UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

Nomfundo Tracy Sibisi

215017351

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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SUPERVISOR: Prof. Johannes John Langba

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Declaration

I, **Nomfundo Tracy Sibisi,** student number **215017351** the undersigned hereby declare that the study on the **Social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students at a South African university** is my original work, both in conception and execution. All the sources that l have referred to or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged through complete references in terms of the APA style of referencing. I further declare that this research project has never been submitted to any institution for any purpose, academic or otherwise.

Candidate: **Nomfundo Tracy Sibisi**

Signature**: N.T.SIBISI**

Date**: 25/11/2022**

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I do not even know where to start when it comes to my family. Those people know how to keep me grounded and always remind me how much I am loved and appreciated. Thank you for all that you do for me. Mum, you are my rock! Sthandwa sami MaMnyabiso, may your beautiful soul continue resting in peace. I love you always gogo wami.

Lastly, I would like to thank all my friends for the constant check-ups and support that you gave me throughout this journey. You guys were able to pick me up and keep me sane on days where I felt really stressed. I appreciate you for that.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to the Sibisi family- oMahlase oBhovungane, this is to having the first family member with a masters degree. To many more in the family!

Abstract

The study sought to investigate the relationship between social media and life satisfaction among University of KwaZulu Natal students. The study was conducted at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Howard Campus. The study employed the quantitative methodology. Time-Location Sampling (also known as venue sampling) was used to select 100 social work students at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Howard campus. For data gathering, a structured questionnaire was administered to students from the Life Satisfaction scale. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SSPS) and interpreted in the manner thereafter. A total of 100 participants answered the questionnaire. The Kai square test of independence was tested between social media usage and life satisfaction and the results indicate that the association was not significant. Further, the Kai square test was also taken for social media and gender and results suggests that there is no difference between male and female when it comes to social media use. Accordingly, the study recommends the introduction of social media education as an extra curriculum programme taking cognizance of a fundamental need to raise awareness on privacy, cyberbullying, and the dangers of meeting with online strangers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Social media has made a huge impact and influence around the world and the popularity that social media sites has increased rapidly in the last decade (Ndlovu, 2017). With the presence of technology and its advances, ways of communication have changed drastically among societies as well as University students (Vogel, 2015). According to Ndlovu (2017), 9 out of 10 students in South Africa are online and more than 70% use social networking sites as a daily routine. Social media is a multi-purpose platform and a web-based technology which can allow the sharing of videos, text, sound, and images more collaboratively and interactively (Kaplan & Haelein, 2010).

Many sites are used by university students. In recent years, social media sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and YouTube have become popular, particularly with students (Vogel, 2015). These tools have become part of the student's lives and help to build their connections with others (Anderson, 2001; Vogel, 2015). However, there are significant shortcomings in social media usage, which have had adverse effects on students. Some of those disadvantages include cyberbullying, personal data leakage, recruitment for jobs and time-wasting (Zhang et al., 2010). Cyberbullying is the act of bullying a person using electronic communication, by sending a message which is threatening or intimidating (Vogel, 2015). The excessive use of social media of students adversely impacts academic performance and tampers with their social and personal lives (Whelan, Islam, & Brooks, 2020). The excessive usage of social media has become a problematic phenomenon as it affects the psychosocial well-being of many students, globally (Whelan, Islam, & Brooks, 2020: 2).

Social media privacy refers to the personal and sensitive information that people can find out about you from your accounts. This information can be purposefully shared such as in public profiles and posts, or unknowingly shared such as the data sites share with other companies and social media marketing agencies. The scary truth is that scammers can use the information you freely give out on social media - your posts, profile, and behavioural data - to spy on you, scam you out of money, or steal your identity.

With the rise of apps like Instagram, YouTube and TikTok, it is hard not to jump onto the trends that everyone else is obsessed with. Social media profiles can say a lot about a person, both in a positive and negative way. When it comes to searching for a job, it is really important that one thinks about their digital image. A lot of employers will check your social media presence when applying for a job, so it is best to always be mindful about what one posts or what they have shared in the past. Otherwise, you might find it holds you back in your hunt for a new job.

Kutu (2021), in his study conducted at UKZN, showed that excessive use of social media has a negative effect on students' success rate especially postgraduate students. The study investigated the use of social media for academic purposes by postgraduate information studies students on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Fifty-five post-graduate students were sampled of which 51 participated, giving a response rate of 93%.

According to Longstreet and Brooks (2017), in line with life satisfaction, social media otherwise referred to as a group of technologies on the Internet, are popular and addictive to many individuals including young people. Accordingly, decreases in life satisfaction are associated with increased levels of internet and social media addictions. Longstreet and Brooks (2017) further posit that young social media users who find things to be happy about

in their lives, their life satisfaction is increased and their corresponding levels of addiction to social media and internet is decreased.

Likewise, as youth develop more stress in their lives, their life satisfaction will decrease, which will in turn correspond to an increase in social media and Internet addictions (Longstreet & Brooks, 2017). It is upon these premises that this study sought to investigate the use of social media and how it impacts the life satisfaction of undergraduate students at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) in South Africa. Therefore, this chapter presents an overview of the study, background context, the statement of the problem as well as the rationale, and significance of the study. The chapter also presents the aims, objectives, research questions, definition of terms and structure of the thesis.

1.2 The Problem Statement

Social media usage has impacted the psychosocial well-being of social work students and their academic performance. A study by Grau, Kleiser and Bright (2019), showed that a high number of students in universities are addicted to social media and this directly affects academic performance both positively and negatively. According to Onyancha (2015), social media across South African universities has become a common phenomenon. However, the presence of unrealistic societal ideals in the mass media can lead to detrimental effects on men and women (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2009). These ideals provide a standard to which individuals compare and evaluate themselves. For instance, there is an overemphasis on thinness and the portrayal of ultra-slender female figures in the mass media of Western culture. This contributes to increasing body image concerns in women and girls (Cheng & Mallinckrodt, 2009). People tend to engage in social comparison that impacts their well-being likely leading to depression, anxiety and other associated illness deemed to adversely affect one's psyche. According to Ndlovu (2017), Social media networks have opened avenues for problems that did not exist 20 years ago in social relationships ranging from a reduction of

face-face communication, cyberbullying, sexting, addiction, time theft, defamation, vulnerability and gullibility of youths and the breach of privacy and safety concerns.

According to Oh, Ozkaya, and LaRose (2014), social media enhance people's life satisfaction through the benefits of increased social capital, perceived social support or increased self-esteem. However, scholars like Horwood & Anglim, 2019; Lin et al., 2016; Wright, 2020) argue that frequent social media use is also linked to loneliness, negative mood, anxiety, depression, lower well-being, and decreased life satisfaction among students. This study focuses on investigating whether social media is proving to be offering worthy life prospects for social work students or if problems emanating from social media are expanding into students' life and causing devastating social and academic problems as well as affecting their self-esteem. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the relationship between social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students in the Social Work department at the Univerversity of KwaZulu Natal.

1.3. Rationale of the Study

Social media usage has opened a gap in mutual communication among students. Students are more drawn to social media rather than creating arenas for mutual conversations, thus, the psychosocial sphere is affected (Raza et al., 2020). Very few studies have focused on how social media influences life satisfaction, this study thus demonstrated implications that are caused by social media which students seek as a source of relevance to themselves (Cheng & Mallinckrodt, 2009; Ndlovu (2017); Horwood & Anglim, 2019; Lin et al., 2016; Wright, 2020). These studies validated the fact that social media is the medium for social comparison at the same time weighing oneself to another to create self-relevance. Providing answers to fundamental questions relating to the use of social media, the types of social media by users, the frequency of their use and how and where they are used by the students is why this study is being conducted. As such, the relationship between social media and life satisfaction

among undergraduate students in a professional degree programme in South Africa is important and must be explored in detail.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Social media usage amongst university students is at a peak and therefore, research-validated whether the usage of media does affect the academic performance of students or not (Onyancha, 2015), The significance of this study, stems from the premise that gaining insights into how students use social media and its effects on life satisfaction could inform social work practice and policy. Therefore, the study will share knowledge of how social media affects students' lives and offer a variety of intervention paths to assist in mitigating the adverse effects of social media addiction. Institutions have their policies; therefore, the study will serve as a guide to policy development for social media use. The potential of the study being included in Social Work education could outline a new perspective on the phenomenon and expose university curriculum and students to the study's contribution to the broader scope of more knowledge regarding the topic. Additionally, the study will be significant in encouraging and informing university authorities and regulations towards social media usage.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

1.5.1 Aim of the Study

The study aims to investigate the relationship between social media and life satisfaction among undergraduate students in a professional degree programme in South Africa.

1.5.2 Objectives of the Study

- Examine the nature and extent of social media usage and life satisfaction among university students.

- Assess associations between social media and life satisfaction among undergraduate students.

- Assess associations between social media usage and body image among undergraduate students.

- Examine gender differences in social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students.

1.6 Research Questions

- What are the frequencies of social media use?

- What are the levels of life satisfaction?

- What is the association between social media and life satisfaction among undergraduate students*?*

- What is the association between social media usage and body image among undergraduate students?

- What are the gender differences in social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students?

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

The core concepts that form the gist of this study include social media, social media usage, self-esteem, life satisfaction and body image.

Social Media. The term has different interpretations, however, according to Boyd and Ellison (2007), social media refers to the wide range of internet-based and mobile services that allow users to globally participate in online exchanges, contribute to the user-created content, and join the online communities.

Social Media Usage. Schonfield (2008) alludes that social media usage is an electronic computer-based technology that facilitates the trending or sharing of ideas and information and the establishment of virtual networks and communities.

Self-esteem. Self-esteem is conceptualized as one's positive and negative evaluations of himself or herself and, relatedly, one's approval or disapproval of the self (Coopersmith, 1967).

Life Satisfaction. Shin and Johnson (1978), define life satisfaction as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria" (p. 478). An overall sense of satisfaction with one's own life can lead to higher self-esteem when young people are aware of their strengths and talents. Likewise, lower life satisfaction can elicit less positive self-esteem when people tend to undervalue their capabilities.

Body Image. Body image is the perception that a person has of their physical self and the thoughts and feelings that result from that perception (Brennan, 2010).

Social Networking. It refers to a process through which individuals engage in social interactions, and become interconnected usually in an informal manner, either by their interests, hometowns, schools, and other commonalities. These interactions occur through internet-based social media programs such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, BBM, YouTube, Skype, and WeChat from computers or cell phones whereby users communicate with each other by posting information, remarks, messages, images, and videos (Weaver & Morrison, 2008).

Social Media Sites/ Social Networking Sites. According to Kuss and Mark (2017), Social networking sites are defined as online sites or web-based services where users can create personal profiles, post photos, videos, blogs, and chat or send e-mails. In a like manner in this study, the concept referred to online platforms that allow users to develop profiles of

their backgrounds and interests, communicate with friends and strangers via chat sites such as WhatsApp, Twitter, BBM, Facebook, Mxit, WeChat etc. or e-mail and share thoughts, photos, internet links, music, videos and more.

Media Literacy. Potter (2018) suggests that media literacy refers to the ability to understand and create digital communications in a variety of contexts. This study, also referred to the study population's understanding of digital media and their ability to utilize it.

Cyberbullying (Internet). The use of the Internet and related technologies to harm or harass other people, in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner. For this study, also, referred to the use of instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms, or social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp either through internet-related technologies such as cell phones or computers to intimidate, insult, frighten or harm/hurt others emotionally and intentionally (Mishna, 2009).

Cyber-stalking. Stevens et. al (2021) defined cyber stalking as the use of Internet-related technologies or other electronic means to stalk, pursue, haunt, or harass an individual, a group of individuals or an organization. The cyber-stalker can, from the safety of his home or the anonymity of an office environment, trace, track and find out personal details of the target including address, phone number, and even more sinisterly, addresses and details of the target's family.

Off-line Bullying (Physical). The act of using overt bodily acts to gain power over peers, which can be by kicking, punching, hitting, or other physical attacks. For this study, it meant real physical bodily contact between a bully and his victim for intimidation or control over the victim. This included kicking, biting, punching, scratching, or wrestling the victim until he or she is completely submissive or unable to retaliate (Lambe et. al, 2019).

Sexting. It encompasses the exchange of sexually explicit messages and images via cell phones or other means of technology. In the study sexting also referred to the act of sending sexually explicit, nude, or sexually suggestive messages, and/or photographs, primarily between mobile phones through social networking sites (Barrense, 2017).

Connectivity. Friston (2011), suggests that this concept is defined as the ability to access the Internet and utilize online resources such as e-mail services and chat/social network services.

Digital Behaviour. The code of conduct, both written and unwritten that individuals exert online. This study defines the term as how an individual handles himself or herself, behaves and interacts with other users online and in groups. For example, individuals may be disrespectful of other people's rights and feelings online, may do abusive things they would not normally do, and may be friendly, shy, and humorous (Pinder et.al, 2018).

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1. This chapter includes the introduction, brief background of the study, statement of the problem, the main aim of the study, objectives, and research questions as well as the justification for the study.

Chapter 2. Comprises of the literature review which reviews relevant social scientific literature in and outside South Africa.

Chapter 3. This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. This study will be guided by the Media systems dependency theory, social learning theory and the life satisfaction theory.

Chapter 4. This chapter provides the research methodology and research design of the study, which unpacks plans on how data relevant to the study was gathered, analysed, and presented. In this regard, the Chapter includes the study area, research design, targeted

population, and sample size as well as sampling techniques used for the study. In addition, it, presents data collection and data analysis techniques that were used in the study. Lastly, it discusses the limitations of the study as well as ethical considerations that were observed in conducting the study.

Chapter 5. This is the presentation, analysis, and Interpretation of the findings of the study. These are based on responses given by respondents. With graphics and illustrations of the data being discussed.

Chapter 6. This is the discussion of findings presented, analysed, and interpreted in the previous chapter.

