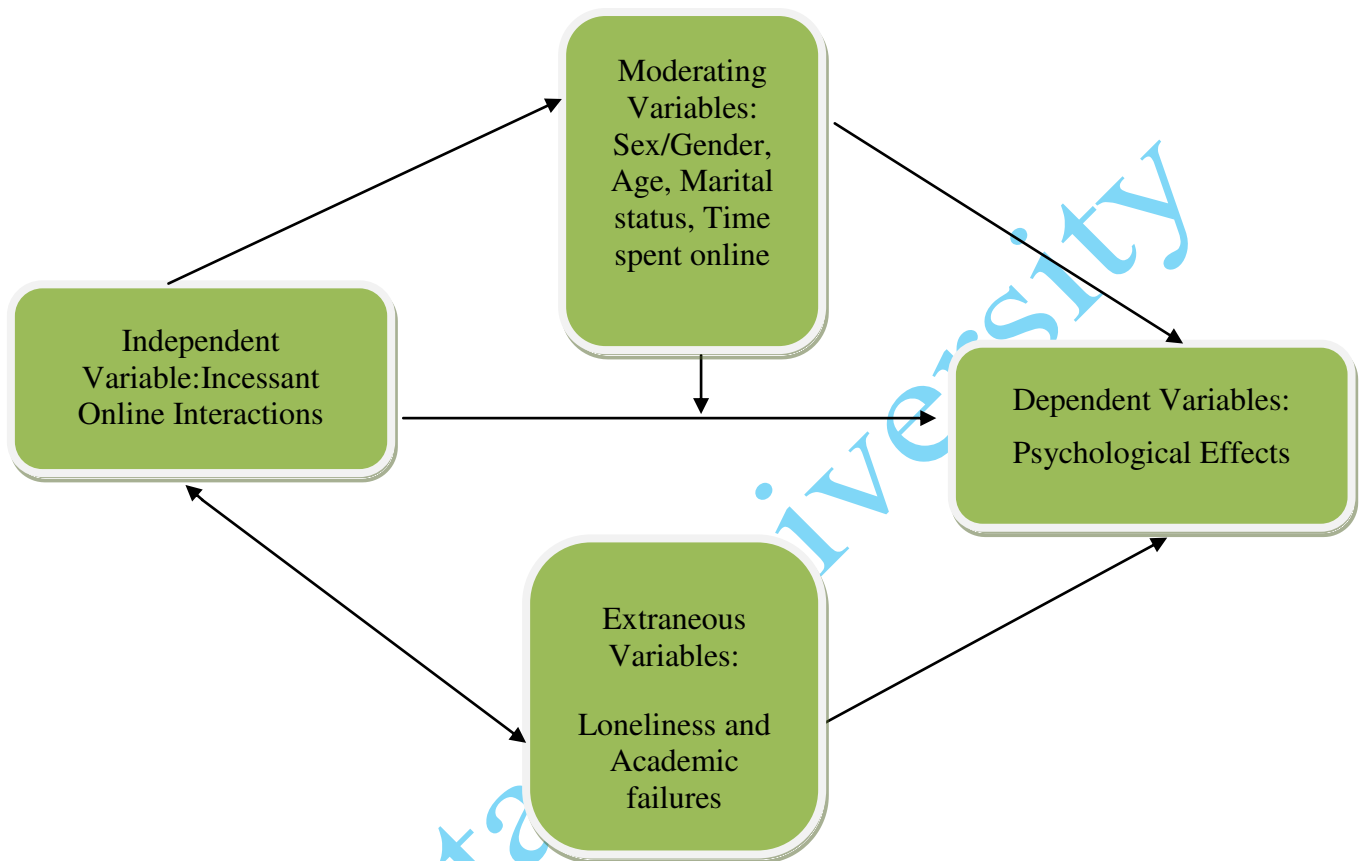


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2016)

Summary

The chapter expounded the research problem by looking at the features and brief history of the online interactions in the past and at present. The general overview of the online interactions among students and the psychosocial effects of constant interactions followed. The researcher has also been able to identify the theoretical

framework to use in this research. The model that the researcher found appropriate to apply was the uses and gratification theory. This theory try to find out the fulfilments that people attain in the course of using a particular media and the different outcomes that can be found in their lives. This has been followed by conceptual framework that was used in this research to examine some of the negative psychosocial effects that might have resulted among the university students due online interactions. The following chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in this study.

Daystar University

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, research method is discussed first. This is where the researcher discusses various research aspects such as, research design, population, sample size, sampling procedure, methods of data collection, data analysis, and ethical consideration and finally a summary of the entire chapter.

Research Design

In a study, research design refers to the way the research will be carried out. It includes a well thought plan for collection and analysis of data to provide the information being sought (Kothari, 2004). The research was carried out using descriptive design, particularly a case study method, which is concerned with describing characteristics of a given group of individuals. This research design was appropriate to this study because the researcher sought to explore and report on the prospective behaviours, values, attitudes and other effects (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003) that might have resulted in the lives of university students in one campus of a private university, due to continuous online interactions

For this reason, the research also involved both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The qualitative analysis aimed to give a complete, detailed description in the form of words or objects while the quantitative analysis classified features and constructed statistical models in an attempt to explain what was

observed (Hurley, 2007; Price, 2001; Ton, Peter, Pietler, Schouten, & Putmann, 2008). In this study there was blending of both approaches with a greater leaning towards the quantitative method.

Population

The target population in this study was Daystar University students. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a target population is defined as a population that a researcher identifies in his research and in which the obtained findings are to be generalized. This population was comprised of students ranging from 18-35 years of age. Most of these were university students who were self-employed or working either in private or public sectors. They included both the undergraduates and postgraduate students from diverse backgrounds, status, religious denominations and provided wide range information necessary for this study. The sampled students were from all programmes in the campus. According to the list of the registered students from the office of the registrar, the total number of students in Nairobi campus was 2,537. They were in either fulltime or part-time programs.

Sample Size

A sample in a research is the smaller group of individuals derived from a sample frame. The sample is selected in a careful manner in order to be a good representation of the population targeted for the study and should have appropriate features to be studied. It is recommended that a sample size in descriptive studies that is ten per cent of the population is capable of generating results that can lead to conclusions that would be generalized fairly to the entire population (Gay, 1983; Mugenda & Mugenda,

2003). In this study, the sample was from the list of registered students from the office of the registrar in Daystar University Nairobi Campus. The sample for this study comprised of Daystar University students who were between ages 18 - 35 years, which was the target population. The entire student population of Daystar University, Nairobi Campus at the time sampling was done was 2537 and those who are below 35 years were around 1,404; thus, 140; that is, 10% of the population was the sample size in this study.

Sampling Procedure

A sampling process refers to the methods a researcher uses to select participants for a study. To ensure representativeness, the individuals selected should have similar characteristics as the target population. The sampling procedure therefore, is the way through which the researcher obtains the sample that is to be used to collect data regarding the target population in the study (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003). Out of many private universities in Nairobi, the researcher chose Daystar University with a purpose. The university was selected because it is a Christian institution of higher learning, a community of scholars from various racial and ethnic groups, nations and backgrounds and has laid down principles governing students conduct and disciplines concerning the way they should generally behave. Hence, pursuant to its mission, vision and core values, Daystar University offers a Christian-centred education. According to Mugenda (2008), purposive technique is a sampling method where the researcher uses those individuals with the necessary information for the research

consideration. Here, the researcher selected the respondents who were suitable to the study by having the right information and with the required characteristics.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to get the required sample. In this technique research respondents were selected from various subsets in the population to ensure replication of the subsets in the sample (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003). The researcher in this study clustered students according to their various ages and programmes of study. There were four programmes of study in Daystar University, they included, postgraduate, undergraduate, diploma and the pre-university programme. All the subsets had approximately 2,537 registered students. From these subsets, the researcher randomly selected students that represented the different sets to participate in the research. The researcher was helped by the research assistant in the random selection while numbers were assigned to those individuals who qualified for the research in each specific set. To facilitate fair participation in the study, papers for each category with concealed assigned numbers were mixed comprehensively and then hand-picked randomly.

To proportionally distribute all the individuals from the various categories, the researcher applied the following formula. The numbers of individuals aged up to 35 years were in a specific category and were divided by the total population of Daystar University- Nairobi Campus students aged 35 and below, it was multiplied by the required sample size, (140). From the numbers of students who were up to 35 years, (1404), the distribution was displayed as shown in the following table.

Table 3.1: Sampling Table

Programme	No. of students aged up to 35 years	Students selected to participate in the study
Postgraduate (master's)	284	28
Undergrads. (Bachelor's)	1038	104
Diploma	60	6
Pre-University	22	2
Total	1404	140

Source: Registrar's Office (2016)

Data Collection Instrument

The instruments used for data collection from the sample selected were a questionnaire and in-depth interview. Both of these instruments were employed because the researcher used a mixed approach to research to avoid emergence of bias from either the use of quantitative or qualitative methods of data collection (Yin, 2003). The questionnaire and the in-depth interview guide enabled the researcher to gather data in response to the research questions.

The instruments were developed in view of the three research questions in this study. There was a corresponding questionnaire and interview guide to be used during the actual data collection tasks, with each question in the instruments indicating certain aspect in the research questions. The content in the instruments that were essential in this study focussed: on measuring the extent of social networking and assess the amount of time spent online, a 12-item Social Network Scale (Moody, 2001) was applied. The youth who are technological savvy are appraised hence improving their self-esteem and status among peers.

On the issue of esteem, things in focus include prestige, attention, status, independence and mastery (Allen, 2006). Considering motivation and gratification for being online, these issues are of great concern to the young people. To Measure psychological well-being items from some instruments were used without any having gained dominance as the best. For life satisfaction components by Diener Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS: Diener et al. 2003) was used. To measure loneliness the UCLA Loneliness Scale was used as conceptualized global one-dimensional construct. It is a 20-item scale with ten descriptive feelings of loneliness and ten descriptive feelings of satisfaction. Once the data had been collected, coding was done, followed by analysis of data. Finally, the reporting of the research findings and recommendations followed.

Data Collection Procedure

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), data collection is the process of gathering the information needed for a research and data is the information a researcher collects for the purpose of the study. This study was carried out using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. These research respondents gave information depending on their own personal experiences and feelings towards unrelenting online interactions. The researcher met the respondents at their convenient time and places particularly before or after lectures and during break time. Selection of the participants was as follows; four students were picked randomly from the master's category; that is, one male and three females. Eight students, three males and five females were selected randomly from the bachelor's subgroup.