Chapter 7. This chapter provides conclusions, which is the summary of the study. The last part of chapter 6 presents the recommendations made by the researcher based on the findings and results of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review in research is of paramount importance. According to Hart (1998), literature reviews are intended to provide an indication of sources you have explored while researching a topic and to validate how your research fits within a larger field of study. This chapter presents reviewed literature relating to the research topic. It first explored the social welfare history of the problem under discussion. Secondly, it discusses policies and legislative framework relevant to this study. Furthermore, a review of literature related to the research questions will be discussed and lastly, the chapter will include the theoretical framework pertinent to the study.

2.2 Social Welfare History of the Problem

It is daring to make a double distinction between traditional media and modern social media, but one could argue that times have changed and that nothing seems to stay the same. This is the case with the manner in which society communicates and makes use of various communication platforms and media.2012: Bertot30) assert that "traditional media like radio, books, and network television are primarily designed to be a broadcast platform (one-to-many)."Before social networks and other intrusive media were created, this is the history of our social media.

During apartheid, laws made it difficult for many people to exercise their rights, including the freedom of speech and expression that the new social media movement now freely promotes. Social media are seen as a tool for democracy in the post-apartheid era. According to Chakrabarti (2018), people are finding it easier to participate in government through social media. The Constitution gives that each individual in South Africa has the privilege to fairness, human poise, assessment, conviction, and opportunity of articulation

(Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).As a result, people are empowered by human rights and can freely express themselves. However, apartheid-era characteristics, such as hate speech and discrimination (racism, sexism), persist on social media. Additionally, people can freely express their opinions on social media, which can lead to psychosocial issues. On the other hand, Mc Larens (2016) asserts that society and the world are impacted by the ever-increasing change caused by technology. Thusly, it is vital to ceaselessly teach individuals about their lawful privileges and commitments, yet it is additionally basic that society is shown how to safeguard itself from the damages of utilizing online entertainment organizations.

The majority of societies have seen an increase in stress as a result of the overuse of social media (Whelan, Islam, & Brooks, 2020).Technology has replaced storytelling as the primary means of development. The latter has disrupted people's day-to-day activities, particularly those of college students, who typically spend half of their time online. Students' psychosocial well-being is disrupted as they lose interest in social activities and focus more on social media. This means that the student finds comfort in being on their phones all the time rather than tapping into reality and conversing with people that are with them. Their feelings are first known by the whole world in the internet first then latter, and sometimes never, known by their families and friends.

2.3 Policies and Legislation

According to Meintjes-Van der Walt et al (2011), a policy is a document that sketches what the government or the organization is going to do and what it can achieve for society. In addition, it outlines all strategies and ideologies that the government, or any other organization, will employ to carry out its mandate. On the other hand, legislation refers to statutory laws that have been enacted by a nation's legislature or other governing body. The process of making a law can also be referred to as legislation because they ensure that people

know how to behave in society, laws and policies are important aspects of society. Additionally, it regulates and ensures that everyone complies with applicable regulations.

2.3.1 Elimination of Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Policy

The "Elimination of Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Policy" was approved by the University Staffing Committee on April 7, 2004, and Council on July 26, 2004, respectively, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This policy, which is in place to ensure the general welfare of the UKZN population and will be examined in this study. The approach expresses that the university is focused on the end of any type of uncalled for segregation or badgering. This includes any actions or threats that prevent an individual or group from carrying out their work or studying because of their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibilities, ethnic or social origin, race, colour, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, or birth.

According to McLean (2013), cyberbullying is bullying behaviour that involves the use of digital technology, such as the internet, email, or mobile phones. Cyberbullying, like all forms of bullying, frequently involves individuals who are acquainted with one another, such as school students, athletes, members of the same social circle, or 'friends of a friend'. Cyberbullying is widespread and never-ending. Cyberbullies may take advantage of the illusion of anonymity (for example, by using an account with a fake name or a blocked phone number), but in many instances, it is clear who is behind the bullying (McLean, 2013:1).Cyberbullying can be especially harmful because it often involves humiliation in public and many other people can read what is written or posted.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to remove everything that has been published online. Example, posting unwanted and offensive emails or text messages to a person, their friends, or associates constitutes online harassment. According to Allen (2001), posting fabricated

and false reviews online may have psychosocial repercussions such as a bruised ego, low self-esteem, and isolation from others. It is invoked whenever individuals post unwelcome discriminatory (racism, sexual orientation, religion, or harassment) or harassing commentary about UKZN staff or students on social media, this policy is extremely relevant to social media and psychosocial well-being. In order to safeguard the well-being of anyone who is a member of the UKZN society, the policy states that the necessary measures will be taken to address issues related to unfair discrimination of any kind and harassment.

2.3.2 Information and Communication Services (ICS)

The UKZN ICS (Information and Communication Services) has a policy that says that inappropriate use of ICS resources will result in a reprimand. This means that if there is defamation, corruption, intimidation, harassment, sexually explicit behaviour, or racism, the policy says that these things will be dealt with in the right way. Evidently, certain social networks with pornographic content have been blocked in some computer LANs at the Howard College Institution. The latter makes it difficult to ensure that students' well-being is taken care of. In relation to the study, this means that the institutions have created these regulations after taking into account anticipated limitations. Students' health is less disturbed and physical interactions are encouraged as a result of these regulations.

2.3.3 Regulation of Interception of Communication Related Information Act (70 of 2002)

The Regulation of Interception of Communication Related Information Act 70 of 2002, also known as RICA, went into effect on September 30, 2005.According to Habib, Jamal, Khalil, and Khan (2002), the law in South Africa known as RICA regulates the intercept or monitoring of both paper-based and electronic communications. There is a potential violation of the right to privacy guaranteed by the Constitution each time communications are monitored and then intercepted. The protection of that right, as well as the circumstances in

which the right is restricted and infringement permitted, are the focus of RICA. Internet access is available to registered students with active accounts at the university. However, university-specific ICT departments monitor university network usage (Habib et al.2021).

2.3.4 Mental Health Care Act (17 of 2000)

It is essential to draw attention to the Mental Health Care Act (Act 17 of 2000), whose preamble states that "health is a state of physical, mental, and social wellbeing" and that "mental health services should be provided as part of primary, secondary, and tertiary health services" should be provided. Accordingly, it should be made clear that self-esteem is a component of health, and self-esteem and body image should be discussed as health issues rather than reduced to a problem with social media. In this manner, it could be recognized as interdependent and interconnected throughout the adaptation process of the individual and the environment. Additionally, the act emphasizes the importance of providing mental health services to both individuals with mental illness and the general public. It also says that people with mental illness should be treated fairly and that their rights shouldn't be violated.

2.3.5 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

It is essential to note that social media provides the freedom of expression that the South African constitution (108 of 1996) guarantees to all residents. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes (a) freedom of the press and other media, as stated in Section 16 (1), chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, which is part of the Constitution (108 of 1996) b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; (c) freedom of artistic creativity; and (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research. At its best, social media should aim to encourage everyone to express themselves through its social interaction platforms, taking care of one's psycho social well-being as the number of users grows.

2.4 Motivations to Use Social Media

Students are driven to use social media as a means of satisfying their instincts to gratify by a set of desires that they are motivated by. There are many factors that influence social media use; the purpose of this research paper is to examine the factors that motivate students to use social media. Students communicate through social media platforms like email and social networks, which are regarded as places to receive daily updates and information. 'What individuals seek to gain from social media use may not only influence the nature and extent of their SM use behaviours, but also what kinds of psychological outcomes they get from SM use asserted'', Choi (2014, p. 3).

It is unarguable that virtual entertainment utilization turns into an inherently built-in urge that seeks to be demanding instant logging on to social sites, however, it is also crucial to acknowledge that these so-called motivations are a form or type of addictive behaviour that justify social media's sponging on individuals' lives. .An individual's use of social media is influenced by their motivations, which are acknowledged as antecedents. According to Choi (2014), people engage in activities on social media for a variety of reasons, including the desire for information, the desire for entertainment, the desire to improve one's self-status, and the desire to meet new people. Therefore, it is generally agreed that students are motivated by a number of fundamentally valid reasons and do not simply connect.

Brown and Yang (2013:403) assert that university students' opinions are motivated by "managing social relationships," a significant task. Yang and Brown (2013) use Erikson's (1959) age and psychological stage to argue that students face the challenge of developing intimate relationships, and that failure to do so has widespread effects on psychosocial well-being, including depression and loneliness. According to Vogel (2015), students are also motivated to use social media because they feel the need to compare themselves to other people. This has a variety of implications that can either make a person feel better about

themselves or make them feel worse about themselves in comparison to other people. Students frequently feel compelled to use social media for a specific reason.

2.5 Types of Social Networking Sites

Students can use a variety of sites to stay connected to their social network, depending on their discretion. Students at universities are familiar with a number of social networking sites, which they use to multitask and keep frequently active. The automotive youth of university students is now heavily dependent on social networks. Boyd (2010:2) assert that "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" are the definitions of these services. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Moodle are some of the well-known social networks that meet the requirements for being considered social sites.

2.6 Effects of Social Media Usage

It is said that the use of social media has been identified as the primary antecedent that has a variety of effects on an individual's well-being. . Strickland (2014: 5) claims that "social networking behaviours of 334 undergraduate students, found that there more negative and less positive interactions on social networking sites were associated with greater depressive symptoms". Therefore, social media as a medium of social interaction contributes to students' psychosocially stress.

According to Zeitel-Bank (2014), levels of uses of media that are centrally about interpersonal interaction (e.g., phone, online communication) as well as uses of media that are not (e.g., video, music, and reading) were positively associated with negative social well-being.1187). As a result, these findings suggested that social media use can be challenging

for students and others. Erasmus (2012) asserted that many university students were using these friends' networking sites and spending a significant amount of their time on them, the sites must be meeting personal and social user needs in a local South African study conducted at the University of Pretoria.71). However, discussing the use of media and the well-being of students is difficult. Students' use of social media has been linked, at least in part, to depression, anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, stress, and mood disorders. As a result, it is safe to conclude that students who sign up for social networks put themselves at risk of the negative effects on their mental and physical health that come with using them.

One appears to be less content the more they use social media. Kross et al. conducted a study (Facebook use was linked to lower levels of life satisfaction and moment-to-moment happiness, according to a 2013 study. These variables decreased more rapidly with the number of Facebook users per day. Kross et al. (2013) suggest that this may be because Facebook evokes feelings of social isolation in a way that other activities done alone do not. In addition, Facebook gives the impression that its users can instantly connect with others on the surface. However, unlike the supportive "offline" social networks, these connections are not as frequent or as beneficial to the user.

In their review of body image and social media research, Fardouly and Vartanian (2018) noted that studies of young women and girls predominate. In contrast, despite evidence that they are a highly vulnerable subgroup, sexual minority men have received little attention .For instance, Frederick and Essayli (2016) compared the body image of roughly 112,000 heterosexual men and 4,400 men from sexual minority groups. They found that the men from sexual minority groups were more dissatisfied with their muscularity, self-objectified more, and made more appearance-based social comparisons, all of which had effect sizes ranging from small to medium. In particular, theories of how exposure to social media causes body dissatisfaction and eating disorders include appearance-based social

comparisons and self-objectification as active mechanisms. In addition, men from sexual minority groups have higher rates of psychiatric disorders, one of which is body dissatisfaction.

2.6.1 Social Media Use and Self-esteem

According to some reports, the use of social media has been identified as the primary factor that has an impact on a person's health in a variety of ways. (Strickland, 2014) who looked at the social networking behaviours of 334 undergraduate students, and found that more negative and less positive interactions on social networking sites were associated with greater depressive symptoms. As a result, this confirms that students' negative psychosocial effects are exacerbated by social media. According to Andreassen (2015), core self-evaluations like self-esteem may also contribute to addictive social media use. Core beliefs, attributions, schemata, and automatic thoughts can be used in these evaluations, which have the power to activate behaviour in general (Beck, 1995), including social media use.

Therefore, if a person believes that 'I am not likeable' or 'I have poor social skills' but also that having a lot of friends or followers will change these self-evaluations, Participation in addictive social media may be made easier by this. According to Forest & Wood (2012), previous research has demonstrated that individuals with low self-esteem perceive social media as a safer environment in which to express themselves than individuals with high self-esteem. Self-esteem and social media addiction have been linked negatively in a number of other studies (Hong et al. 2014). This may suggest that symptoms of addictive social media use and low self-esteem are negatively linked.

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number of Facebook users per day. According to the authors, this may be because Facebook evokes feelings of social isolation in a way that other solitary activities do not. "Facebook provides an invaluable resource for fulfilling such needs by allowing people to instantly connect," the authors write. The current findings demonstrate that interacting with Facebook may predict the opposite result for young adults, it may undermine well-being rather than enhancing it, as frequent interactions with supportive 'offline' social networks powerfully do.

2.6.2 Social Media Use and Body Image

In their review of body image and social media research, Fardouly and Vartanian (2018) noted that studies of young women and girls predominate. In contrast, despite evidence that they are a highly vulnerable subgroup, sexual minority men have received little attention. For instance, Frederick and Essayli (2016) compared the body image of roughly 112,000 heterosexual men and 4,400 men from sexual minority groups. They found that the men from sexual minority groups were more dissatisfied with their muscularity, self-objectified more, and made more appearance-based social comparisons, all of which had effect sizes ranging from small to medium. In particular, theories of how exposure to social media causes body dissatisfaction and eating disorders include appearance-based social comparisons and self-objectification as active mechanisms. In addition, men from sexual minority groups have higher rates of psychiatric disorders, one of which is body dissatisfaction.

In conclusion, the above reviewed research studies are related to the research questions and were able to outline the most popular social media platforms, the reasons why students use social media and extent of use. Also, this section revealed evidence that suggests social media does certainly adversely impact the well-being of students.

2.6.3 Self-esteem and Life Satisfaction

A small number of studies have looked at how social comparisons on social media affect self-esteem. A recent study by de Vries and Kühne (2015) examined the indirect relationship between Facebook use and negative social comparisons of one's own self-perceptions, as well as whether or not this relationship varies depending on whether or not the individual was initially happy or unhappy. According to the results of the survey, which was sent out to 231 people between the ages of 18 and 25, Facebook use was associated with a greater degree of negative social comparison, which was related to negative self-perceived social competence and physical attractiveness. The use of social networking sites was found to have a negative correlation with self-perception through negative social comparison, particularly among unhappy individuals.