The other remaining four students were got randomly two from the diploma and two from pre-university categories; a male and a female from each subgroup, respectively. Each participant recruited was first required to fill in the consent form. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggested that, “sensitive and personal information can be extracted from the respondent by honest and personal interaction between the respondent and the interviewer (2003, 84).” Therefore, from the sample of 140 respondents, 16 students were involved on in-depth interviews. The researcher captured in-depth interviews using dictaphone and thereafter summarized the data by classifying it according to emerging themes in order to enhance analysis.

Pretesting

The researcher did a pretest to try out whether the instruments to be used in data collection communicated to the respondent in the study. Doing a pretest enabled the researcher to know if the research instruments are stated rightly and clearly understood. For this reason the researcher did pretesting of the instruments at Tangaza Campus in Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). The pretesting was conducted long before the actual data collection; just in case there was any need to redraft the instruments. In the course of pre-testing, the researcher was able to estimate time taken in administering the instruments. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) posited that, it is necessary to do pre-testing on individuals different from the actual participants in the study, though with the same characteristics as the sample. Further, the pretest sample may possibly be between 1% and 10% of the sample size. To select

students to participate in the pretest activity, the researcher applied purposive technique.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the raw data was collected from the field, it was processed, analysed and finally interpreted. Data processing was comprised of tasks like editing, coding, sorting, entry in software and formulation for analysis. During editing, the researcher scrutinized the raw data was obtained to correct any errors and omissions found. Coding was then done where numerals and symbols were assigned to various responses to enable sorting and then the data was entered in the computer software for formulation. Formulation encompassed summarizing and displaying the raw data into statistical charts for analysis purposes. According to Kothari (2004), analysis includes working out certain measures and finding the various patterns of interactions that exist from the obtained information. The patterns of interactions that were found were used in the interpretation of the data, where the researcher derived the research findings and conclusions.

To generate the output, the researcher used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 19 (SPSS, V19) in data processing and analysis. In analysing the data the researcher used descriptive statistics to distribute the measures from the data (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003). The summarized data was then put in frequency and percentage on the distribution tables and graphs. To generate the qualitative data, the researcher transcribed the data into word processing documents first. This was

followed by coding of the data and developing category systems by segmenting the data into meaningful segments.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics is about how researchers are to conduct themselves. It refers to the standards that guide the behaviours of a researcher when carrying out the study in the research site. The behaviour of researchers has to be morally acceptable and legally informed in order to minimise harmful effects on other people (Corey, Corey, and Callanan, 2007).

During this study, various ethical concerns were deliberated in order to carry out the research within the right principles. Given the target population in this study, the researcher made sure that the participants were obtained on free entry and exit basis, which was by voluntary willingness to participate in the research work (Babbie, 2008). To be practical the researcher clearly informed the respondents about the research before engaging them. By getting their informed consent, the researcher honestly informed the respondents about the research through well-informed choice, whether to participate or not participate in the research work. Corey, Corey and Callanan (2007) stressed that doing this helped to prevaricate rise of any issues concerning participation of the respondents. The researcher assured respondents that should they could choose to exit before the end of the study, there would be no negative consequences that would occur to them. Further, the researcher obtained an introduction letter clearly stating that this study was particularly for academic purposes.

Considering the sensitivity of the information that the respondents provided, the aspect of confidentiality and anonymity was very vital. The researcher appreciated the sensitivity of the information the students were giving about their personal life, thus, the need to observe privacy throughout the research. This is where there was no information obtained from the respondents that would be revealed without their consent. The identities of respondents remained anonymous throughout the research work by making sure that no real names were used.

Where necessary, numbers or coded names were used to conceal the respondents' identities if the researcher had to disclose information about an individual participant (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003). To do this, the researcher assured the respondents verbally and also in writing of maintaining confidentiality during and after the research. The researcher informed the respondents that there were no known risks associated with their participation in this research. And also that the study did not benefit the respondents directly but it improved their understanding of how to promote appropriate online interactions and social media use. Therefore, there was no monetary compensation that was given.

Before going to the field, the researcher sought permission from the authorities concerned to be allowed to conduct the research. This included a permit from the Kenyan government through National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and from Daystar University Head of Psychology and Counselling department (HOD).

Summary

This chapter has discussed the method the researcher used in carrying out the research. The researcher used descriptive design in carrying out the study. The mixed approach to research was applied by having questionnaires and interview guides. The target population for this research was comprised of university students. The sample size was selected through stratified random sampling technique. During collection of data, high level of ethics will be adherence. Analysis of the collected data was done using (SPSS, V19).

Daystar University

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter precisely presents the analysed data, interprets and summarizes the key findings. The findings are presented in two sections of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was drawn from the questionnaires while the qualitative data is derived from the interview guides.

Response Rate

A total of 140 questionnaires were distributed to the students of Daystar University to give their feedback. Approximately, 133 questionnaires were returned representing about 95% response rate. During the editing of the data, the researcher categorised 5 questionnaires as invalid because they had not met the required standard, one was filled by individual who had indicated that he does not have internet access, two were filled by over age individuals and two were seemingly filled by the same person. Therefore, out of the 133 questionnaires that were returned, only 128 (96.2%) were valid and fit for the survey.

Quantitative Analysis

This section presents the data that was analysed quantitatively using SPSS 17.0. This includes the demographic data and the likert scale questions which are represented in frequency tables.

Demographical Data

Respondents by Gender

To ascertain the gender distribution, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they were male or female. From the total of 128 respondents whose questionnaires were valid and fit for the survey, 59% were females and 41% were males. As the figures indicate, the male population was lower than the female population. This could be correlated to the record of students obtained from the office of registrar in Daystar University, which had the ratio of male to female as 35:65. Given these figures from the research findings, most probably there are more female students affected than their male counterparts.

Respondents by Age

In trying to establish the developmental stage of the respondents they were asked to indicate their ages and the results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

<i>Respondents by Age</i>	Number	Per cent
18 – 19 years	18	14.0
20 – 21 years	20	15.6
22– 23 years	20	15.6
24 – 25 years	38	29.7
26 –27 years	14	10.9
28 – 29 years	4	3.1
30 – 31 years	0	0.0
32 – 33 years	10	7.8
34 – 35 years	4	3.1
Total	128	100

In this study the age of respondents ranged from 18 – 35 years. A high number of respondents comprising of 29.7% were aged between 24- 25 years, followed by 15.6% of the respondents who were between 20-21 years old and 22-23 years old. Further, 10.9% were between 26-27 years whereas a lower number comprising 7.8% were 28-29 years of age and 3.1% of the respondents were the minority at 30-31 years and 34-35 years. The majority (78.0 %) of the respondents' year therefore were at the intimacy vs. isolation stage according to Erikson's psychosocial phases of development that is between 20-35 years. Erikson believes we are sometimes isolated due to intimacy. We are afraid of rejections such as being turned down or our partners breaking up with us. Erikson also argued that "Intimacy has a counterpart: Distanciation: the readiness to isolate and if necessary, to destroy those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to our own, and whose territory seems to encroach on the extent of one's intimate relations". If people cannot form these

intimate relationships – perhaps because of their own needs – a sense of isolation may result; arousing feelings of darkness and angst (1998).

Table 4.3: The Respondents by Year of Study

<i>Years of study</i>	Number	Per cent
First Year	50	39.0
Second Year	46	35.9
Third Year	18	14.0
Fourth Year	14	10.9
Total	128	100.0

The majority 39.0% of the respondents were in first year whereas 35.9% were in second year. In addition, 14.0% of the respondents were in third year while 10.9% were in fourth year. According to the findings, the first year students were the majority; this could be for the reason that undergraduate students in their first year of study who were aged 35 or less were more compared to those in the other years of study. The diploma and pre-university students were also in their first year of study; hence this resulted to the higher percentage of first year respondents.

Programs Enrolled by Respondents

In trying to establish the programs enrolled in by respondents, the respondents were asked to indicate their programs of study. The results are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Programs Enrolled in by Respondents

<i>Program enrolled in</i>	Number	Per cent
Pre-university	4	3.1
Diploma	8	6.2
Undergraduate	74	57.8
Postgraduate	42	32.9
Total	128	100.0

In this research the respondents were enrolled in various study programmes. The results from the study showed that, 3.1% of the respondents were in Pre-University whereas another 6.2% were in the Diploma programme. Additionally, 57.8% of the respondents were in the undergraduate programme. The remaining 32.9 % of the respondents were in the postgraduate programme. The respondents from the undergraduate programmes were the majority of the respondents as well as the largest population at Daystar University, Nairobi Campus. They were closely followed by the Diploma and Pre-University students who were virtually equivalent.

Respondents Who Were Students and Working

According to the findings, 25.0% of the respondents were in employment as well as attending classes, they are both students and workers. On the contrary 75.0% reported that they were only students. Almost all the respondents who were employed attended evening classes. However, most of the respondents who were students-only attended day classes in undergraduate programmes. Hence, they could be full time students who had better part of daytime at their disposal. This study found out that most of the employed respondents had very limited time out of work and class schedules.

Table 4.5: Respondents Who Were Students and Working Concurrently

<i>Apart from being student, are you employed?</i>	Number	Per cent
Yes	32	25.0
No	96	75.0
Total	128	100.0

Internet Access

All (100%) of the respondent reported to have been involved in online interactions through social network sites connectivity. In examining the extent to which the students are able to access internet for online interaction the respondents were asked to indicate whether they have internet access. The results are as follows

Table 4.6: OnlineInternet Access

<i>Do you have internet access?</i>	Number	Per cent
Yes	128	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	128	100.0

Device Used To Access Internet

On the question of what the respondents used to get online, 56.9% of them reported to get online using cell phones. An additional 16.5 % reported to use laptop computer whereas 12.7% reported that they got online using desktop computers. Another 9.3% got online using tablets while 4.6% used iPods. Having the larger population of the respondents specify on use of mobile phones to interact online, is an implication that, they can access various social sites anywhere and anytime, thus the unrelenting usage. The respondents listed some of the devices they used to get online as shown on the following table.

Table 4.7: Device Used to Access Internet

<i>What do you use to get online?</i>	Number	Percent
Cell phone only	73	56.9
Tablet only	12	9.3
iPod only	6	4.6
Laptop only	16	12.7
Desktop computer only	21	16.5
Total	128	100.0

Number of Social Sites Visited

Regarding the number of online social sites visited in a day, 70.3% of the respondents reported that they visit up to three sites per day. In addition, 29.7% of the respondents visited up to more than four sites in a day. This study found out that most of the respondents had three online social sites in a day which means that all this time for the majority of respondents is spent exclusively online interactions. This implies that majority of the students forfeit a better part of their quality time in an average day, interacting online at expense of face to face interactions.

Table 4.8: Number of Social Sites Visited

<i>How many social network sites do you regularly visit in a day?</i>	Number	Per cent
1 site	12	9.4
2 sites	34	26.5
3 sites	44	34.4
4 sites	16	12.5
5 and above sites	22	17.2
Total	128	100.0

Time Spent Online Interactions

On the time spend interacting online in a day, 4.7% of the respondents spent less than an hour while 23.4% spent between 1-2 hours. In addition, 21.9% of the respondents spent between 2-3 hours whereas 7.0% spent 4-5 hours. It is evident that majority of the respondents spent 1-2 hours on an average day interacting online. Most likely, by the end of the week, some of the respondents end up spending much time interacting online, compromising the time spend interacting with their face to face contacts. This hurt the apparently hurts their already existing relationships in the real world.

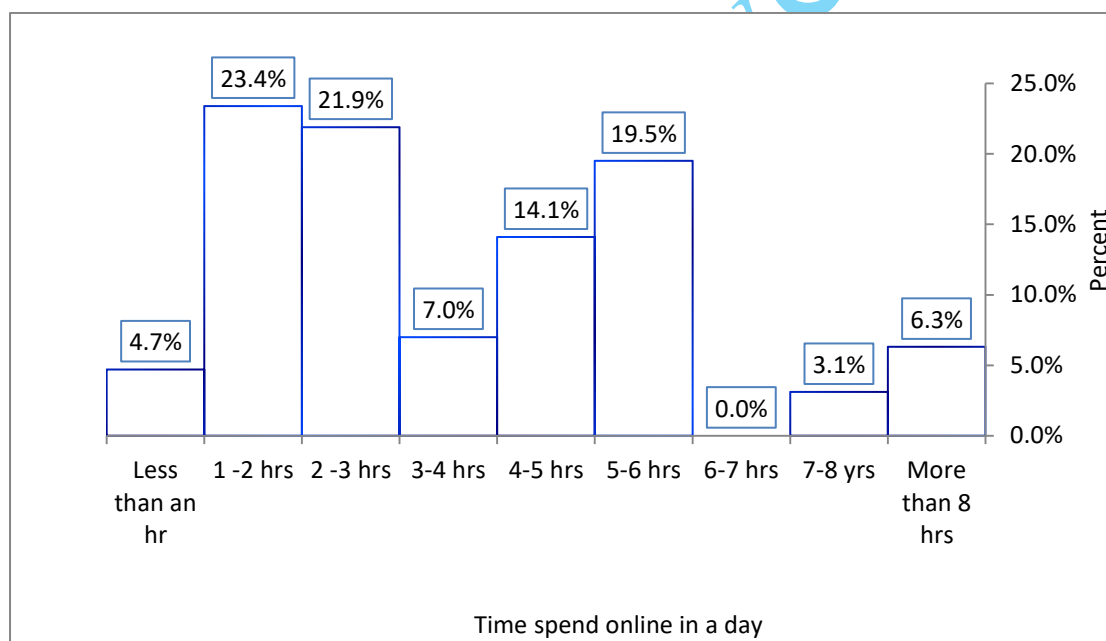


Figure 4.1: *Time Spent Online Interactions in a Day*

Duration in Online Interactions

Regarding the duration one has been involved in online interactions, 3.1% of the respondents had been involved for less than a year while 21.9% had been involved in

online interactions for a period between 2 – 4 years. Additionally, 65.6% of the respondents had been involved in online interactions for a period of 5 – 9 years while 9.4% of the respondents had been involved in online interactions for a period of more than 10 years. With these figures, it is possible to find out whether they have any psychological effects on their online involvements in the students well-being.

Table 4.9: Duration in Online Interactions Involvement

<i>How long have you been engaged in online social interactions?</i>	Number	Per cent
Less than a year	4	3.1
2 – 4 years	28	21.9
5 – 9 years	84	65.6
More than 10 years	12	9.4
Total	128	100.0

Purpose for Interacting Online

On the purpose for which respondents use online social interactions in a day, 41.7% uses them for chatting with friends, parents and family members as well as sending pictures and videos to contacts. Another 49.4% use their online social connections for listening to music, playing games and browsing different social sites. In addition, 17.0% of the respondents indicated that they got online interaction for business transactions and other undefined tasks. Certainly, from these findings it was evident that the respondents used various online social sites to interact. Regardless of the purpose for which the respondents use online social interactions in a day for, it is possible some could end up spending too much time interacting online than it could be appropriate.

Table 4.10: Purpose of Using Online Social Interactions

<i>What do you use your online interaction for?</i>	Frequency	Per cent
Chatting with friends, parents and family members	71	25.1
Sending pictures and videos	47	16.6
Browsing sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter etc.	96	33.9
Playing music and games	44	15.5
Business transactions	26	9.2
Other tasks	22	7.8
Total	283	100.0

Awareness of Online Harassment

In trying to establish the students level of awareness on the crimes spread during online interactions the respondents showed the following in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Awareness of Online Interactions Harassment among Students

<i>Are you aware of trolling and harassment among your peers?</i>	Number	Per cent
Yes	86	67.2
No	27	21.1
Not sure	15	11.7
Total	128	100.0

On whether the respondents were aware of online interactions harassment and trolling among students, majority 67.2% of them reported to be aware of criminal activities like trolling and harassment through online interactions while 21.1% reported not to have come across such criminal activities during their online interactions. Essentially, this was a key finding of this study given that most of the respondents are apparently adherent to Christian principles put in place by the university. This implies that most of the students were well aware of various criminal activities propagated among the students as they interact online.

Motive of Propagating Online Harassment

On what the respondents considered to be the motive of those who propagate criminal activities like trolling and harassment through online interactions, 29.0% of them believed that those who propagate criminal activities like trolling and harassment among students through online interactions do it to seek attention from others. In addition, 8.4% believed some students do it due to loneliness. There were also 6.9% and 6.6% of the respondents who believed students are involved in trolling and harassment as hobby and due to peer pressure influence- for identity respectively.

As a follow up on the criminal activities, the respondents, who reported to be aware of trolling and harassment through online interactions among students, gave the statements in Table 4.12 to explain possible motives of those who propagate trolling and harassment through online interactions.

Table 4.12 Motive of online interactions harassment and trolling among students

<i>What do you consider to be the motive behind it?</i>	Rate	Per cent
To seek attention	41	31.3
Jealousy and revenge for malice or hit back	17	13.0
Embarrass and tarnish reputation of others	15	11.4
For self-interest like bringing a competitor down	13	9.9
Due to loneliness	11	8.4
Is a hobby / leisure	9	6.9
Peer pressure influence- for identity	9	6.6
For fun - to be trendy	8	5.8
Love of criminal activities	6	4.6
To show ones tech-savvy skills	2	1.8
Total	131	100.0

Satisfaction of Online Interaction

On what respondents considered to be the satisfaction of online interactions among the students, 23.6% believed students get satisfaction by just connecting with the social world while 13.3% believed students get satisfaction by getting engaged and overcoming boredom. Another group of respondents 11.5% believed they get satisfaction by being able to enhance relationships that overcome time and space barriers. Additionally, 6.7% of the respondents believed students get satisfaction by reaching millions of people instantly at a click while 3.0% believed that it is satisfying to connect to new and old friends anywhere and anytime of the day.

Table 4.13 Satisfaction of online interactions

<i>What do you consider to be the satisfaction of online interactions among the students?</i>	Frequency	Percent
Just to connecting with the social world	39	23.6
Sharing current news and information	30	18.2
It is engaging and help overcome boredom	22	13.3
Enhances relationships that overcome time and space barriers	19	11.5
Has applicable multimedia platform like entertainment	17	10.3
It is fashionable and stylish	15	9.1
Ability to reach with millions of people instantly	11	6.7
Ability to connect to new and old friends anywhere and anytime of the day	5	3.0
Students can express themselves to other people without fear or intimidation	3	1.8
Help conceal students age, status and background	2	1.2
It is efficient media for business transactions	2	1.2
Total	165	100.0

Although most respondents had negative attitude towards continuous online interactions on this question, a larger number of the students seemed to seek great deal of fulfilment in online interactions according to the findings of this study. Therefore, this does not mean that the search of satisfaction through the honest means is safe anyway, as regards either positive or negative psychological effects of online interactions.

Distracted/ Dishonest in Chapel/Lectures

On whether the respondents have come across other students being distracted or dishonest with the incessant online interaction during lectures and chapel time, 87.5% responded they had while 7.8% responded they had not and 4.7% of the respondents gave no response to this question. The 87.5% of respondents indicated to have come across students getting distracted or dishonest through their involvement in online social interactions, which was a very serious effect, given that all the respondents who are university students should abide by the rules and regulations laid down by the institution in relation to the students' code of conduct.

Table 4.14: Distracted/ dishonest via online interactions in lectures/chapel

	Number	Per cent
No response	6	4.7
Yes	112	87.5
No	10	7.8
Total	128	100.0

Dishonest About Their Whereabouts

Regarding the respondents dishonest through online communications about their whereabouts, 76.6% responded to have been while 18.8% responded not to have been whereas 4.7% gave no response dishonest. The majority of the respondents reported to have come across students being dishonest about their whereabouts, taking advantage of the online social connections. Yet again, this was another major finding of this study considering the Christian standards that all the respondents as students are expected to embrace.

Table 4.15: Dishonest via online interactions about their whereabouts

	Number	Per cent
No response	6	4.7
Yes	98	76.5
No	24	18.8
Total	128	100.0

Dishonest About Their Relationships

On whether the respondents had come across students being distracted or dishonest through online social interaction about their relationships, 84.4% responded they have and 9.4% responded they have not, whereas 6.2 % gave no response.

Table 4.16: Dishonest via online interactions their relationships

	Number	Per cent
No response	8	6.2
Yes	108	84.4
No	12	9.4
Total	128	100.0

Awareness of Psychological Effects

Regarding the question of whether the respondents were aware that there are psychological effects that may result from incessant online interactions, 98.4% of the respondents said they were aware while 1.6% responded they were not aware. Thus, the answer to the question of whether constant online interactions by students have any effects to their wellbeing appeared to be a definite yes. From the respondents, it is evident that majority of them are aware of the psychological effects that may result in unremitting online interactions.