Negative social comparisons are correlated with the number of strangers a person follows, as the above study demonstrates. It is unknown who the participants were following, it could be other people in their age group who they do not necessarily know personally, celebrities, or other famous people. Whether they are users who are similar to them in terms of demographics, social class, or famous people who have a lot more money and social status than them, following strangers changes their social comparison group. Their sense of self-worth and level of contentment with life could also be impacted. People who follow strangers like models and celebrities may have lower self-esteem and feel dissatisfied with their lives after seeing pictures that celebrities post every day of their extravagant lifestyles, "perfect" bodies, and pretty faces. Review done to test the openness of pictures of models to young ladies have found that members who saw pictures of models revealed fundamentally lower body fulfilment and confidence report than those in the benchmark group who were not presented to any models (Clay, 2005).

Greenwald et al (1988) demonstrated self-esteem and the number of items generated in categories like linked activities, positive qualities, and names of friends were found to have a reliable correlation. People who lack self-esteem place little value on their achievements and themselves.Often ashamed of themselves, people believe they are not good enough and have a lower value than others. They frequently apologize, engage in negative self-talk, and constantly seek reassurance. This kind of person frequently struggles with failure and is a perfectionist. According to Baumgardener (1990), people who have low self-esteem are less certain than people who have high self-esteem. According to Campbell (1990), people who had high self-esteem rated themselves as being more exceptional, confident, quick, and stable over time than people who had low self-esteem.

Life satisfaction is boosted by self-esteem. According to Arslan et al. (2010), confrontation, emotional expression, self-disclosure, and life satisfaction are positively correlated with higher self-esteem and greater life satisfaction. Positive emotions are linked to concepts like self-esteem and life satisfaction. As a result, it is to be expected that people with high self-esteem will also have high levels of life satisfaction. Body-satisfaction and self-esteem are impacted when women are exposed to models for a short time. What if females were exposed to other female celebrities and models on a daily basis by following them for an even longer period of time on a social media platform like Instagram? Because they see pictures of these celebrities and models every day, they become their social group to compare themselves to. Is it possible that their sense of self-worth and contentment in life will suffer as a result of this constant exposure?

2.6.4 Body Image and Self-esteem

Concerns about one's body image are linked to a poor overall self-concept among early adolescents, including low self-esteem and negative self-concepts regarding one's physical, social, and academic abilities. It is known that people who have a negative body image are

more likely to diet and suffer from eating disorders. Self-esteem, gender, media messages, peer pressure, and family support all have an impact on body image. Body image, body weight, academic performance, athletic ability, and participation all have an impact on self-esteem. O'Dea (2012) found that girls with lower self-esteem were more likely to be overweight.

O'Dea (2012) says that self-esteem is very important to a person's mental health. A strong sense of self-worth and a positive self-image are likely to assist young people in becoming more content with their bodies. In terms of improved mental health and social behaviour, it is also a protective factor. Dissatisfaction with one's body, low self-esteem, and body image aren't just issues that young people face during puberty and adolescence; they affect people all throughout their lives, though the nature of these issues may change over time. Regardless of age or gender, people with low self-esteem are more likely to express dissatisfaction with their body size or shape. It should come as no surprise that self-esteem and body dissatisfaction are linked because a person's self-concept is heavily influenced by their perception of their body. The "beauty bias" exists in almost every social setting, and every experiment demonstrates that we favour physically attractive individuals. The irrational but deeply held belief that people who are physically attractive also possess other desirable characteristics, such as intelligence, competence, social skills, and confidence, is another stereotype that the majority of societies hold.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the reviewed research studies relate to the research questions. Nevertheless, the studies were able to show the most popular social media used platforms, the reasons why students use social media and its extent and revealed that social media does certainly impact the well-being of students.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study (Collet, 2004). The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (Collet, 2004). This study will be guided by the Media systems dependency theory, social learning theory and the life satisfaction theory as they all very much relate to the study.

3.2 Media Systems Dependency Theory

This study can be explained, using the Media Systems Dependency (MSD) theory. In 1976, Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melivin Defleur proposed the media systems dependency theory, which describes a complex system in which individuals, the media, their personal environment, and the social environment are dependent on one another. Media systems dependency theory, as proposed by Baran and Davis (2012), holds that the greater a person's dependence on media use to satisfy their needs, the greater the significance of the media's role in the individual's life and, consequently, the greater its influence. As the world becomes more complicated, people use the media to communicate or understand what's going on.

In addition, Yoon (2006) explained that people will become more reliant on media that addresses a variety of their needs than on media that only addresses a few. Individuals are influenced more by the media the more they rely on the media to share ideas and express their thoughts. Again, attitudes, cognition, emotional states, and behaviour will change more as a person uses social media more (Jung et al.,2015).The media systems dependency theory also relies on the fact that the media system has become more important as a result of industrialization because interpersonal communication has become less important.

Research on media system dependency is divided into three main effects the dependence society has on the media. They concentrated on the effect of mental impacts, emotional impacts, and social impacts. Due to people's dependence on information sources, these three types of changes are frequently discussed in the media (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976).The psychological processes that take place when trying to comprehend new information, developing new attitudes toward something, and making decisions are referred to as cognitive effects. Emotional impacts can be characterized as "the effect of media messages on a group of people's sentiments and close to home reactions" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976).Although changes in attitude, belief, and affective states are interesting behavioral effects, their significance lies in the extent to which they influence outward behavior.

3.2.1 A Critique of the Media Systems Dependency Theory

The theory does not directly address the question of whether there is some ideal level of media dependency. Baran and Davis (2012) assert that the media systems dependency theory does not distinguish between excessive and inadequate dependence. An explanation for the potential long-term effects of media dependence is also ignored by the theory. Most of these questions will never have a clear answer because of the constant evolution of society and technological advancements. The theory does not define how people's experience of media dependency is related to the many associated effects, which is one of the criticisms. Critics, for instance, ask, "Can we be dependent on the media without being dependent? "Is it possible for us to feel dependent when we are actually quite independent? DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1976:89).

The fact that this theory provides a thorough explanation of the role the media plays during social changes or crises is one of its greatest strengths in relation to the issue of how excessive use of social media affects one's self-esteem and body image. It clarifies some

societal behaviors and the motivations behind them. Since everyone is unique, there is no comprehensive scientific explanation for the exact reason why they are drawn to the media; however, it provides sufficient information to comprehend the relationship between individuals and the media (Baran & Davis, 2012).

An example of media dependency is the recent outburst between two popular South African Artists Babes Wodumo, and her boss boyfriend, Mampintsha, who had people talking like after the allegations of abuse. Across the country, unrest is erupting; social media has become a very critical and sometimes even hostile community. Because of this outburst, more people have responded via social media than any other possible platform. In this case, people rely on social media to learn about social changes and anything else that's going on in the world and to have their voices heard. This is a perfect illustration of how much society has come to rely on social media to keep them up to date on the latest news. People are exposed to all of the negative aspects of social media during these times, such as cyberbullying, racism, and harassment, which has psychosocial effects on their well-being (such as depression, isolation, and anxiety).

In conclusion, the relationships between the media, society and audiences are critical to understanding the theory of media system dependency. This theory explains how media dependency is relevant in almost everyone's lives. The fundamental point it outlines is that the more someone wants or needs the media, the more important role it ends up playing in that person's life. With that being said, the media will end up having more influence on that person.

3.3 Social Learning Theory

According to the theory, a person's behavior is learned, witnessed, verbalized, and imitated from their closest social environment. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, individuals learn from one another through imitation, modeling, and observation. Due to its inclusion of motivation, memory, and attention, the theory has been compared to the behaviorist and cognitive learning theories. According to Bandura (1977), behavior is first observed, recalled, and then carried out. As a result, many students may be affected by their exposure to social networks. There are a variety of activities that students can observe and eventually engage in on these platforms. Students may, for instance, be exposed to pornography, which can later have an impact on their public image and cause anxiety and stress. The majority of people eventually become accustomed to what is observed. Some students take on ways of life that aren't their own, and keeping up these ways of life can cause frustration and anxiety and depression. According to social learning theory, what we understand is what we do.

People are known to be social creatures. The world was already aware that individuals did not learn in a vacuum when Albert Bandura first advocated the idea of imitative responses as a key mechanism in social learning (Grusec, 1992).The entire of human experience recounted to a comparable story, one of cooperation and mental result. According to Social Learning Theory (2014), people, for better or worse, observe, imitate, and model the behaviour of others. If anything can be learned from this, it is that a person's socialization development is influenced by numerous factors in their environment, including the family, school, and biological factors. Social media sites are the most prevalent social education contexts in this section. According to social learning theory, a person's self-esteem is influenced by friends and situations.

3.4 Life Satisfaction Theory

According to Suikkanen (2011), life satisfaction theory says that happiness comes from having a positive outlook on one's life. There are many ways to complete this fundamental schema, but the most common one involves making some kind of global judgment: an affirmation of one's life or endorsement of it. Most measures of life satisfaction are either based on factors that a person finds personally important in their own life or are subjective. A person's level of life contentment will not be determined by a factor that they do not personally find meaningful.

Life satisfaction theory as per Suikkanen, (2011), holds that individuals experience fulfilment in numerous areas of life, similar to work, connections, loved ones, self-awareness, and well-being and wellness. Together, these aspects of our lives contribute to our overall sense of satisfaction in life. In general, Diener et al. (2013) point out that many different aspects of our life satisfaction are influenced or even determined by life satisfaction. According to (Suikkanen, 2011), advocates of life satisfaction see two major benefits to their theory. In the first place, life satisfaction is comprehensive, going over the entire of one's life, or the entirety of one's life over a specific period. Second, as the case of the suffering artist demonstrates (Suikkanen, 2011), life satisfaction appears to be more closely linked to our priorities than it is to effect. The theory of life satisfaction is more in line with liberal ideals of individual sovereignty, which focus on how well a person's life is going for them.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that students are motivated by certain factors that push them to use social media as a form of fulfilling their desires that they express to gratify. Social media usage is coloured by multiple reasons that justify why one uses them, in the premise of this research paper, one will review the reasons that motivate students' usage. Students use social

media as a form of communication where the use emails and social networks are said to be platforms where one receives information and daily updates. The next chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting the study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The collection of valid and trustworthy data that provides the reader with authentic information about a particular research study is crucial. According to Brown (2006), the methodology is the philosophical framework or foundation upon which the research is based. The systematic and theoretical analysis of the study as well as the methods used for the study are included in a study's methodology. The research design, epistemology, and methodology of the study were discussed in this chapter. In this regard, the population and sampling analysis were described. The section also dwelled on the data collection approach used, the data management and analysis and ethical considerations. It further discussed the potential limitations of the study and lastly included the timeline of the study.

4.2 Research Design

Research designs are an outline and plan that a study utilizes to arrive at the so-called truth or reality. Leedy (1997: 195) defines research design as "a plan to study, providing the overall framework for collecting data". This study utilised a quantitative research design in its efforts to ascertain a causal relationship between social media and life satisfaction. A quantitative approach is deductive as it produced a theory or hypothesis from observations. (Neumann, 2006). .This study made use of descriptive correlational research, which aims to describe the relationship between variables rather than inferring causes and effects. When the researcher has no control over the independent variables, the variables that are believed to cause or influence the dependent or outcome variable, descriptive correlational studies are useful for describing how one phenomenon is related to another (Neumann, 2006).

A postpositive epistemology known as quantitative research holds that scientific methods are the only means by which reality can be established. Post-positivists contend that

the researcher's theories, hypotheses, background knowledge, and values can influence what is observed, in contrast to positivists, who place an emphasis on independence between the researcher and the person (or object) being studied (Robson, 2002).

The first step in the research design process, according to Mouton (1996), is selecting a focus for the study. An epistemology is the means by which one perspectives the world and own translations of how the world is. This study follows a positivist approach to research. Positivism holds that only "factual" information gleaned from observation (using the senses), including measurement, is reliable. The researcher's responsibilities in positivist studies are limited to the objective collection and interpretation of data. According to Crowther & Lancaster (2008), the findings of these kinds of studies are typically observable and quantifiable. By making use of the positivist research method the study produced precise, verifiable, systematic and theoretical answers to the research questions and hypothesis.

Hypotheses

This study hypothesises that among undergraduate social work students:

H_1: There is an association between the frequency of social media usage and life satisfaction

H_0: There is no association between the frequency of social media usage and life satisfaction

H_2 There is an association between gender and social media usage

H_0: There is no association between gender and social media usage

Variables

Social media usage. Schonfield (2008) alludes that social media usage is an electronic computer-based technology that facilitates the trending or sharing of ideas and information and the establishment of virtual networks and communities. Social media usage was the independent variable in the study.

Life satisfaction. Shin and Johnson (1978), define life satisfaction as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria" (p. 478). Life satisfaction was the dependant variable in the study.

Gender. "For sociologists the key has been to see gender as a social construction (something created by the social environment) (Holmes, 2017:03). Lastly, gender was the independent variable in the study.

Measures

Life satisfaction scale. According to Dienner et.al (1985), it is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). This scale was used to measure the dependent variable which is life satisfaction.

Social media usage measure. Social media usage was measured using a set of five questions to see how frequent participants are on social media and which social networks they use the most.

Body image measure. These are some of the questions that were asked to the participants to measure body image; 'are you happy with the way you look?' and 'have you ever gone on a diet or are you doing it now?'

4.3 Population

According to Neumann (2006), sampling is the process of selecting which cases to include in your research. That is, a sample is a small subset of the overall population that will be studied. The population of this study were social work students enrolled in the year 2020 at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Howard campus. All the individuals within a population have similar traits, interests and sometimes experiences. One needs to know the target population that the study used to evaluate as the source of knowledge. The researcher chose

social work students because she has been a tutor in the social work department assisting students. Having noticed the challenges associated with social media usage and life satisfaction as well as the effects it has on students prompted the researcher to focus on social work students. In addition, due to COVID-19 restrictive measures on movement, the researcher had to focus on social work students which she had access to from working in the department, this assisted in limiting movements as a COVID-19 protocol.