Table 4.17: Respondents' awareness of psychological effects of continuous online interactions

<i>Are there any effects that may result from continuous online interactions by a student?</i>	Number	Per cent
Yes	126	98.4
No	2	1.6
Total	128	100.0

Psychological Effects Known To Students

On suggesting some of the adverse psychological effects that might result from continuous connection to the online interactions by students, some gave more than one suggestion, 24.1% of the respondents believed that incessant online interaction by students could lead to addiction to certain online social sites and another 14.4% thought that it led to improper time management and self-control. An additional 13.5% of respondents thought it could lead to poor academic performance due to lack of concentration in class. There were other varied psychological effects pointed out by respondents as shown in Table 4.18, which indicated that the respondents have high level of awareness on the effects of unrelenting online interaction. This knowledge

would help increase their will to avoid excessive online interactions which creates resilience.

Table 4.18: Psychological effects identified to students resulting from incessant online interactions.

<i>Incessant use of online interactions</i>	Frequency	Per cent
Dependence to certain online social sites that may have obscene materials	52	24.1
Improper time management and self-control	31	14.4
Poor academic performance due to lack of concentration in class	29	13.5
May lead to procrastination, inactiveness and laziness	25	11.2
Decreased face to face health interactions	19	8.8
Increased criminal activities like trolling	15	7.0
Reduced interpersonal relationships	13	6.0
Being brain washed or ruined by online social opinions	12	5.6
Invasion of privacy of students	10	4.6
Getting susceptible to harmful strangers like sex predators	9	4.2
Increased moral decadence such as pornographic materials	9	4.0
Dishonesty and disruptions in the family matters	7	3.2
Seclusion that may lead to stress and depression	5	2.3
Enhanced and efficient social networking	5	2.3
Getting more informed on current world news	3	1.4
Total	215	100.0



Intervention to Affected Students

Concerning the ways that could be appropriated to assist students who were affected by continuous online interactions, some students gave more than one suggestion, 43.1% of the respondents suggested a comprehensive psycho-education and counselling on effects of incessant online interaction, while 16.0% of the respondents were for the opinion that students be disengaged from any social media and create

more leisure facilities for them. This implies that a high number of the respondents awaited help to come from university authorities, policy makers and the government. Although most students expected help from the authority, it is surprising that only 5.3% of the respondents felt that students should have a sense of duty to contribute directly in the intervention.

In examining the extent to which the students sought counsel for themselves or those affected, they were asked to suggest list ways to assist. The responses from the respondents were the following.

Table 4.19: Suggested assistance to students affected by respondents

<i>Ways to assist</i>	Frequency	Per cent
Comprehensive psycho-education on effects of incessant online interaction	39	23.0
Extensive guidance and Counselling	34	20.1
Disengage them from any social media and create more leisure facilities	27	16.0
Sensitize them on benefits of not over-indulging with online interactions	19	12.2
University authorities to invest activities that contribute positively to lives of students	16	9.5
Policy makers introduce strict rules on when and where to get online communications	13	7.7
Encourage students to endeavour to balance between online and offline for quality social interactions	9	5.3
Students to presented to online addicts survivors undergoing treatment for a proactive experience	5	3.0
Establishment of rehabilitation centres for virtual interactions addicts	3	1.8
Institutions and governments to establish youth social centres/facilities for sports and team building activities	2	1.2
Introduce in school curriculum a subject that trains on effective online interactions and self-management skills	2	1.2
Total	169	100.0

Likert Scale Questions Analysis

In the Likert Scale questions analysis, the respondents were asked to indicate how well each item described them.

Excessive Online Interaction Awareness

About the awareness of the respondents to have used online interaction excessively, 45.3% agreed they had excessively used online interactions. On the other hand, 34.3% of the respondents disagreed. As for the respondents' relationships between online interactions and their psychological well-being improving if they did not engage in online interaction, 26.5% agreed while 42.2% of the respondent disagreed that their academic performance would have been better if they did not have their online interactions.

In trying to establish the level of awareness of the students on excessive online interaction, the respondents were asked to indicate how each of the following statements best described them.

Table 4.20: Awareness of the respondents to have used online interaction excessively

Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total %
I have used online interactions excessively	23.4	21.9	20.3	23.4	10.9	100
My psychological well-being could be better if I did not spend much time interacting online	15.6	10.9	31.25	29.7	12.5	100

Online Interactions and Academic Performance

Regarding information by respondents about online interactions and academic performance, 29.7% of the respondents agreed while 15.6% strongly agreed. In addition 39.0% of the respondents were neutral. However, 6.3% strongly disagreed while 9.4% disagreed. Therefore, 45.3% of the respondents agreed that they know peers who have difficulties related to academic performance because of the long hours they spend interacting online with friends.

Table 4.21: Respondents' online interactions and academic performance

Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total %
I know students whose academic performance have been affected due to online interactions	15.6	29.7	39.0	9.4	6.3	100

Respondents' Online Interaction and Distress

While 39.1% of the respondents disagreed with regard to psychological distress of the respondents when not able to interact online, 37.5% agreed with the same. On the same issue, 25% were neutral; farther, 37.5% of the respondents agreed to have experienced psychological stress when they were not able to connect with friends via online interactions.

As for the experience of stress related to online interactions the respondents, 21.9% disagreed, 26.6% of the respondents were neutral and while 51.5% agreed. It is evident from the findings of this research majority of the respondents experienced

stress related challenges for being unable to cope with online interactions challenges, which is an indication that they experienced stress related conditions.

Table 4.22: Respondent s' online interaction and distress

Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total %
I experience psychological distress because of the time I spend interacting online	15.6	21.9	23.4	25.0	14.1	100
I have experienced stress related to being unable to cope with online interactions challenges	20.2	31.3	26.6	15.6	6.3	100

Online Interaction and Feelings of Loneliness

On whether the respondents felt lonely when they could not access their online connections, 42.2% disagreed to feel lonely while 46.9 % of the respondents agreed to feel lonely when they could not access their online peers or friends.

On the issue of coping with challenges when students are unable to get online for social interactions, 34.4% of the respondents disagreed. Subsequently, the majority, 42.2% of the respondents agreed to experience coping challenges when unable to connect to their online interactions. This implies that, the respondents could be experiencing online interactions dependency due to their feeling of being lonely and emptiness when unable to interact online. In addition, this point out those students may have already developed dependence tendencies on their online interactions.

Farther, the findings of this research indicate that 60.9% of the respondents agreed to

have felt emptiness when they are without online interactions while 18.7% of the respondents disagreed.

Table 4.23: Respondent s' online interaction and feelings of loneliness

Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total %
I feel lonely when I cannot access my online peers or friends	17.2	29.7	10.9	21.9	20.3	100
I experience coping challenges when I am unable to access online associates	12.5	29.7	23.4	17.2	17.2	100
I feel empty without interacting online	39.0	21.9	20.3	12.5	6.2	100

Online Interaction and Anxiety

In relation to whether the respondents get nervous because of not being able to interact with their online friends, 50.0% agreed while 25.0% of the respondents disagreed to have felt nervous when not able to interact with friends via their online interactions.

Likewise, relating to the thought of feeling anxious when respondents are cut-off from online interactions, 39.1% agreed while 39.0% of the respondents disagreed that a thought of being cut-off from online interactions makes them feel anxious. These feelings of nervousness and uneasiness are pointers that respondents experience anxiety correlated to their online interactions.

Table 4.24: Online interaction and anxiety of the respondents

Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total %
I feel nervous when I am not able to interact with my online friends	20.3	29.7	23.4	18.8	6.2	100
A thought of being cut-off from online interactions makes me feel anxious	10.9	28.2	20.3	21.9	17.1	100

Reasons Why Students Do Incessant Online Interactions

In trying to examine the reasons as to why students do incessant online interactions the respondents were asked to rate whether they agreed or disagreed with these statements.

Interacting With Family Members and Friends

Pertaining to whether the respondents get online interactions to let family and friends know their whereabouts, 48.4% of the respondents agreed, whereas 23.4% disagreed that they engaged in their online interactions to inform others of their whereabouts. This implies that the students obtained social gratification from online interactions hence they seek to remain constantly connected with family members and friends. This way, the caregivers in particular are able to know the whereabouts of their children and therefore offer the necessary assistance in case of need.

Table 4.25: To let family members and friends know where I am.

	Number	Per cent
Strongly disagree	18	12.5
Disagree	14	10.9
Neutral	36	28.1
Agree	46	35.9
Strongly agree	16	12.5
Total	128	100.0

For Security Purposes in Case of an Emergency

In regard to the respondents interacting online to contact others or to be reached in case of emergency, 39.1% strongly agreed, while 35.9% disagreed. Evidently, the findings of this research clearly affirmed that the respondents engaged in online interactions for security gratification; to contact or get contacted in case of an emergency. This implies that most of the students utilized the online interactions in securing their safety during emergencies.

Table 4.26: For security purposes in case of an emergency.

	Number	Per cent
Strongly disagree	20	15.6
Disagree	26	20.3
Neutral	32	25.0
Agree	42	32.8
Strongly agree	8	6.3
Total	128	100.0

The Closeness of the Respondents to Their Acquaintances

Regarding the closeness of the respondents to their acquaintances at all times, 39.0% disagreed while 37.5% agreed that they get online to keep close to friends. The findings show that a significant number (37.5%) of the respondents did agree that they engage

inonline interactions in order to remain close to their online friends.This too is a security satisfaction that they derive from online interactions given that the respondents experience a sense of safety by nurturing such close virtual relationship.

Table 4.27: My online friends are always very close to me

	Number	Per cent
Strongly disagree	20	15.6
Disagree	30	23.4
Neutral	30	23.4
Agree	38	29.7
Strongly agree	10	7.8
Total	128	100.0

Online Interactions and Being Fashionable

On whether the respondents interact online because it is fun to be fashionable, 21.9% disagreed whereas 45.3% of the respondents agreed that they interact online just because it is fun to be fashionable. However, 31.3% of the respondents were neutral on this question with the statement they interact onlinefor it is fun and fashionable, which is self-indulgence.

In exploring the students continuous online interactions and being fashionable the respondents were asked to rate their perspective on how fashionable it is to do online interactions. The results were as follows.