4.4 Sampling

Time-Location Sampling, which is also known as venue sampling, was used to recruit members of a target population at specific times in predetermined locations. According to Leon et al. (2015), the potential universe of venues, days, and times is represented by venue-day-time units (VDT), which are also referred to as time-location units in the sampling framework. A VDT unit, for instance, could be a predetermined period of four hours on a Monday at a specific location. The researcher used available students, who fit the inclusion criteria, as participants to attain the information needed for the questionnaire. The researcher approached available students at that time and place and were given the questionnaire for completion. Convenience sampling was also utilised to identify other social work students. Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled simply because they are "convenient" sources of data for researchers (Bless and Higson, 2006). Some participants assisted with the contact details for other potential participants so that the researcher could call them and set up a meeting for the interview. All COVID-19 protocols were observed during the meetings. Those who could not meet in person after being given their contact, agreed to answer the questions telephonically.

4.4.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria were that potential participants must be UKZN registered students in the year 2020 and must also be registered in their second year studying towards a Bachelor of

Social Work (BSW) degree in the discipline of social work. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria excluded UKZN students who were not studying towards the BSW degree, and not actively involved in more than one social media platform.

4.4.2 Sample Size Determination

To calculate the sample size, the DIY quantitative research sample calculator was used. The DIY quantitative research sample calculator displays the recommended sample size required for the research to be statistically significant. The tool has both an online calculator and a manual calculator with a formula $S = (z^2 (d (1 - d))/ e^2) / 1 + (z^2 (d (1 - d)) / e^2)$. However, for this study the DIY online calculator was utilised whereby the total undergraduate population size of 3635 students was used, with a confidence level of 95% and margin error of 10%, the average number recommended interviewing was an average of 100 students for the research to be statistically significant:

$$S = (z^2 (d (1 - d))/ e^2) / 1 + (z^2 (d (1 - d)) / e^2)$$

Where:

S = sample size

P = population size

z = z-score

e = margin of error =10

d = standard deviation

Minimum sample size (s) = 99

A total of 100 participants completed the survey questionnaire.

4.5 Data Collection Approach

Data collection is a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes (Robson, 2011). A quantitative approach is deductive in nature as it produced a theory or hypothesis from observations. In quantitative research, the postpositive epistemology views reality as only proven through scientific methodologies.

4.5.1 Instrumentation

This study utilised a quantitative research approach in proving that there is a causal relationship between social media and psychosocial wellbeing. A consent form was signed by both the researcher and participant to ensure that the participant is fully aware of the nature of the study and other relevant aspects. This research used a written questionnaire as a data gathering instrument. A written questionnaire is a data collection instrument in which written questions are to be answered by the participants in written form (Bless and Higson, 2006).

This research used questionnaires because generally it is relatively quick to collect information using a questionnaire. This is so because a questionnaire is more objective. Unlike interviews, potential information can be collected from a large portion of a group (Bless and Higson, 2006). Also, other advantages of using questionnaires are that they are easy to analyse because data entry and tabulation for nearly all surveys was easily done with computer software packages (Bless and Higson, 2006). Every participant had some experience completing questionnaires thus, they generally did not make people apprehensive and reduced bias.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts namely socio demographic, social media usage, body image and life satisfaction. Socio demographic section looked at the personal information like age, year of study, nationality. The social media usage section wanted to find

out if the participants had social media and how often do they spend their time on different social networks. Further, it looked at the body image and tried to see if it is affected by their use of social media. Lastly, it looked at how satisfied participants are with their lives (See appendix B).

4.5.2 Recruitment and Gaining Entry

This study was conducted in a form of a questionnaire where the researcher visited UKZN Howard campus on different days during the busiest time of the day to recruit members who participated in filling out the questionnaires. The researcher through utilising the ethical clearance given by the university of KwaZulu Natal as well as COVID-19 permit to access university premises, the researcher managed to interview students within the UKZN Howard college premises.

4.5.3 Data Management and Analysis

A program known as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was installed on the computer and used to manage and analyse the data. After the information was collected, the program analysed and managed the data in the form of graphs, charts, or statistically. The researcher found the generated data to be appealing and simpler to analyse. The Pearson's correlations tool, which can tell how strong and in which direction two random variables have a linear relationship, was used to find relevant relationships between the variables that had been identified. The two variables of concern are social media and life satisfaction.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

In quantitative analysis it was crucial that the matrix of reliability and validity are adhered to as data could have been seen as untrustworthy. When one speaks of reliability it relates to the ability of the measurement tool to yield consistent results in the same environment without changing any dimensions or elements while validity is construed as the truthfulness of the

measurement (Heale & Twycross, 2015). The study considered both reliability and validity maintained a relationship as it is evidently possible that a study can yield reliable data without validity whereas a study can never be considered valid if it is not considered reliable. "Reliability and validity are ideas that help to establish the truthfulness, credibility, or believability of findings" (Neuman, 2014, p. 212).

A study's reliability and validity are determined by the instrument's ability to consistently yield the same results despite multiple measurements of the same phenomenon on the subjects. The most common method for determining an instrument's internal consistency is Cronbach's alpha. In this test, the normal of all connections in each mix of parted not set in stone. The test can be taken with instruments that have multiple-choice questions. The value of the Cronbach's alpha test is between 0 and 1.According to Heale and Twycross (2015), p. 67, a reliability score of 0.7 or higher is considered acceptable. As a result, the reliability of each instrument was evaluated to ensure that they all scored between 0.7 and higher. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used to collect data from study participants. In addition, the study made use of instruments whose validity had already been checked.

As shown Table 4.6.1., the internal consistency of the Life satisfaction Scale was 0.577 (Cronbach alpha).

Table 4.6.1: Internal Consistency of the Life Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.577	.551	5

As shown in table 4.6.2., the scale means of the five items in the life satisfaction range from 1.9-2.8.

Table 4.6. 2: Item Statistics of the Life Satisfaction Scale

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I could live my life over, i would change almost nothing	2.8000	1.33333	100
My life is close to my ideal	2.1500	.85723	100
Conditions of my life are excellent	2.5000	1.02986	100
Im satisfied with my life	1.9500	.80873	100
I have gotten the important things i want in life	2.2500	1.04809	100

As shown on Table 4.6.3, the scale means of the items if the items are deleted range from 8.85-9.15.

Table 4.6. 3: Item Total Statistics of Life Satisfaction

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I could live my life over, i would change almost nothing	8.8500	4.836	.558	.491	.355
My life is close to my ideal	9.5000	8.576	.115	.023	.620
Conditions of my life are excellent	9.1500	7.422	.250	.066	.567
Im satisfied with my life	9.7000	7.990	.272	.097	.554
I have gotten the important things i want in life	9.4000	6.162	.505	.453	.419

4.7 Ethical Consideration

The researcher was guided by a certain ethos that made sure that boundaries are set for the researcher, participants and anyone who was implicated in the study.

4.7.1 Protection of the Participants' Integrity

The proposal went through the ethics committee and was approved first before conducting the research to ensure that it was appropriate enough to be presented to the potential participants.

4.7.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent is important for the participants to take decisions that are informed. Neuman (2014, p. 151) posit that "it is not enough to obtain permission; people need to know what they are being asked to participate in". Participants were provided with an informed consent form and no rights of theirs were infringed upon (*See appendix C).*

4.7.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity was addressed by ensuring that the participants' details are kept safe and information that will make the participant identifiable like name, student number, etc. was not collected. To ensure the researcher does not bridge confidentiality, only the supervisor and researcher had access to the information. Data had a password and will be destroyed by fire after five years.

4.7.4 Voluntary Participation and Privacy

Participants were ensured that this is strictly a voluntary participation. Participants were recruited to participate without prejudiced or coercion. This allowed room for participants to freely contribute to the study without fear of harm participants (Tesoriero, 2010). The participants were also ensured that they can withdraw their consent at any time when they no

longer feel comfortable taking part in the study. Privacy was vital in the study as it dealt with personal issues of individuals, thus the researcher maintained the privacy of all the participants by designing questionnaires that did not require any participant to reveal their names or any other information that could be used to identify their identity. There were no implications, and the interview was conducted in a private space, not even friends were allowed to be in the same place.

4.7.5 Transparency

The provision of accurate information and feedback was of paramount importance and participants were well-informed of all the details of the study and were encouraged to complete their questionnaires. In this regard, participants were given information regarding the study and why they had to complete the questionnaire.

4.7.6 Risks and Benefits

There was minimal risk for participants who completed the questionnaire. The participants who become emotional during an interview, the interview was stopped immediately, and the participants were referred to student counselling. There were no tangible benefits of participating in the study.

4.8 Limitations of the Study

Limitations refer to the shortcomings of the research study that the researcher may have not anticipated or that may take place and restrict the conclusions and the methodology of the study. Social desirability may be one of the potential limitations (Ross et al, 2019). Participants' responses may have been influenced by social desirability as they may have not been honest with their answers and would have wanted to portray a good image of themselves because it was a student-on-student research and they knew the researcher would

meet them every day at campus and might judge them. The research also has questionnaires with closed questions which may limit the participants in expanding to the research questions presented. However, participants were assured that the study is for academic purposes and confidentiality was maintained.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the responses given by the participants. The first section presents interprets and discusses the demographic profile of participants. The subsequent section presents an analysis of data which addresses the study's objectives: namely, to examine the nature and extent of social media usage and life satisfaction among university students. To assess associations between social media and life satisfaction among undergraduate students. To assess associations between social media usage and body image among undergraduate students and to examine gender differences in social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students.

5.2 Univariate Findings

5.2.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

In terms of demographics, as shown by table 5.1 (below), half 50% (n=50) of the participants were female, and male participants were also 50% (n=50). The table shows an equal representation of participants who were considered for the study.

The study participants' demographics in terms of race, nationality and level of study were of African race (n=100) and were of South African nationalities (n=100), studying towards their second year in the university (n=100).

Table 5. 4: Gender Distribution of Participants

	N	%
Male	50	50%
Female	50	50%

5.2.2. Frequency of Social Media Usage

Figure 5.4 shows the daily frequency of social media use by the participants and the results were 54% of participants spend 12 hours on social media a day. While 23% of the participants spend 18 hours on social media, 6 hours are spent by on 21% and 1% spend 24 hours. The remainder of the 1% had said they only spend 3 hours on social media per day.
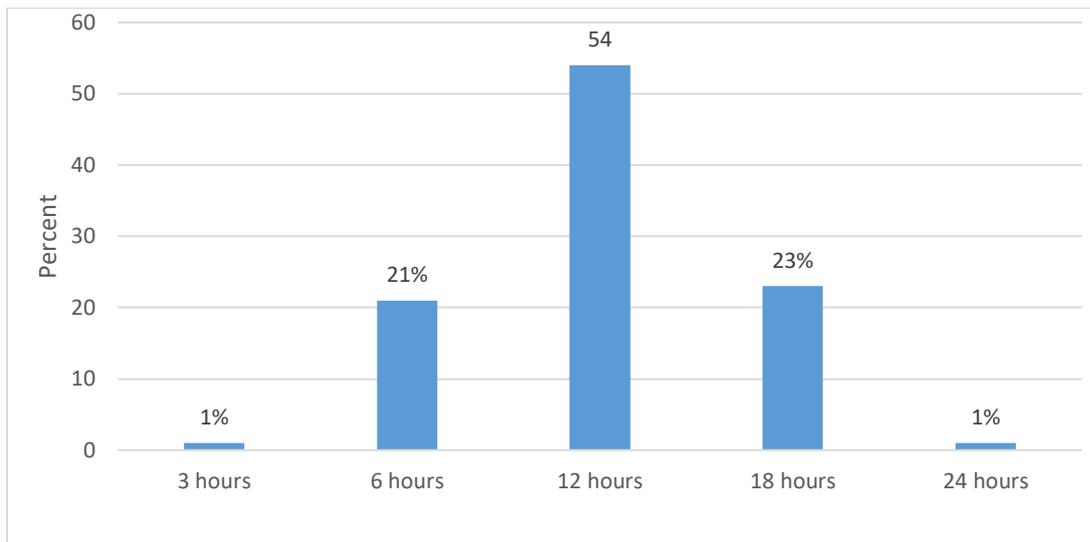
Figure 5.1: Frequency of Social Media Usage

About 30 participants strongly agreed that they are satisfied with their lives. The 16 of the participants who strongly agreed that they are satisfied with their lives said they spend 12 hours on social media per day, while 7 said they spend 18 hours on social media per day, and only 6 said they spend about 6 hours on social media and only 1 spends 24 hours on social media per day.

About 50 participants agreed that they were satisfied with their lives. 29 of those who agreed that they are satisfied with their lives, spend 12 hours on social media, while 12 spend 18 hours on social media per day. Then, 8 of the participants claimed that they spend 6 hours a day on social media only 1 spends 3 hours a day and no participant spend 24 hours on social media per day.

The total of 15 participants disagreed that they are satisfied with their lives, from the 15, participants 7 participants said they spend 12 hours a day on their social networks. Moreover, 6 of the participants claimed to participants spend a total of 6 hours a day on social

media and 2 of them claiming to spend at least 18 hours on social media in a day. No participant claimed to spend 24 hours a day on social media.

A total of 5 participants disagreed that they were satisfied with their lives. Of the 5 participants, 2 who strongly disagreed with being satisfied with their lives spent 18 hours on social media per day, while the other two participants spend 12 hours on social media per day. One participant spends 6 hours a day on social media and there were no participants who strongly disagree with being satisfied with their lives that spent 3 & 24 hours on social media per day.

5.2.3. Social Networking Site Usage by Gender

The data presented in Table 5.3 shows the social networking site usage of students interviewed in terms of gender, the rapid growth of social networking site usage is evident. It is highly recognized that social networking site by students is high because overall, 98.0% of students interviewed for the study used social networking sites while only 2.0% did not. In terms of gender distribution, overall, 48.0% of student participants were male and used social networking sites and 50.0% of student's participants were female, used social networking sites while 2.0% of student's participants were male, and did not use social networking sites.