Table 4.28: Respondents continuous online interactions and being fashionable

Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total %
It's fashionable to interact online	15.6	29.7	31.3	6.3	15.6	100

Qualitative Analysis

This section presents the qualitative data from the students according to the interview conducted among the respondents. These were analysed by the emerging themes to show the trends. The narratives are used in elaborating and examining the emerging themes.

There were 11 students who participated in the interviews; on the average they had a range of 2-7 year experience in online interactions. Evidently, this was similar to the questionnaire findings that showed majority of the students had been involved in online social interaction for a period of between 2 and 10 years approximately. The findings of the interviews and the interview questions are presented below.

Question 2: In your opinion, what could make students be persistent in online interactions?

Throughout the entire process of the interviews, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on reasons that could make students engage on incessant online interactions. Most of the respondents (57%) frequently gave the reasons that students are unrelenting on interacting online is because interacting online is faster, efficient and economical in the contemporary in the busy world; compared to offline interaction, which sometime require greater amount of time and monetary resources to

call or travel that are not available to most students. The second reason that was frequently alluded to by respondents is that most students have access to internet facilities; hence they have to exploit the opportunities available to them. Other reasons given were that online interaction is more fashionable and trendy. In addition, some of the respondents indicated that some parents or caregivers are too strict or protective that they cannot condone the free mingling of youth in fear of their sons or daughter getting to the wrong company, may be through peer pressure.

Question 3: Considering the students daily responsibilities, how do they manage to balance between online interactions and other responsibilities?

According to the respondents, students are able to balance between online interactions and other responsibilities quite well, because one can be performing say academic task on the computer and at the same time be online interacting. About 65% of the respondents argued that most students are capable of dividing their attention between interacting online and performing other responsibilities. One of the respondents described this saying,

“The modern youth have a day fully loaded with assignments to be submitted to the lecturers, deadline to meet at workplace and a family or a child to spend quality time with. So, without training your mind to multi-task at all times, then you are out-dated.”

It is essential to mention that some students actually have very busy schedules throughout the week, especially those that are of dual status that is they are both students and employed. However, the full time students some of them who are very young to have families have a lot of time at their disposal. Pointing out this some of the respondents explained specifically that the parents, lecturers and the society have

sometime ideal expectation from all areas of life; hence they must tore themselves into part to meet these expectations. As one female respondent puts it, “For the ladies, we are naturally born to multitask, so this is not a big issue, after all, if I do not attend to all who will do it for me”. Another respondent said,

I am living in this age of online interactions, so I have to make maximum use of it to link with the distant world. And at the same time reach physically those that I can without much hassle. After all I know my strength and weakness, as in striking a balance between the two for me is cool.

At the same time several other coping ways in regard to meeting all the responsibilities were exposed during the interview. This study found most of the respondents are ready to do anything to prevail, some revealed that for academic work the download material, edit a little and then submit it, others said that they hire people to do their assignment while others said they forfeit sleeping time to ensure they attended to all obligations. One respondent gave the following account to express this point:

Unless you are wise, you may never pass your exams and at the time have time for chatting online with friends. As I chat I also search for relevant material online cut and paste with some view changes one assignment is done. I give priority to online interaction, it is without which I cannot obtain happiness with friends and life. I have only one life to live, but for a degree, there is always a chance to advance it. Virtual connections can provide a better job than a good grade can, in our current Kenya.

A number of other respondents indicated in the course of the interview that some students who are well to do have the habit of hiring willing students to do their assignments. Several other respondents reported that their colleagues especially ladies rely very much on male brilliant students to have their assignments done. However, some of the respondents said that some students also try as much as possible to spare

time for studies and that for other responsibilities. This implies that students have diverse coping ways, which comprise of both positive and negative coping skills in trying to strike a balance between online interactions and other responsibilities.

Question 4: What do you think motivates students to engage in online interactions crimes?

In the course of the interview, majority of the respondents indicated that students were motivated to engage in online crimes because of their desire to share information that would be difficult to share offline and not lag behind current 'dark web' shared issues. They explained that the online interactions aided students to connect with the world issues, events and relations that are age exclusive. Online interaction is the most effective way to keep their friends close in touch, and avoid the feeling of parental over protectiveness.

For several respondents, online interactions served as a social channel that provided students with opportunities to virtually express their feeling freely update and share sexy stuff that the society would otherwise not tolerate (Nie, 2001). As pertains to the longing to remain being updated with current social news, some of the respondents argued that their parent never gave them a sex talk even when they needed it, so they have to browse from the web. Others said that students bullied during online interactions as a way to avoid boredom and relax from some thrilling world stressors. Several others expounded on the same saying online interaction is fun, is the best way to blackmail people without being known. Therefore, online interaction bullying provide a multimedia platform for

recreation ‘sexortionism’ such as video capability features that are entrenched in it like trading ‘twerking’ videos, listening to racy music and playing games. One student said that “the raunchier the photo, video or picture the better.” Some students believed that this helps them unwind from academic pressure and other social demands from the family and society.

For some respondents, the online interaction among students is a “simply cool and smart. If a man asks you send him a ‘ndithi’ (nude) photo, I just do it, as long as I do not show my face.” one respondent said. The respondent explained that the online interactions are “actually addictive and unavoidable” because of some stuff that is exclusively shared; hence most students cannot restrain themselves from the online interactions. One respondent said, “Personally I cannot do without online interactions, I remain connected all round the clock; 24/7, for I have to keep on peeping what my friends have for laughter”. And she continued, “how will it be like in the present-day world without some postings that my confidants send me online: Oops! Very stressing”! In addition, some other respondents were of the opinion that students were motivated to bully online for security reasons, meaning that some of the things they do online cannot be tolerable in real time to their friend and family members. Some also reported that some of their student colleagues stayed online interactions to keep in touch icon, models and celebrities in diaspora who share ideas that were not tolerable in the African culture and ideas.

Question 5: What do you consider to be some of the effects of continued online interactions by students?

As pertains the effects of continuous online interactions, the vast majority of the respondents said that the key effects were mismanagement of time and lack of self-control, hence addiction. The respondents explained that most students interact online to end up deviating from the day schedule giving much time to online interactions. In time they develop a compulsive habit that they are unable to let go. Exposure to indecent materials like pornography, were pointed out as the precursor to antisocial tendencies like seclusion, isolation and loneliness. Other effects brought forward are moral decadence, identity theft, privacy invasion, meeting strangers and sex predators who prey on socially anxious and lonely individuals (Mckenna&Bargh, 2004). One respondent said, “As long as am safe and know what am doing why [my parents] shouldknow who am hanging out with, it is my life.”Other respondents explained that some students get online when idle or bored, this could be dangerous for vulnerable anxious students, they are likely to form very close intimate relationship with strangers.

Concerning pressures due to academic and life demands, some respondents explained that as a result of taking refuge in continuousonline interactions, many students have experienced psychological conditions like stress and anxiety. One respondent said, “I have experienced online interactions related distresses especially after an online criticism or argument on political views. Another said, “For me, without being connected to my buddies, I feel worried and out of touch with the world.”

Question 6: Based on your interactions with others, do you think it is possible for students to be dependent on online interactions?

In assessing the level of awareness on how addictive interacting online could be, the finding shows that most of the respondents had a good knowledge on this. For all the respondents (100%), the answer to this question was a definite yes. They reported that it was possible for students to get addicted to their online interaction because of the various social sites and applications accessible online. One respondent said, “There are innumerable sites and applications that are ever attractive with all sorts of information, sometimes at night I don’t know how hours elapse, Facebook and Twitter are my companions in time of sorrow.” Another respondent indicated, “For some students can’t survive without interacting online, most of their friends are online.”

For the majority of the respondents, what had caused the online interaction addiction was the proliferation of social network sites like the Facebook, twitter, my space, and blogs among others. Most students confessed that they knew continuous online interaction is addictive but they do not realize when dependency symptoms start showing. For this reason most of the students hardly sought help of counselors, parents or other authorities, in the right time, instead they shared with friends. This implied that the friends were more approachable compared to the people in relevant authorities.

Question 8: What measures can be put in place to avoid the psychological and social effects that may result from the continued online interactions by students?

On this question the respondents gave different measures that they thought could help address the psychological or social effects that resulted from incessant online

interaction. Several respondents proposed comprehensive guiding and counseling as the best option. One respondent said:

The answer to this question is not straight forward. This is because many of my college mates who have these problems do not accept they are helpless about their conditions. But I think counseling and extensive training on how to balance between online interactions and other everyday responsibilities could be the starting point to helping such student. Even if it means taking them to rehabilitation centres like any other mentally sick persons.

Most of the other respondents insisted on that training and advising students on self-control and sensitizing them on proper time management skills. Others felt that establishment of other recreation and leisure facilities in colleges and residential areas could help too. Some of the respondents insisted that compulsory participation in sports and team building activities that create strong ties might also help in minimizing some of the time spent online interaction. There were also suggestions that the policy makers and civil society should push for inclusion of subjects on effective use of internet in the curriculum, right from primary school to tertiary institutions of learning. Introduction of strict rules on where and when to get online should be introduced in the country. One respondent said, "This is not easy, but for it to be effective, everybody must contribute, also instituting policies and rules my help law enforcers take charge".

In regard to cutting time spent online interactions to other creative and attractive activities, some respondents suggested that students should be encouraged to find by themselves alternative creative and innovative hobby activities to keep them busy and avoid boredom or loneliness. Further, some respondents were of the view that social centres could be established where youth may might a support system to help

overcome daily pressures among the youth. These findings reveal that some students appealed to the authority to handle interventions. This implies that some students felt insufficiently strong and incompetent in dealing with their personal and peers' psychological effects, probably due to lack of experience and the inability to empathize with them.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the respondents, from both the questionnaires and interviews. The findings of this study have been provided and interpreted focussing on the views of the participants and commentaries of the researcher. The following chapter will focus on the key findings, making conclusions and the recommendations drawn from the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations found essential. The study sought to explore the effects of online interactions on the youth psychological well-being, with special reference of the students in Daystar University- Nairobi campus. The discussion of the most important findings would be according to the study objectives.

Discussions of the Key Findings

The study considered the reasons for students' incessant engagement in online interactions, the awareness of psychological effects from online interactions compared to offline interactions and the interventional measures that could be necessary for those students who are psychologically affected due to online interactions.

In regard to the first objective of the study, that was to establish the psychological effects of continuous online interactions, the students were found to be exposed to various effects. The study revealed that 98.4% of the respondents were aware of varied psychological effects that may have resulted from incessant online interaction.

These results were obtained through questionnaires and were strengthened by the information collected through the interviews. On suggesting some of the psychological effects known to the students, 24.1% of the respondents believed that continuous online interaction by students could lead to addiction to certain online

social sites. This result is in agreement with a study by Walsh and White (2007) which found that the academic performance of the students and their social life are unfavourably affected by the unrelenting online interactions. Consequently, it is evident that the students are well informed of the psychological effects that may directly affect their college life. This implies that knowing their addiction and doing something about it are different aspects.

Although the students felt they were responsible for their life and wanted to be free from these effects, they expressed lack of social support system as a channel of protecting them. For the students, they felt that parents, the university and the government among other policy makers were not sympathetic and hence they lacked insight on combating continuous online interactions among the youth effectively. This is worsened by absence of open and trustworthy relationship with these significant people where they could express their concerns without fear of victimization. This is in support to research conducted by Rosenthal et al (2004) which held that positive attitude towards the young people and good nurturance provide general coping capacities that usually enable them to do well in life.

On the aspect that continuous online interaction reduced interpersonal relationships, the findings concurs with Mazalin and Moore (2004) who found that continuous online interactions was associated with less identity status, higher levels of anxiety and generally inhibiting young people development. For this reason, the researcher suggested that it was important for parents to be on the lookout for signs of a disturbed youth. Signs like withdrawal from the public, overprotectiveness and

general strange behaviour could be associated with unrelenting online interactions.

The research also found that, a good number of respondents thought that online interaction could lead to brain wash among students, and could also result to invasion of the privacy of students. This is supported the research by Walsh (2009) which reported that young people heavily in their online interactions may develop dependence tendencies. The findings showed that some respondents reported that continued online interaction by students resulted to getting susceptible to harmful strangers like sexual predators and increased access to pornographic materials. This was similar to what Addlerand Kwon (2002) posited about diminishing in ethical values in relation to unrelenting online interactions among youth in universities. This implies that in this age where laptops, phones and tablets are gifted to children and where internet is readily available, our children are at risk of sexual abuse now more than ever.

Actually, many parents have no clue of what social interaction is or what happen there. They are totally oblivious of the dangers to their children. The researcher thought that is high time we spy on our children when interacting online. For underage, parents are advised to randomly check their phones, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, to know who they are communicating with. For university students, parents must have sex talk or seek for help from counsellors. Caregivers should in fact not worry about online interactions only, but also the dark web: the type that is not in the public domain. Perhaps, you are who you follow on social sites. So, the youth must refrain from attracting attention at all costs and should be warned against posting too

much information online.

In addition, stress and despair were found to be caused by continuous online interactions among students leading to seclusion and antisocial behaviours. This affirmed what Putnam (2000) and James and Drennan (2005) found out that unrelenting online interactions by students could lead to stress related pressures due to alienation from the face to face interactions, thus jeopardizing the daily lives of students. When interviewing the students, the researcher learnt that a typical youth social media account looks like this; when they are not posting selfies and photos of themselves every other hour, they are updating personal stuff about their whereabouts, feelings and even about their parents and siblings. Such that, most of the time a student is chatting with another person, many a times a stranger, they are most likely sharing intimate stuff about their feelings and their lives- Self-disclosure. They are also trading funny photos, videos and memes, and perhaps they could also be exchanging compromising photos and even planning to meet.

Students told me during the interviews that the unspoken rule on online interaction is that you don't get a lot of 'likes' and comments if you post a modest pictures. Meaning that racy, suggestive photo makes one look modish. Implying that the vulgar the photo the better. From my counselling point of view this, this is exactly what leads to alienation. However, only a minority at 2.3% and 1.4% of the respondents reported positive effects, that is, about enhanced and efficient social networking outcome and getting more informed on current world new respectively. This implies that despite the many adverse effects revealed the students still derive social and security

satisfaction that stimulates them to prefer online interaction. The satisfaction (Leung & Wei, 2000), which respondents received from online interactions made them experience a sense of safety. However this is contrary to the findings of a research by Helliwell and Putman (2004) that found out that youth seek self-gratification through their online interactions. From the counseling perspective, the researcher concurred with the latter since the social media has become a playing ground for braggarts, sex predators and sextortionists, who are pleasure seeking people preying on young and vulnerable minds. In other words, it is high time the caregivers took a keen interest in their children's online interaction habits. Moreover interviews established that the aspect of being moderate, judicious, and having self-control on regard to online interactions came out as a shared theme of the things that many respondents pointed out as vital consideration for all virtual relationships.

In regard to the first objective, it is clearly manifested that students are prompted to engage to online interactions instead of offline one in order to obtain different satisfactions. Some of these satisfactions are social, security, and self-satisfactions (Walsh, 2009). The findings of this study about the satisfaction was a confirmation that Uses and Gratification theory applied was suitable in exploring the way students have been interacting online to get various gratifications; as a consequence the students might be exposed to harmful effects related to incessant online interaction.

The second objective of the research which was to find out if these effects vary with social demographic characteristics such as age, gender, study programs, employment status, years in online interactions and so on. Female (66.0%) were rated highly

exposed to the various effects that came as a result of continuous online given that they were the majority in online interactions. Males (34.0%) rated second and were found to conceal psychological effects more than females did. This implies that female student had better coping skills than male. Probably, this is due to their social attitude and friendliness capabilities. Therefore, males become more vulnerable to effects of online interactions since they tend to vent little compared to female students.

A high number at 58% of the respondents in this study reporting on psychological effects of online interactions were in pre- university, Diploma and bachelor's degree programmes and 33.0% in postgraduate programme. Of these, 74.9% of the young people in the university were between 18 to 25 years. The respondents also agreed that they have used online interactions excessively (45.3%), these results are authenticated by what Australian Research Council (2007) and Cotton (2008) had found earlier on that the college students who are incessant online communications users are those at 35 years and below in age. Likewise, this is confirmed by what Addler and Kwon (2002) posit about moral decline in relation to unrelenting online interactions among youth in colleges. For this reason immediate intervention is necessary in case of stress, anxiety and addictive behaviour since these posed a very high risk to students' wellbeing.

The findings also showed that 75% of the respondents were exclusively students, that is, they were not employed. So they had the entire day at their disposal, to interact online as a hobby and active leisure activity to avoid boredom. Having a lot of time

out of class schedule and avoiding idleness were common themes that were widely shared during the interview by majority of the respondents in the study. Online interactions therefore can either be a risk or a resilient factor depending on what type of people, who, why and how it is used. To support this, Valkenburg and Jochen (2007) argued that psychological well-being was not harmful because of online interactions itself but rather by the time spent interacting with friends online and the quality of those friends. In relation to this the students reported that 73.4% of them visit up to four social sites in a day. Of these, 65.6% had been engaged on continuous online interactions for a duration ranging between five to nine years.

This study was confirmed by a previous research by Odell et al. (2000) suggesting that young people spend long hours at the internet on an average day limiting their time for face to face interactions. The picture that emerges is that time for face to face social activities are thus greatly reduced. Furthermore, Kraut et al. (1998) speculated that by interacting online, an individual may be substituting their better real-time relationships (strong ties) which are thought to lead to better psychological outcomes, for artificial online relationships (weak ties). This implies that virtual relationships simply reduces a youth to a socially anxious and lonely individual, who is dangerous to the community and the society at large because they are very likely to form very close relationships even in the real world.

Essentially, almost a half (42.2%) of the respondent believed that their psychological wellbeing would have been better if they did not spend too much time interacting online. There was a widely held theme among those interviewed shared that students

spent a great deal of their time in a day visiting one social networking site performing diverse activities of their interest. According to findings by Lenhart and Madden (2007), online interactions for youth has social benefit in that when away from college it can be used to maintain previous relationships, enhance self-esteem, and enhance offline friendship rather than losing touch. However, Gross and Acquisti in the articles by Hodge (2006) on the contrary pointed out negative impact of incessant online interaction, with focus on privacy violations and personal safety: like identity theft and cyber-bullying.

This research established the awareness by students of some of the psychosocial effects that might result from incessant online interaction. This is supported by the research by Walsh (2009) which reported that young people heavily in continuous online interactions may develop dependence tendencies. The researcher agreed with this as students told the researcher that most of their parents do not have a clear idea what social media is. So if the son or daughter is chatting to strangers, exchanging suggestive or nude pictures mostly at table or study room, the parent cannot intervene, since they are not aware what a son or daughter is up to online. The parents think that when their children are in their rooms, they are reading but they do not know whom they are interacting online with. This is why the family computer should not be in the child's room, but in a public place in the house, where you can monitor them and get a glance into their online activities.

Messaging applications like Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram Direct Messages are also an avenue for online dependency. This is because they have video

capabilities which are very attractive to young people's mind; with this people can strip naked for the person on the other end. Many young people with self-esteem issues can find comfort in somebody online that in the face to face interactions. In other words, young people heavily in continuous online interactions are only a click away to online fixation and care givers should take keen interest in their children's routines.

The implication here is that for most students all their timelines (home and away) are occupied by online interactions; hence the unceasing online interaction addiction habits. Generally, the major psychological effects that could have resulted from incessant online interaction were commonly shared regardless of the social demographic characteristics. This was similar with what Putnam (2000) and James and Drennan (2005) found out that unrelenting online interactions by students could lead to stress related pressures due to alienation from the face to face interactions, thus jeopardizing the daily lives of students. These effects were considered using variables such as: anxiety, stress, and continuous online interactions addiction.

Stress Experience: This was highly rated as 51.5% of the respondents agreed to have experienced stress related to being unable to cope with online interactions challenges. Similarly, most of the interview respondents specified that many students have experienced stress and in some cases, have been distressed as a result of continuous online interactions. This is a sign that the youth are at risk of suffering psychologically due to online interactions because of believing that it is possible to interact online all the time Nie (2001). Furthermore, 37.5% of the respondents agreed

to experience psychological distress because of the time they spend interacting online. Stress indicators may be affecting students' wellbeing, even though they might not realize it; as a result, they have negative emotional consequences related to continuous online interactions due to the beliefs they hold concerning it. Students may think illness is to blame for that angry outburst, frequent insomnia, social withdrawal or their decreased productivity in their duties. But stress may actually be the culprit.

Anxiety Experience: Anxiety rated second as 39.0% of the respondents agreed to have feeling of anxiety when a thought of being cut-off online interactions cross their minds. Yet another, 50.0% of the respondents agreed that they have felt nervous when they are not able to interact with their online acquaintances. Thus, it is possible that some of the youth end up getting affected psychologically by experiencing anxiety related to continuous online interactions. Accordingly, in Corey's (1996) ABC-REBT personality theory view point, continuous online interactions can be activating events that prompt beliefs which bring emotional consequences like anxiety to the students confirming the cause and effect connections where continuous online interactions in extension trigger irrational beliefs.