The table further shows that 49.0% of the students using social networking sites were male whereas 51.0% of them were female. Significantly, the observation, therefore, was that the gender divide in social networking site usage is small. The table suggests not much of a difference in male and female social networking usage as it also shows that 96.0% of male students and 100.0% of female students interviewed used social networking sites. The reason for gender being one of the objectives was because most of the previous studies had not looked at it so this study wanted to explore if there are any gender differences between social media and life satisfaction.

Table 5.5:Social Networking Site Usage of Students

Gender of the Respondents		If Participants Use Social Networking Sites		Total
		Yes	No	
	% within the Gender of the Respondents	96.0%	4.0%	**100.0%**
	% within If Participants Participants Use Social Networking Sites	49.0%	100.0%	**50.0%**
	% of Total	**48.0%**	**2.0%**	**50.0%**
	% within the Gender of the Respondents	100.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
	% within If Participants Participants Use Social Networking Sites	51.0%	0.0%	**50.0%**
	% of Total	**50.0%**	**0.0%**	**50.0%**
	% within the Gender of the Respondents	98.0%	2.0%	**100.0%**
	% within If Participants Use Social Networking Sites	100.0%	100.0%	**100.0%**
	% of Total	**98.0%**	**2.0%**	**100.0%**

5.2.4 The Social Networking Sites to which Students Belong

Figure 5.3 presents the social networking sites to which the participants for this study belong.

Figure 5.3 illustrated the burgeoning popularity and extensive use of many online social

networks with most of the students equally making use of all the social networks. Social media sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are the most popular and frequently used with students equally utilizing these networks. All these social media platforms were reported to be the favorites.
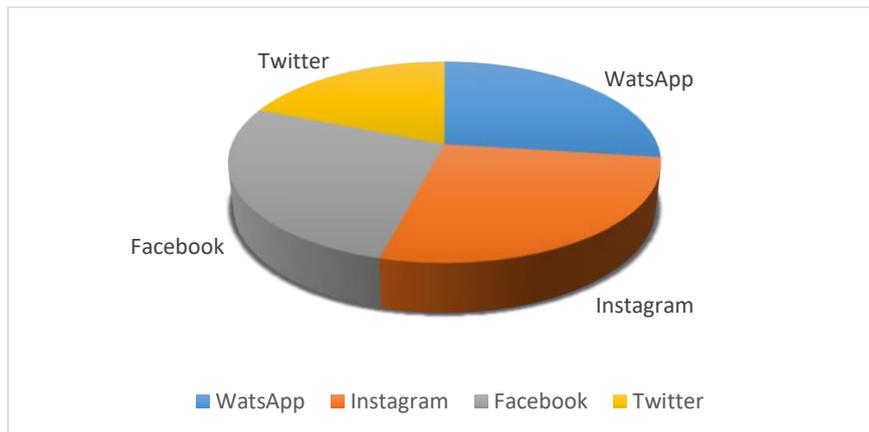
Figure 5.2.: Social networking sites to which the participants for this study belong

5.2.5. Roles Played by Social Media in Students' Lives

The data shown in Figure 5.3 outlines the roles of social media in the participants' lives. It appears students tend to befriend people they have previously known and those who are in their close circle because 34.0% of the participants viewed social networking as playing the role of maintaining existing relationships/friendships, while 18.0% of the participants used it for finding new friends and 10.0% for dating. This disparity, however, enhances the argument by Ndlovu (2017) that posit, in as much as social media networks cater for the formation of new ties, it mostly allows for the continuation of existing relationships. With a proportion of 14.0%, 6.0%, and 4.0% of the participants noting that social media plays the role of self-expression, sexual pleasure, and civil/political participation, it becomes clear that through

social networking the individual identity and self-expression role is catered for. Lastly, a minority of 4.0% claimed it plays the role of business networking.
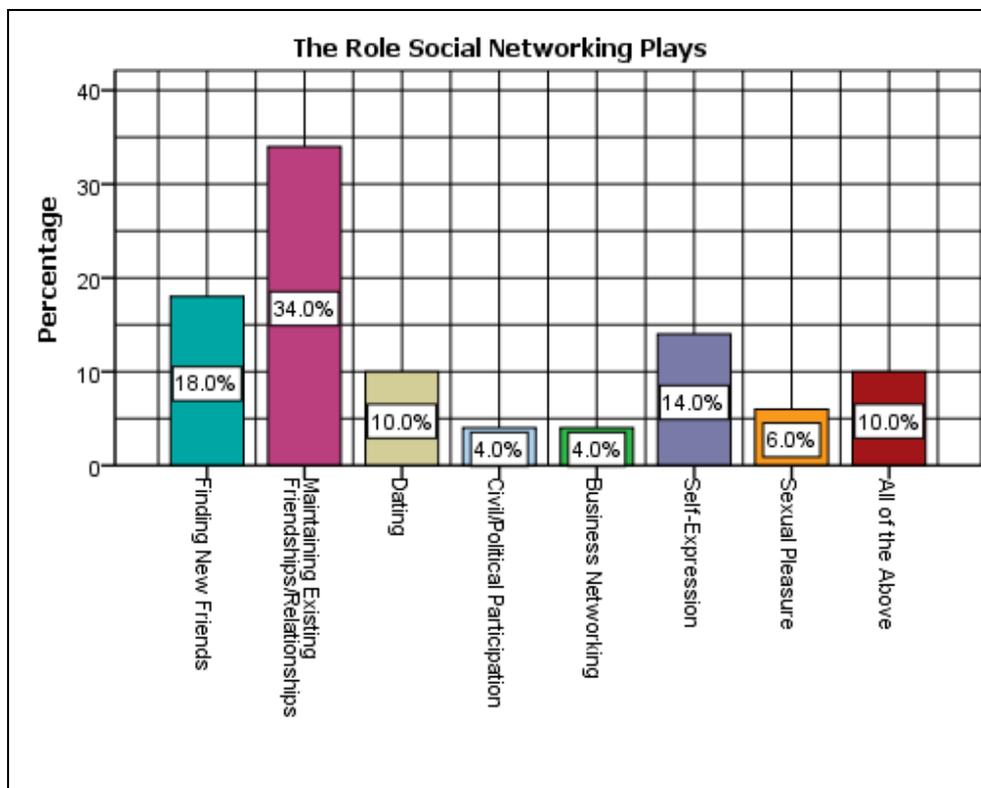
Figure 5.3: The roles of social media in the participants' lives

5.2.6. Social Media's Educative Role

The researcher asked the participants of the study if they think social media networking has an educative role. Pie chart figure 5.4 (below) presents their views. According to the findings, social networking has an educative role, with 80.0% attesting to perception and only 20.0% of the participants thought social networking does not have an educative role. However, the minor discrepancy in the views of the participants concurs with an argument by Mkhathini (2017) which suggest that inconsistency lies within claims that social networking augments education.
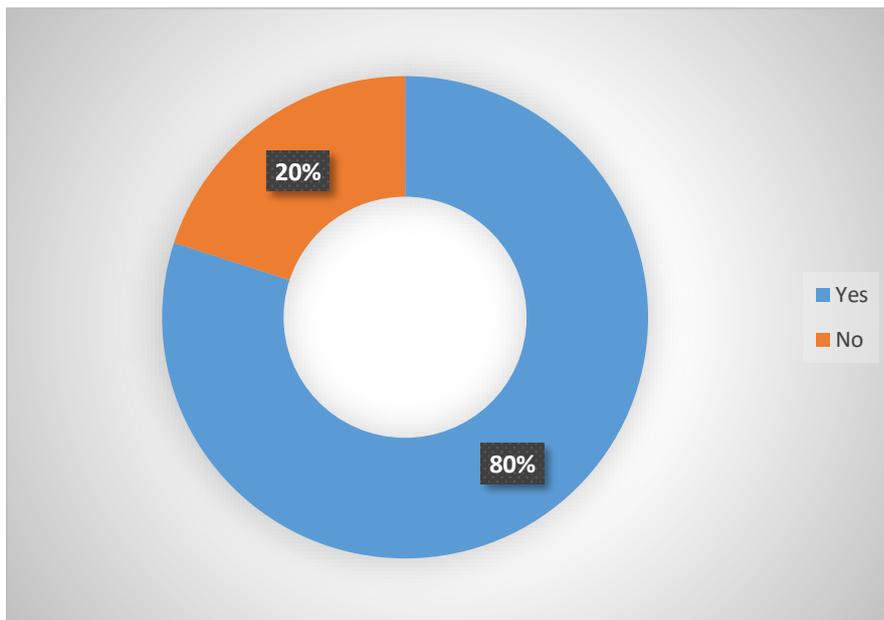
Figure 5.4: Social networking's educative role

5.2.7. Responses on How Social Media Has an Educative Role

Figure 5.5 presents participants' explanations of how social media has an educative role. These explanations account mostly for the informal aspect of education in which peers mostly exchange social life skills and knowledge. Fig 5.5 highlighted that 43% of the students used for the study viewed social networking as educative because people shared inspiring life stories/experiences therein. About 17% of the students' participants noted that social networking allowed for information sharing while 17% of the students' participants said new things were learnt from these social networks.

However, in formal education terms, 23% of the students who viewed social networking as educative noted that it gave room to class discussions outside the formal classroom settings.
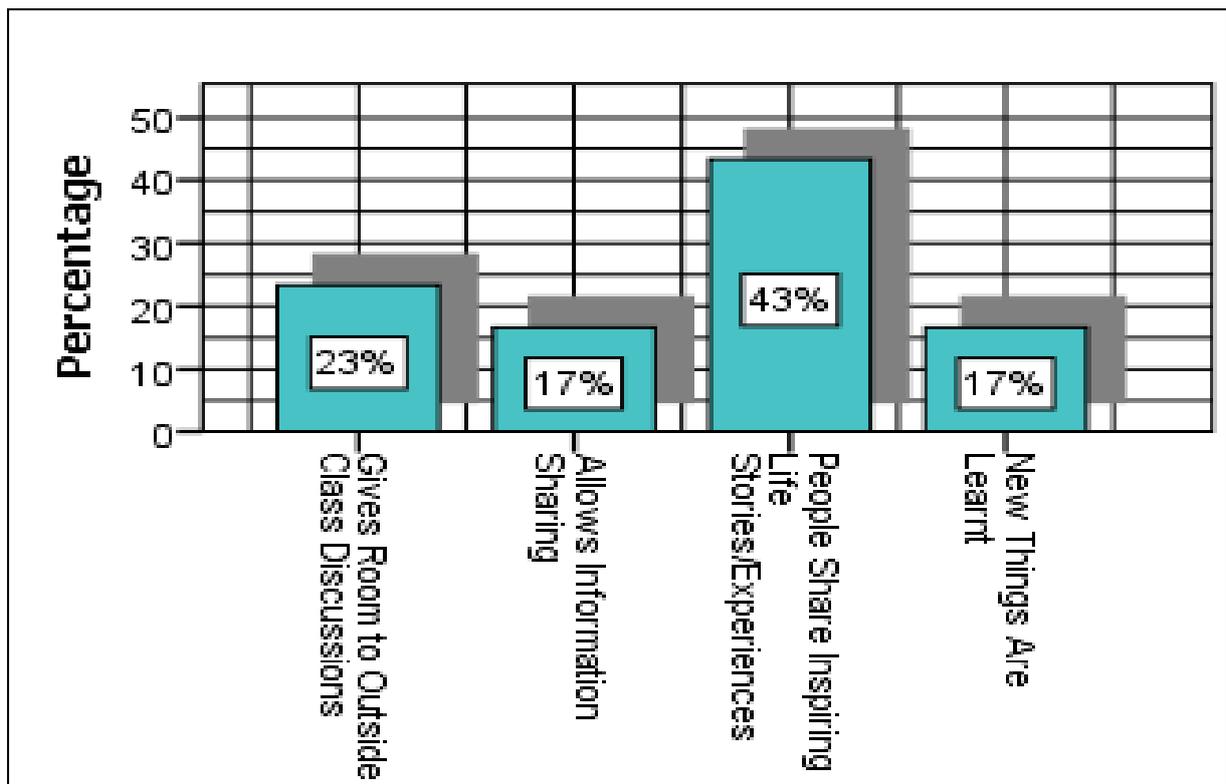
Figure 5.5: Participants' explanations of how social media has an educative role

5.2.8. Preferable Topics Discussed with Online Friends

The data presented in figure 5.6 (below) indicates the preferable topics discussed with online friends. As highlighted in the chart, the bulk of the participants (32%) discussed personal problems with their online friends whereas a total of 30% discussed entertainment related issues, followed by 29% of the participants who discussed educational matters and eventually 9% of the participants cited politics as the preferable topic. The topics discussed cut across aspects of personal life and were based on discussions in which students could have their "sharing needs" addressed and they could express themselves.
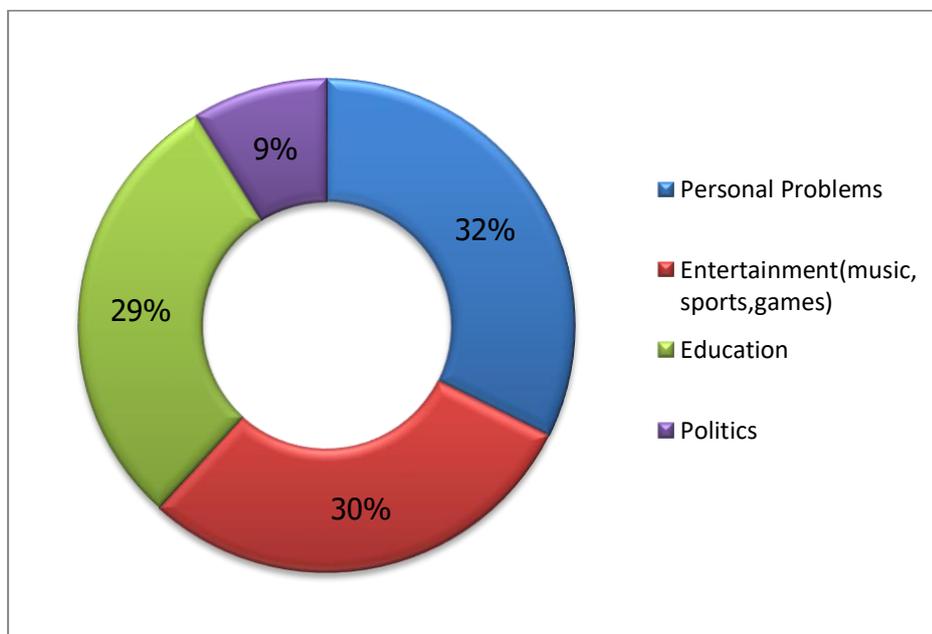
Figure 5.6: Preferable topics discussed with online friends