Dependency Behavior: Due to stress, socially anxious and lonely individuals may become dependent on online interactions as this study found out that 45.3% of the respondents agreed to have used online interactions excessively, 46.7% of the respondents agreed that they felt lonely when they could not access their online peers or friends and 42.2% agreed to have experienced coping challenges when they were unable to access online associates. Of all the interviewed respondents, 80 per cent of

them agreed that a good number of students exhibit addictive conduct to incessant online interactions. Perhaps, the dependence is because of the various fulfilments students derive from the constant online interactions(Walsh & White, 2007).

From the findings of this study, it is evident that students' continuous online interactions are making them to receive different gratifications and also develop fixed beliefs concerning continuous online interactions. The gratifications and beliefs related to continuous online interactions are inducing them to develop harmful psychological and social effects. As Williams (2006) argued, continuous online interactions provides a constant connection, which is a psychological gratification and it makes the young people to experience anxiety and stress when they do not have online interactions. At long last these bring about the feelings of emptiness, and lonely because of having acquired an unremitting online interactions thus, the addiction tendencies.

The third objective of the study was to recommend intervention measures to combat negative psychological effects of online interactions. A 100% of the respondents reported to have access to internet access using various gadgets, over a half (60.0%) of them used cell phones to interact online. This implies that these youth are at high risk of suffering from psychological distress, since they have their phone everywhere and every time interacting online. This category of students needs urgent intervention so as to adopt a positive attitude towards online interactions. Therefore developing the right methods of managing their incessant online interaction, this will protect them from adverse effects of incessant online interactions. According to Wellman et al.

(2001) a vast majority of college students need help on online communications; this concurs with the report got from this study that 45.3% of the respondents agreed they have excessively been in online interactions.

The respondents suggested various intervention measures. More than a half of the respondents both from the questionnaire and interview suggested for comprehensive psycho-education to assist the students who have been affected by continuous online interactions. Extensive guidance and counselling was suggested by 20.1% of questionnaire respondents. With the two suggestions above from the findings of this study, it was evident that students acknowledged that some of their colleagues had been affected and psychotherapy would be the best option. It is therefore very necessary for all professional counsellors to appreciate the problems that results from the continuous online interactions among the young people to be able to assist them effectively.

Another suggestion from the respondents was education on the proper use of mobile phones and the creation of awareness about the negative effects that could result in the continuous online interactions among the youth. The suggestion about disengaging them from any social media and create more leisure facilities was supported by 50.0% of the interview respondents and 41.0% of the questionnaire respondents. This concurs with the research by Walsh and White (2007), who argued that youth could end up having academic work challenges due to their incessant online social interaction.

On disengagement from social media and create more leisure facilities the interview respondents said that implementation of this need to be done cautiously such that is attractive to the young people, otherwise most of them might reject the whole concept. Others suggested sensitization on benefits of not over-indulging with online interactions through support groups, social clubs, peer to peer groups, trainings/seminars, mass media shows, pamphlets and magazines among other forums targeting the young people. Closely related to this suggestion was a recommendation to have universities, institutions and government authorities invest on activities that contribute positively to the lives of students by establishing youth social centres/facilities for sports and team building activities. Respondents thought that it is possible to engage students in other activities that stimulate face to face interaction which is thought to have strong ties. Having these activities that facilitates proper use of time will make the young people recognize other ways of spending the time out of lectures.

Respondents also suggested that policy makers supported by stakeholders such as parents, teachers, institutions and the community at large should introduce strict rules on when and where to get online interactions. This is to promote proper decision making and impart self-discipline among the young people by limiting online interactions. The aspect of self-control was also addressed by 56.5% of the interview respondents who suggested that students should be encouraged to endeavour to balance between online and offline interactions for quality social interactions.

Steve Parlina, an American motivational speaker, once said that discipline is like a muscle; the more you train it, the stronger it becomes and the less you train it, the weaker it becomes. So, just as it takes a muscle to build muscles students should learn self-restraint towards online interactions in the chapel, lecture rooms and other such places. However, discipline is not build overnight. It is built over time. Failure to pursue achievable goals that take students out of online interactions comfort zone might advance to other psychological concerns such as emptiness, anxiety and stress. Establishing rehabilitation centres for online/virtual interactions addicts was also thought to be an intervention for ensuring that those already dependent to online interactions could be helped. This would cater for all complications in the lives of the young people due to too much involvement in online interactions hence making them feel like they cannot do without them. Also as a way to avoid addiction in earlier years some respondents suggested introducing in school curriculum a subject that trains on effective online interactions and self-management skills in regard to continuous online interactions.

Conclusion

In general the study looked at the effects of online interactions on the psychological wellbeing of the youth. From the data collected the researcher observed that there was a significant relationship between the variables. Using Uses and Gratification theory, the researcher was able to establish that students have been on continuous online interaction to fulfil psychological and social desires. Therefore, this study confirmed by what was found by Walsh (2009) said that students received various gratifications

like social, self and security during their online interactions activities. For this reason, the young people considered online interactions to be attractive and importance in their lives, hence, the inclination to the unrelenting interaction online. To appoint that, they do not observe people around them to see to what extent incessant online interactions have hurt their colleagues psychological health. By so doing, they have deteriorated day by day not knowing what need be done to evade negative consequences of incessant online interactions.

Some of the students, have given up, and an aspect that was clearly specified during interviews that they feel lonely, anxious, distressed and they experience coping challenges when not connected to online interactions. Despite experience of these feelings, some respondents said students stick and keep on pressing to their psychological satisfaction like being trendy and they are well on their way to building the bad habits they have always wanted to avoid. At last they end up with severe adverse psychological and social effects in their struggle to sustain these pleasures, thus the possibility of experiencing psychological distress in their attempt to retain online interactions besides losing the quality face to face interrelationships.

For the purpose of being elegant, my observation is that, most of the young people seem to prefer show-off and fashions not the quality of one's life which is more important. This has confirmed one of the assumptions of this study, which stated that students have some psychological effects as a result of incessant online interactions; for they have not been able to sense what is vital nor approve what is excellent and of real value (Philippians 1:10)

In using the theory of personality as shown by ABC- REBT the researcher found it suitable in this study when it comes to development of the various consequences from the continuous online interactions. This is because online interactions of the students have been shown to be giving them some satisfactions, which influences the idea (belief) of the need and desire to access online interactions. As they continue interacting online, apparently they end up bringing in their lives the harmful psychological and social effects like addiction, stress, anxiety. The majority of the respondents validated what Billieux et al (2006) argued that online interactions and technology development in general brings about some effects to the social order in the life of students which has resulted depreciated wellbeing in terms of trouble and conflicts with peers, friends and relative. This is in support to research conducted by Mazalin and Moore (2004) supporting the negative effects on online interactions that found continuous online interactions was associated with less identity status , higher levels of anxiety and generally inhibiting young people development. Therefore, this was a major finding concerning students being preoccupied by taking advantage of their online interaction connections.

Recommendations

Having identified some negative psychosocial effects of incessant online interaction on the youth in a Daystar University- Nairobi campus, the researcher has made the following recommendations:

1. The national and local governments through their related Information and Communication docket should consider sensitizing the youth on the effects of

incessant online interactions and establish regulations to control these psychological effects. This can be done through advocacy and lobbying through different mass media to educate the youth on how to avoid the adverse effects of online interactions.

2. All stakeholders like the parents, caregivers, sponsors and all interested parties ought to be made aware of the psychosocial effects of continuous online interactions through public meetings, church meetings and the media, so that they can enlighten and guide their children on the proper use of social sites so as to avoid being affected negatively.
3. Psycho-education on the proper online interaction should be introduced early enough at home so that when children are becoming young adults, they will be well prepared to handle the mobile phones, during their personal communications.
4. Institutions of higher learning particularly the universities to put in place strict rules that govern social media and students be made aware of the negative effects of online interactions on the students. This is to help them to come with proper policies concerning the online interactions and to provide information to the students concerning the possible any psychological effects. Policies such as students not to use their mobile phone during class sessions and tough penalties like taking away the phone from students who do not observe such a rule can be of use. Other strict rules with tough penalties by the universities through the lecturers should be established to prevent students from unrelenting online interactions.

5. The university counselors need to be aware of the negative psychosocial effects of continuous online interactions. With this understanding, they will be better placed to address those issues that come about for counseling related to continuous online interactions. University authorities will also be in the forefront in creating awareness and educating people on the possible negative behaviours that could arise in their continuous online interactions. Information dissemination can be done when they are invited to offer various talks to different people and also counselors can be involved with psycho-education during counseling sessions.
6. The young people should be educated so that they can see the online social networking as a tool to enhance social connection rather than replacing face to face interactions. Help can be sought anytime from counselors in the university, the researcher included, who are willing to work with you as you look forward to overcome any undesirable behaviour that could have resulted in the process of online interactions.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Going by the findings of this research, there is need for a study of the effects of continuous online interactions on the psychological well-being of those who were not in the scope of this study, particularly the minors, right from primary schools.
2. A research needs to be carried out to determine whether the social contact that has been brought about by continuous online interactions has replaced or enhanced the personal, face to face interactions and the consequences arising.

3. It is also necessary to study the psychological effects of continuous online interactions among the youth in other tertiary institutions like vocational schools. This is because this study focused on just a university setup.

4. Also, research should be conducted to determine the extent of incessant online interactions and addiction among different individuals. This should be an area of great concern and there is a need to have the various symptoms to use so as to determine whether one is addicted to what extent.

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Daystar University

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of Study: *Effects of Online Interactions on the Youth Psychological Wellbeing.*

Researcher:

Name: Nicholas Nyaga 14-1698

Department: Counseling Psychology

Introduction

- You are being asked to read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The researcher intends to determine whether youths in universities have been affected by the online interactions from a psychological perspective
- Ultimately, this research is entirely for academic purposes.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- There are no known reasonable risks associated with the participation in this research.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The study may not benefit the participants directly but it may improve their understanding of how to promote appropriate use of online social networks sites.

Confidentiality

- This study is anonymous. We will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity.

Payments

- You will receive no payment before, during or after this study. The study is solely for academic purposes.