5.2.9. Activities that Students Engage in within Social Networking Sites

Figure 5.7 (below) shows the activities that students engaged in within social networking. As highlighted earlier, social networking serves the purpose of chatting. Figure 5.7 illustrated and elaborated that about 70% of students frequently use social networking for chatting. Moreover, figure 6 also illustrated that 12.0% of the students used for the study engaged in profile setting, a way of discovering their self-image, 6.0% of the students engaged in photo-sharing, accessing other people's profiles. The observation is that chatting is dominantly the activity that students engaged in on social networking sites as compared to other available activities.
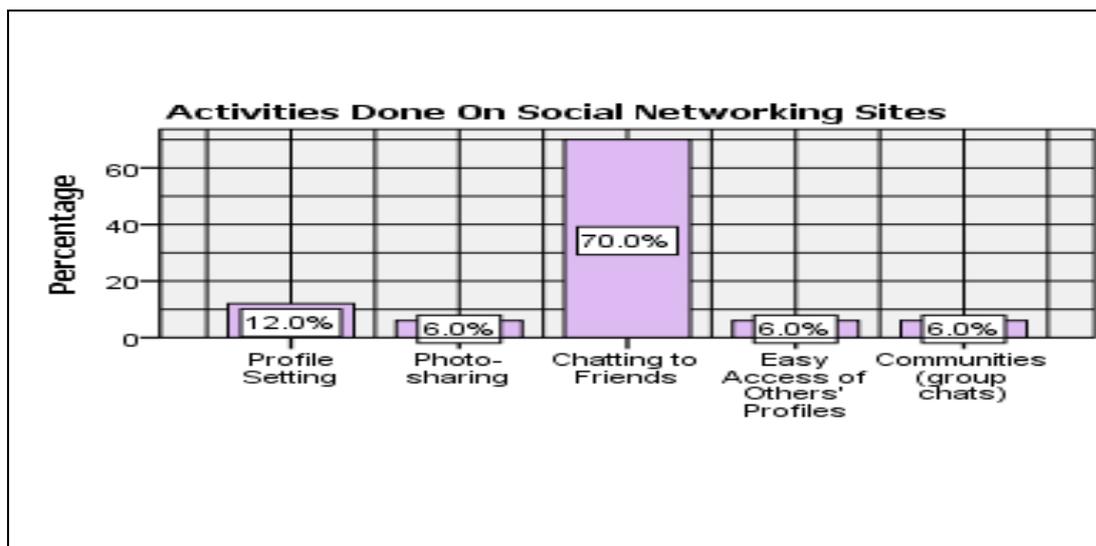
Figure 5. 7: Activities that students engaged in within social networking

5.2.10. Daily Time Spent on Social Media and Activities

The data presented in figure 5.8 (below) shows the time students spend and the activities that they engaged in within those time intervals. From the data shown, chatting was the prevalent activity within all the time intervals but was most significantly prevalent in the 6+ hour interval as it recorded a significant 26.0% among the participants used for the study. Photo sharing and profile setting equally (4.0%) dominated but within different time intervals of 1

hour 30 minutes to 2 hours and 2 hours 30 minutes to 3 hours, respectively. Figure 5.8 also showed that within all the time intervals, easy access to other people's profiles was not intensely engaged by most of the participants as much as chatting, for they all recorded lows of 2.0% each. What is worth noting from these findings is that, among the participants, no matter how much time one spent on social networking sites on a typical day, the general activity engaged was chatting.
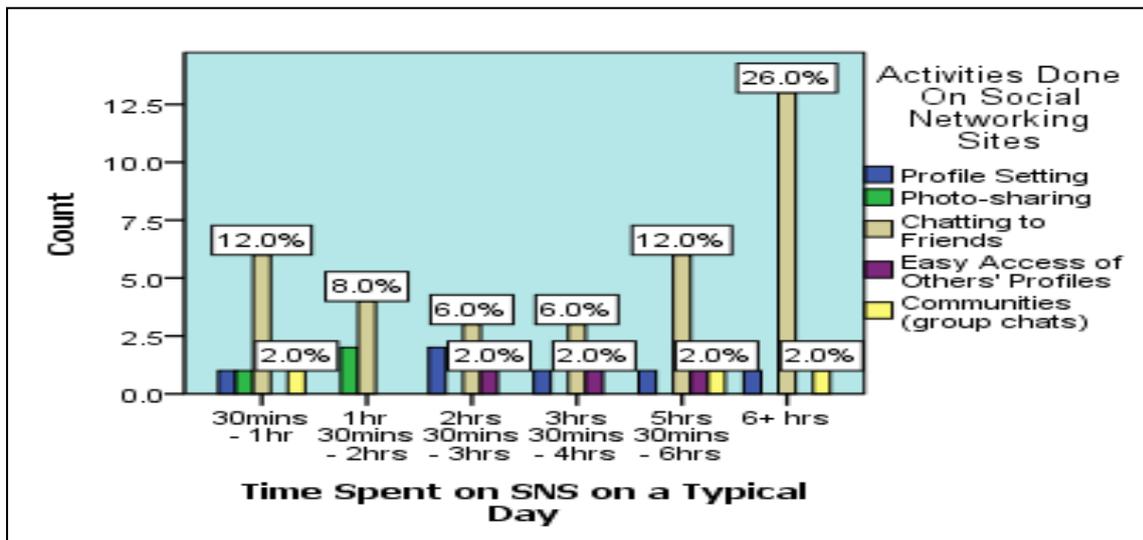
Figure 5.8: The time students spend and the activities that they engaged in within those time intervals

5.2.11. Participants' Use of Social Media Sites to Create, Share and View User-Generated Content

A significant number of students in this study engaged in content creation and sharing. Figure 5.9 (below) illustrates that 60.0% of the participants for the study used social media sites to create; share and view user-generated content whereas 40.0% did not. This showed how students in particular were immersed in creative content production and sharing.
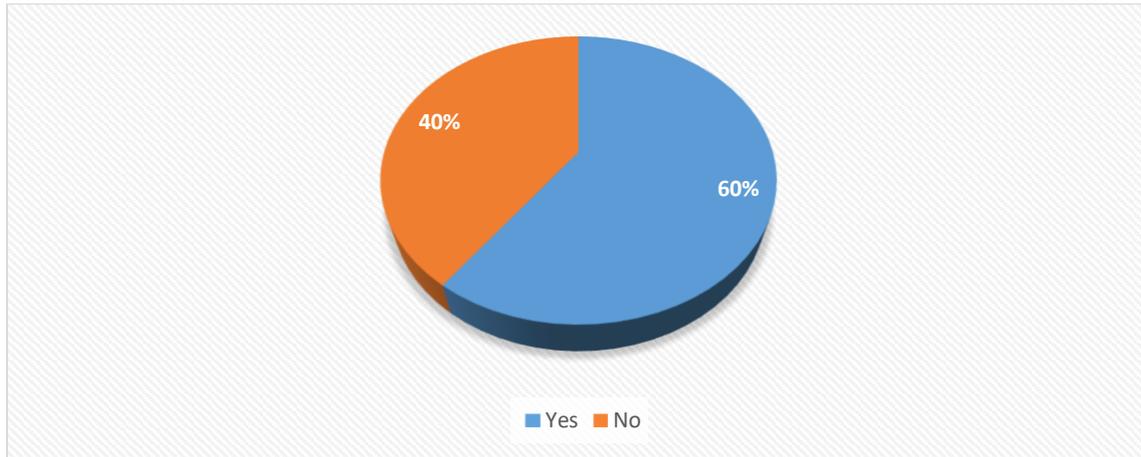
Figure 5.9: The participants' use social media sites to create; share and view user-generated content

5.2.12. Non-use of Social Network to Create, Share and View User-Generated Content

Figure 5.10 (below) illustrates the reasons why 40% of participants in Figure 5.9 did not use social networking sites to create, share and view user-generated content . A great proportion (45%) of the cited participants, suggested that it was expensive and thus unaffordable. This indicated how affordability affects the use of content/sharing sites by students but gave the impression that had it been affordable this proportion of students would use them. This suggests that content production/sharing fosters students' technical skills, however, in this study 30% of the participants stated that they did not know how to create, share, and view user-generated content while 25% claimed such functions were not compatible with their phones, clearly highlighting drawbacks in digital technologies amongst some students.
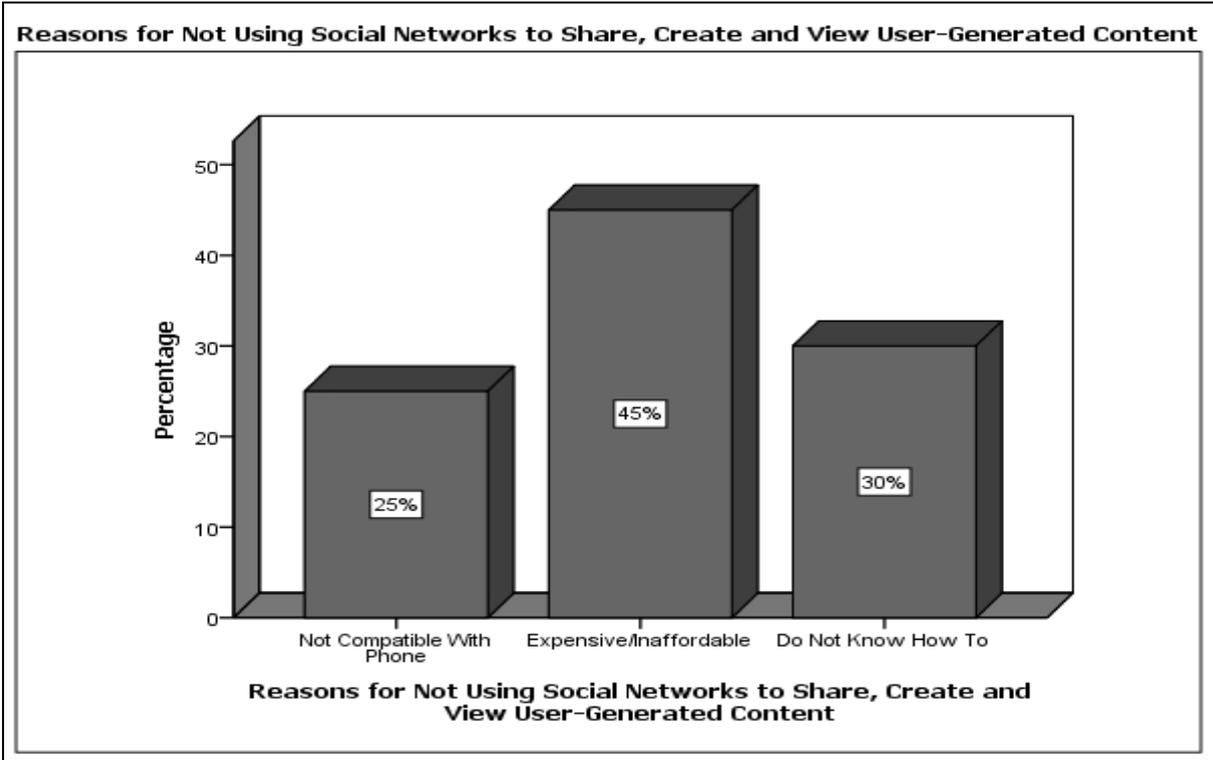
Figure 5.10: Non-use social networking sites to create, share and view user-generated content

5.2.13. What Students Do on Content-Generating/Sharing Sites

The researcher asked the participants that admitted to using content-generating/sharing sites what they did on those sites and Figure 5.11 highlights their responses. The data presented shows that 43% of these participants used these sites to view other people's videos, 27% shared videos on these social networking sites, and lastly, 30% downloaded videos therein. These findings were an indication of the intense activity of students on these social network platforms.
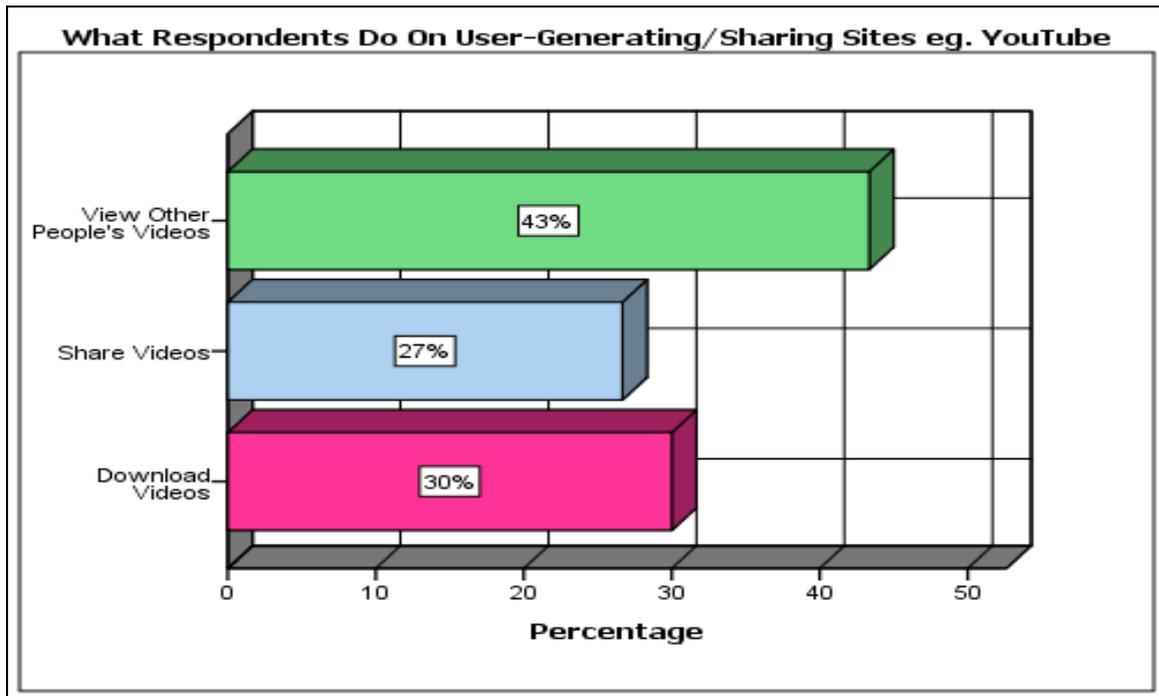
Figure 5.11: What Students Do on Content-Generating/Sharing Sites?

5.2.14. Establishment of the Participants Personality/Identity on Social Networking Sites

The data presented above in figure 5.12 (below) indicates that a significant proportion of participants (56%) allowed no degree of detachment from their offline lives to see them establishing their personality/identity on social networking sites. However, 44% of users used social networking sites to experiment and establish new personalities/identities.

Figure 5. 12: Establishment of the Participants Personality/Identity on Social Networking Sites

5.2.15. Reasons for Personality/Identity Establishment on Social Networking Sites

The data presented in figure 5.13 (below) shows the participants' reasons for establishing their personality/identity on social networking sites. Ndlovu (2017) noted that students who establish their personality/identity on social networking sites tend to do it for the enjoyment of pretending to be someone they were not and experiencing what it feels like to be a different gender and age. They simply viewed it as harmless fun. However, in this study, as shown (*see* Fig.5.13), about 50.0% established their personality/identity to enhance their popularity. Approximately 23% of the participants established their personality/identity on social networking sites to boost their self-esteem while a further 27% stated countering shyness as their reason for using social networking sites to establish their personality/identity.
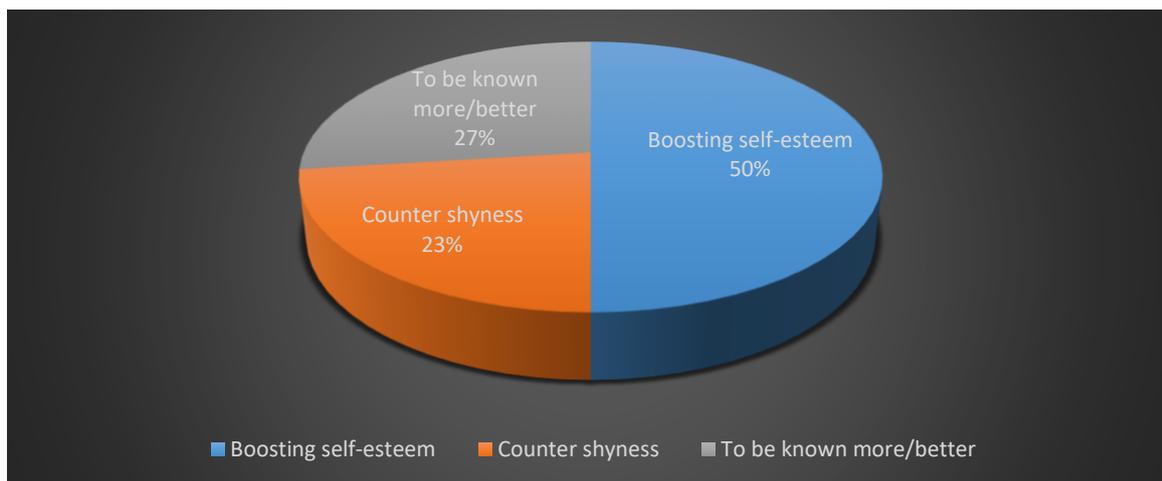
Figure 5.13: Establishment of the Participants Personality/Identity on Social Networking Sites

5.2.16. Respondents' Description of the Online Relationship Against Personality Establishment

The researcher investigated if the students' relationships with their online friends affected them establishing their personality/identity on social networking sites. Figure 5.14 illustrates that despite 24.0% of students having a very good relationship with their online friends, they had attempted to establish their personality/identity on social networking sites. Contrastingly,

another high number of students with a good relationship (24.0%) and a significant

proportion of those with a fair relationship (18.0%) with their online friends had never

attempted to establish their personality/identity on social networking sites. Furthermore, the

expectation would be that the students with fair relationships established their personalities

but the 18.0% who claimed to have fair relationships with their online friends had not

attempted to establish their personality/identity on social networking sites. The observation

would be that the relationship that participants have with their online friends does not

necessarily determine if they will or will not try to establish their personality on social

networking sites.
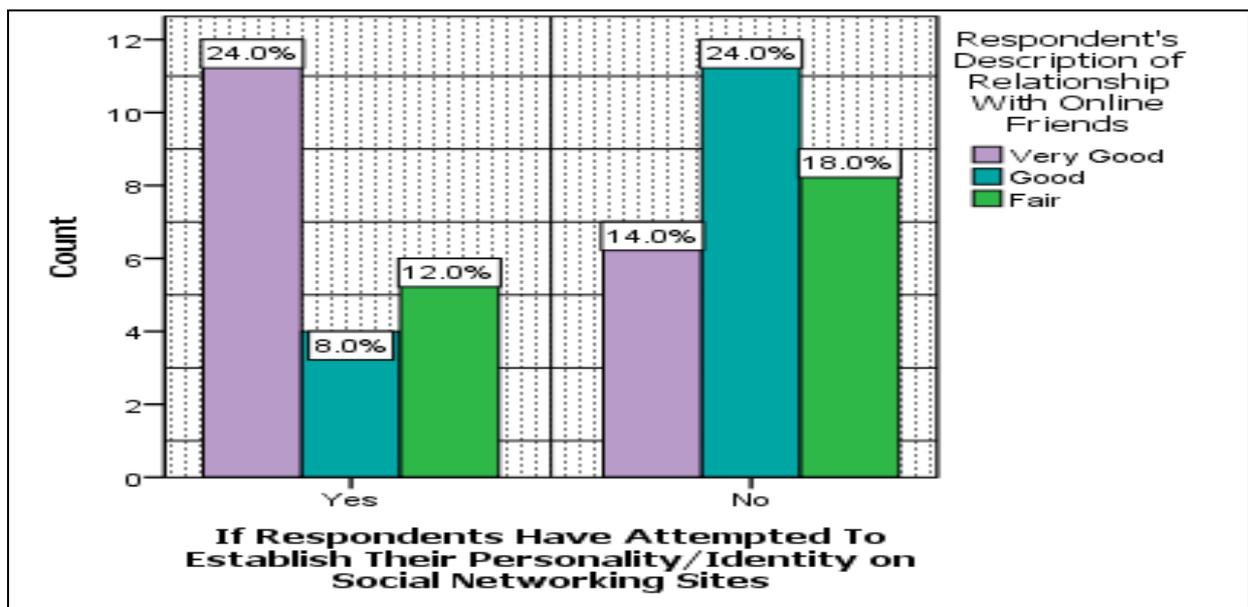
Figure 5.14: Respondents' Description of the Online Relationship Against Personality

Establishment

5.2.17. Description of Relationship with Online Friends Against Reasons for Personality/Identity Establishment

Figure 5.15 shows a cross-tabulation of the participants' description of their relationship with

online friends against the reasons for personality/identity establishment on social networking

sites. As shown in the chart, a majority (36.4%) of the participants who had a very good

relationship with their friends established personality/identity online to be more popular while the 9.1% who had a good relationship with their friends, countered shyness by establishing personality/identity on social networking sites. Lastly, for the participants with a fair relationship with their online friends. About 13.6% of the participants did so to counter shyness. It appears that social networking sites benefit those who are already in very good/good relationship with their friends.
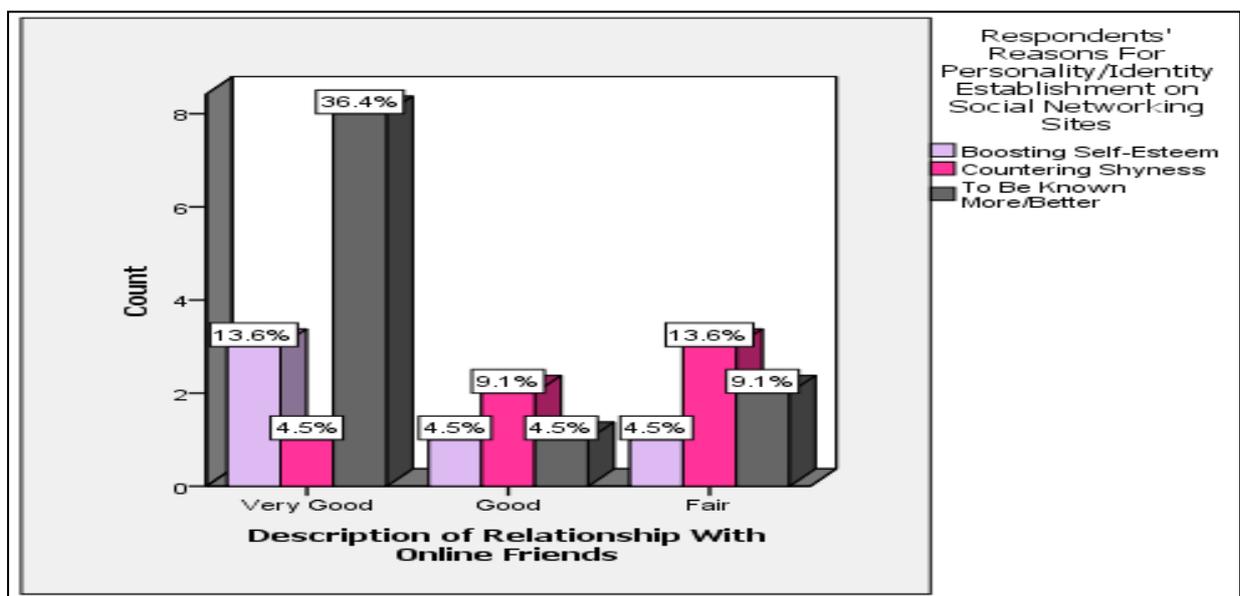
Figure 5.15: Description of Relationship with Online Friends Against Reasons for Personality/Identity Establishment

5.2.18. Challenges Encountered on Social Media

Figure 5.16 (below) shows the challenges that students encounter on social media and networking sites. As presented in the chart, the challenges that students faced came in different forms. The most prevalent challenge faced by the participants was the threat to privacy, which outnumbered other challenges and recorded 41.2% while stranger intimidation closely followed with 35.3%. About 14.7% of the participants claimed to encounter sexual harassment and only 8.8% acknowledged that they have encountered lack of access into their

social networking sites accounts. However, in general, the participants used for this study

faced challenges that were mostly safety and privacy related.
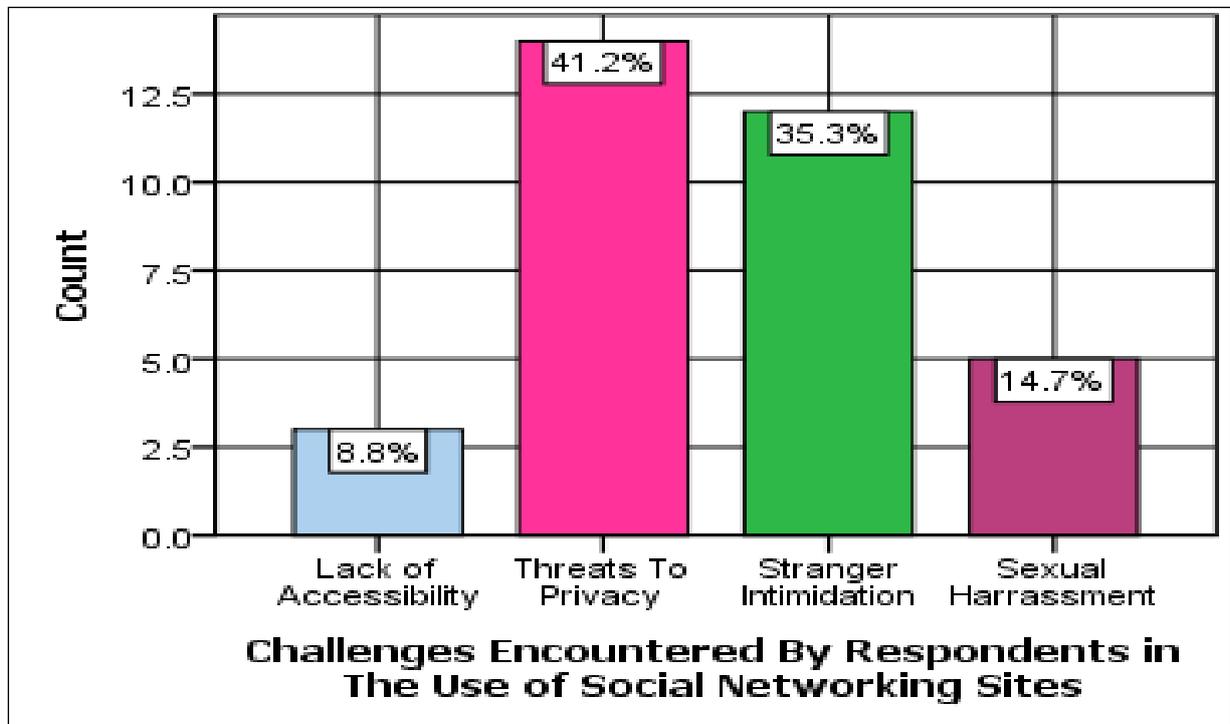
Figure 5.16: The challenges that students encounter on social media and networking sites