Free Entry and Exit

- The choice to participate in this study is entirely on free entry, free exit basis. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher of this study. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study during the process. After the research if you have any further questions about the study, contact Nicholas Nyaga at nicmaru@gmail.com or by cellphone at +254 4400813.

Consent

NOTE: By signing here below you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above and have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study.

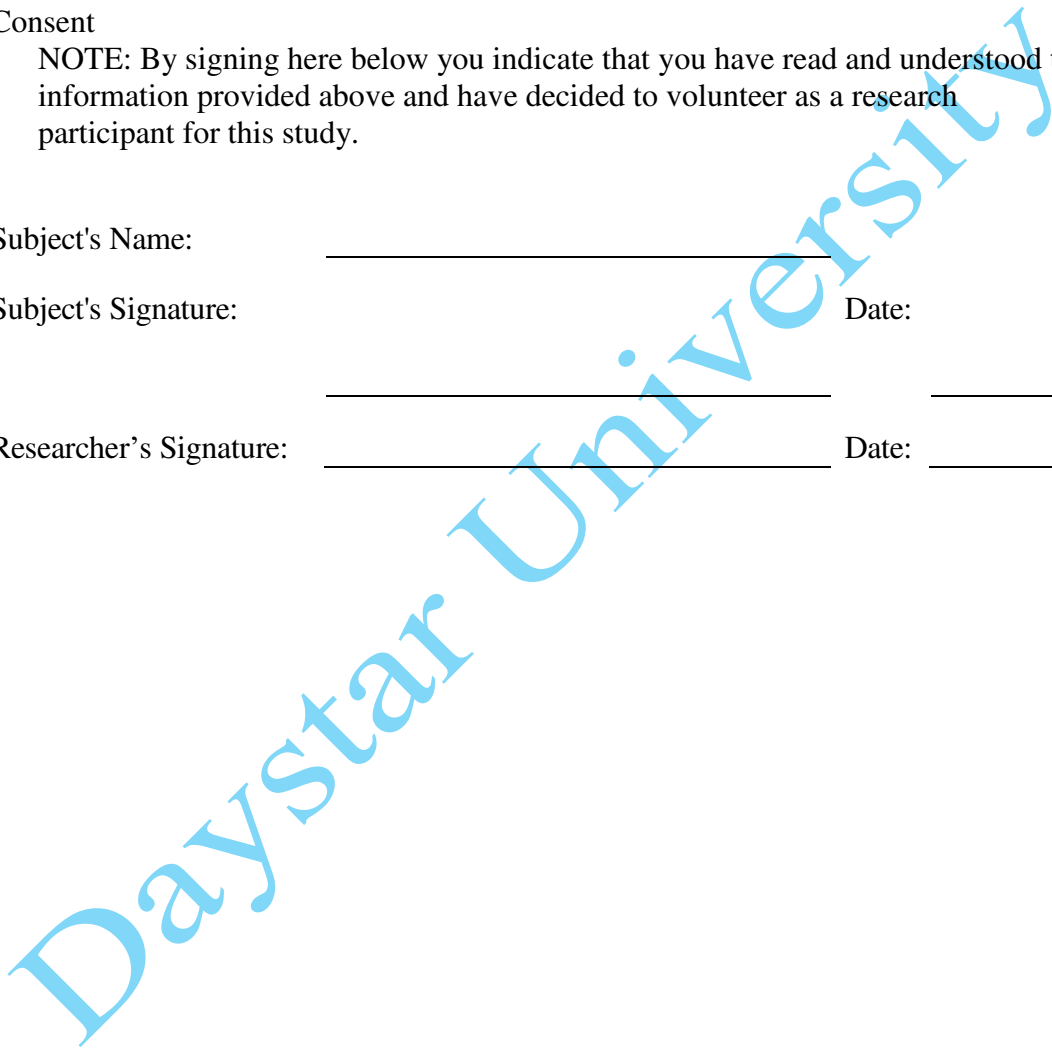
Subject's Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____



Appendix B: Questionnaire

Dear student,

My name is Nicholas Nyaga, an M.A. student in Counseling Psychology at Daystar University. I am carrying out a research on *the effects of online interactions on the psychological well-being of the youth*. You have been selected to participate in the present study and I'm requesting you to fill the questionnaire below. Your honest responses to the following questions will greatly enhance the quality of this study. The responses you give will be confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research. I kindly request you to answer ALL questions. Please tick (✓) your response or give the necessary information in the spaces provided. Your honest responses and cooperation is highly appreciated.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Gender Male Female
2. Age _____
(If you are above 35 years please do not proceed filling this questionnaire)
3. Year of study _____
4. Program enrolled in (diploma, undergraduate etc.) _____
5. Apart from being a student, are you employed? Yes No

SECTION B: INTERNET ACCESS

6. Do you have internet access? Yes No
(If the answer of the above question is 'No', do not proceed with the other questions).
7. What gadget do you use to access internet? _____
8. How many social network sites do you regularly visit in a day? _____
9. Approximately, how much time do you spend online in a day?
 Less than an hour. 1 – 2 hours 2 – 3 hours
 4 – 5 hours 5 – 6 hours More than 7 hours
10. How long have you been engaged in online social interactions?

- Less than 1 year
 2 – 4 years
 5 – 9 years
 More than 10 years

11. In average day, what do you use your online interaction for? (Put a tick (s) on the box)

- Chatting with friends, parents and family members
- Sending photos, pictures and videos
- Social sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter etc.
- Playing music or games
- Business transactions like banking.
- Others _____

12. Are you aware of trolling and harassment among your peers?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

13. If ‘Yes’ to question 12, what do you consider to be the motive behind it?

14. What do you consider to be the satisfaction of online interactions among the students?

15. Have you found students being distracted /dishonest through online interactions in the following ways? (please tick)

<i>Distracted/dishonest</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
During lectures/chapel		
About their whereabouts		

About their relationships		
---------------------------	--	--

16. Do you think there are any effects that may result from continuous online interactions by a student? Yes No

17. Please list some of the effects that may result from continuous online interactions by students.

18. What do you think may be done to assist students adversely affected?

19. Please rate the following statements?

<i>(Please tick (√) one option at each statement)</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I know students whose academic performance have been affected due to online interactions					
I have experienced psychological distress because of the time I spend interacting online.					
I feel lonely when I cannot use access my online peers or friends					
I experience coping challenges when I am unable to access online interactions.					

A thought of being cut off from online interactions makes me feel anxious					
I feel to have used online interactions excessively.					
I feel nervous when I am not able to interact with my online friends.					
My psychological well-being would be better if I did not spend much time online					
I have experienced stress related to being unable to cope with online interactions challenges.					
I am empty without my online interactions					

20. How much do you agree with the following statements regarding the reasons why people do online interactions?

<i>(Please tick (✓) one option against each statement)</i>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
To let family members and friends know where I am.					
For security purposes in case of an emergency					
My online friends are always very close to me.					
It's fun to be fashionable					

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix C: In-Depth Interview Guide

Dear student,

My name is Nicholas, an M.A. student in Counseling Psychology at Daystar University. I am carrying out a research on the *Effects of Online Interactions on the Psychological Well-being of the Youth*. I kindly request you to allow me interview you. If you would not mind allow me to take some notes during the process. Feel free to decline any of these requests without prejudice. Your responses will be confidential and will only be used for academic purpose only. Your honest responses and cooperation is highly appreciated.

1. For how long have you been using social network sites and for which activities?
2. In your view, what could make students be persistent in online interactions?
3. Bearing in mind the students daily responsibilities, how do they manage to balance between online interactions and other responsibilities?
4. According to you, what motivates students to do online interactions?
5. What do you consider to be some of the effects of constant online interactions by students?
6. Given on your interactions with others, do you think it is possible for students to be dependent on online interactions?
7. Have you experience coping challenges when unable to access online social interactions?
8. In your opinion are there measures that could be considered to ensure sound psychological wellbeing of the students who have continuous online interactions?
9. Can you recommend what can be done to those adversely affected?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME IN THIS INTERVIEW

Appendix D: Letter from Daystar University

7th March 2016

National Commission For Science, Technology and Innovation
8th - 9th Floor, Utalii House
off Uhuru Highway, Nairobi
P. O. Box 30623, 00100
Nairobi KENYA



Dear Sir/Madam,

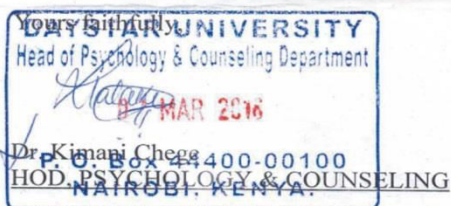
RE: NICHOLAS NYAGA (14-1698)

The above named is a student in the Master of Arts, Counseling Psychology at Daystar University Nairobi Campus. He is about to complete his coursework for the Master's program, and is required to do research as part of his final requirements. The topic of study is *'The effects of online interactions on the youth's psychological wellbeing: A case study of Daystar University, Nairobi campus'*. His proposal has been passed and approved by the Department of Psychology and Counseling.

He is hereby authorized by the University to carry out his study by collecting data from the field. He requires your authorization such that he can be able to access and identify his target population.

Thank you in advance for your willing to give this opportunity. We are truly grateful for your partnership in this, and for your organization's contribution in the education of Daystar University students.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Ref:hd/ministry letter

"...until the day dawn and the daystar
arise in your hearts"
2 Peter 1.19 KJV

Appendix E: Research Authorization Letter from NACOSTI



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/16/23815/10334**

Date:

12th April, 2016

Nicholas Kimaru Nyaga
Daystar University
P.O Box 44400-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“The effects of online interactions on the youth psychological well-being: A case study of Daystar University Nairobi Campus,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **2nd April, 2017.**

You are advised to report to **the Vice Chancellor, Daystar University, the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


**BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The Vice Chancellor
Daystar University.

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001: 2008 Certified

Appendix F: NACOSTI Certificate

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. NICHOLAS KIMARU NYAGA
of DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY, 44400-100
Nairobi, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/16/23815/10334
Date Of Issue : 12th April, 2016
Fee Received : Ksh 1000

on the topic: THE EFFECTS OF ONLINE
INTERACTIONS ON THE YOUTH
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: A CASE
STUDY OF DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY-
NAIROBI CAMPUS



for the period ending:
2nd April, 2017

Applicant's
Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

Conditions of the permit including: 1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit. 2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment. 3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved. 4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries. 5. You are required to submit at least two (2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report. 6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice. Includes NACOSTI logo, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, and Serial No. A 8570.