5.2.19. Participants as Victims of Cyber-bullying (online)

The data presented in Figure 5.17 below illustrated if participants have ever fallen victims to

cyberbullying. From the shown data, 22.0% of the participants had been cyberbullied

whereas an extremely high 78.0% had never experienced cyberbullying. This seems to

suggest that there is minimal victimization of the participants suggesting that social

networking does not inherently increase cyberbullying, but attitudes toward it increase the

fear and misinterpretation of problems social networking poses.
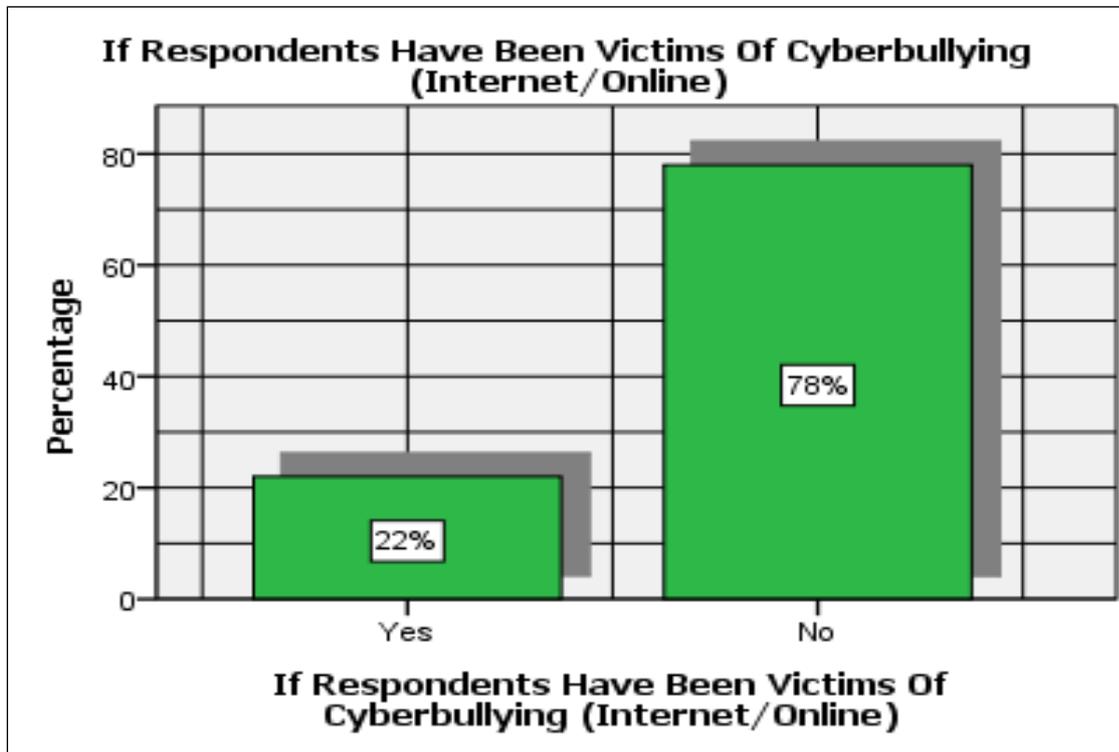
Figure 5.17: Participants as Victims of Cyber-bullying (online)

5.2.20. Reasons for being Insulted/Bullied on Social Media Sites

Figure 5.18 shows the reasons why participants were insulted on social media sites. The data presented shows that about43.5% of the participants that claimed to have been insulted on social networking sites in the study, had been insulted for rejecting/ignoring advancements or comments from their social media friends. This indicates how social networking makes students anti-social. The chart also showed that 21.7% got insulted for not sharing a picture and 21.7% of the participants received insults for not disclosing private information highlighting cyber-bullying instincts within social networking. About 13.0% of the participants stated they were insulted by sexually suggestive solicitation also indicating the presence of practices such as sexting that are of concern to adults/parents and youths themselves.
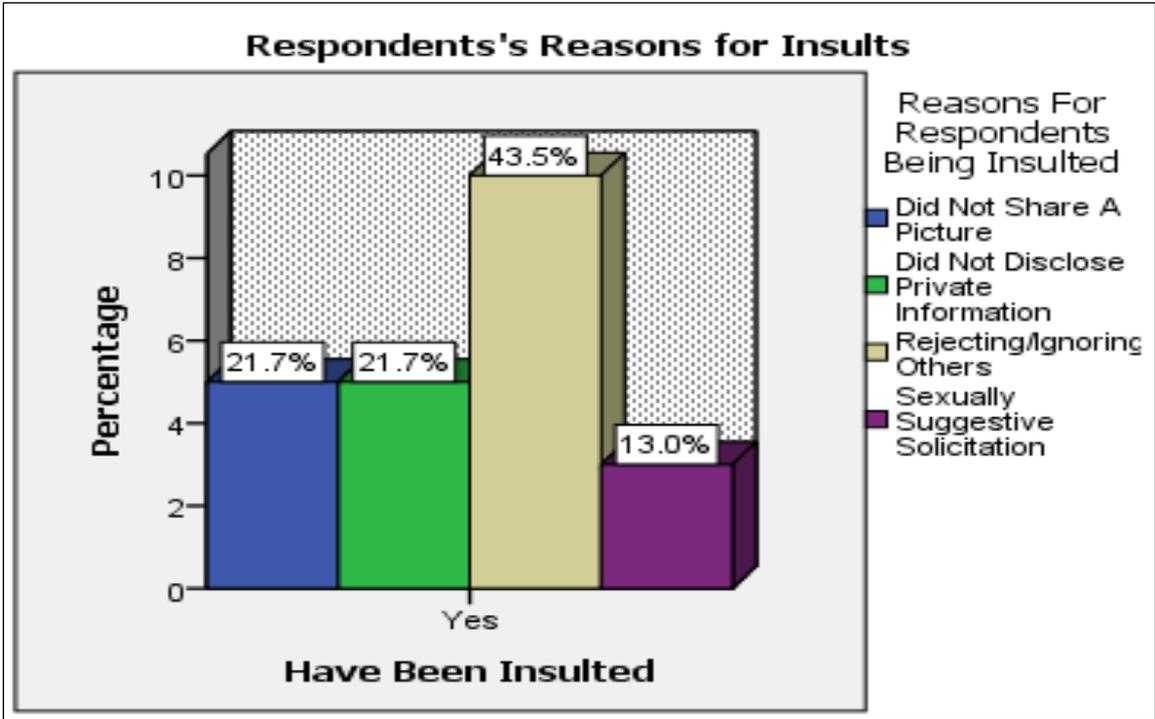
Figure 5.18: The reasons why participants were insulted on social media sites

5.2.21. Social Media Representation for Positive Self-esteem

Figure 5.19 shows the results of whether social media representation encourages people to have positive self-esteem. The majority (75%) of the students said yes while 25% disagreed that social media representation encouraged people to have positive self-esteem.
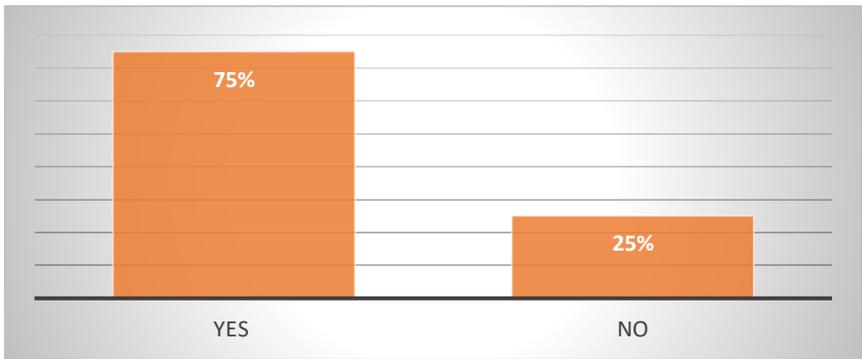
Figure 5.19: The reasons why participants were insulted on social media sites

5.2.22. Self-Esteem

Student's self-esteem levels were also investigated. Asked if they are satisfied with their lives, figure 5.20 shows that 90% of the students agreed to be satisfied with their lives while 10% disagreed. Students were also asked if they think they are not good at all, the majority 90% disagreed while 10% feel they are not good at all. All interviewed students however reported that they feel they possessed several good qualities, and they can do things other people are doing and wished to be shown more respect. All students also agreed that they are not inclined to feel they are failures, and they take positive attitudes towards themselves. However, 10% of the students interviewed said they do not have much to be proud of while 90% express the contrary. Also, 2% of the students reported that they feel useless sometimes while 98% expressed no such feelings.
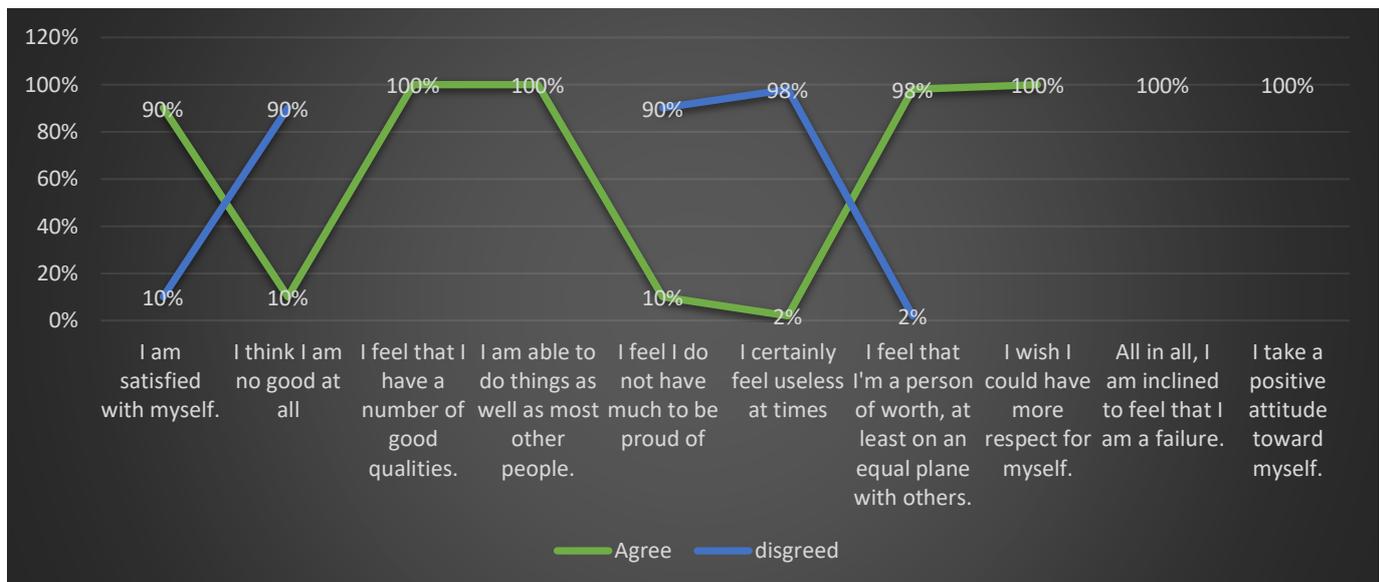
Figure 5.20: Student's self-esteem levels

5.2.23. Satisfaction with Life Scale

Figure 5.21 shows that 5% of the interviewed students strongly disagreed that their lives are close to ideal, while 25% strongly agreed, 30% disagreed and only 40% agreed that their lives are close to ideal. About 20% of the students also strongly disagreed that the conditions of their lives are excellent, while 20% also strongly agreed. However, 30% agreed while 30% disagreed that their living conditions are excellent. Of the students interviewed 50% agreed that they are satisfied with their lives, while 30% also strongly agreed with the same sentiments. However, 15% disagreed that they are satisfied with their lives and 5% strongly disagreed that they are satisfied with their lives. About 40% of the interviewed students disagreed that they have the important things they want in life while 35% strongly agreed while 10% strongly disagreed, and only 15% agreed that they have the important things they want in life. Above average (65%) of the students strongly agreed that they could live their lives over and would change almost nothing, while 30% agreed. Only 10% disagreed that they could live their lives over and would change almost nothing.
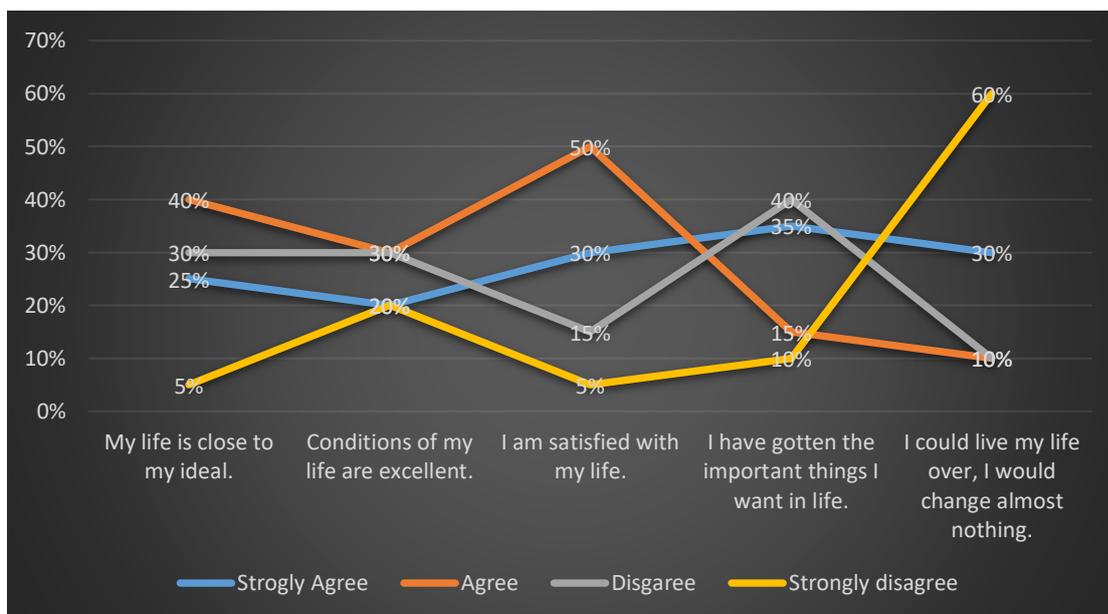
Figure 5.21: Student's self-esteem levels

5.2.24. Happiness Depends on Physical Appearance

Students were also asked if their happiness depended on physical appearance. The majority (80%) disagreed with the notion reporting that not at all does their happiness depends on physical appearance. Only 17% partly agreed that their happiness depends on physical appearance, while 3% outrightly said their happiness depends on physical appearance a lot.
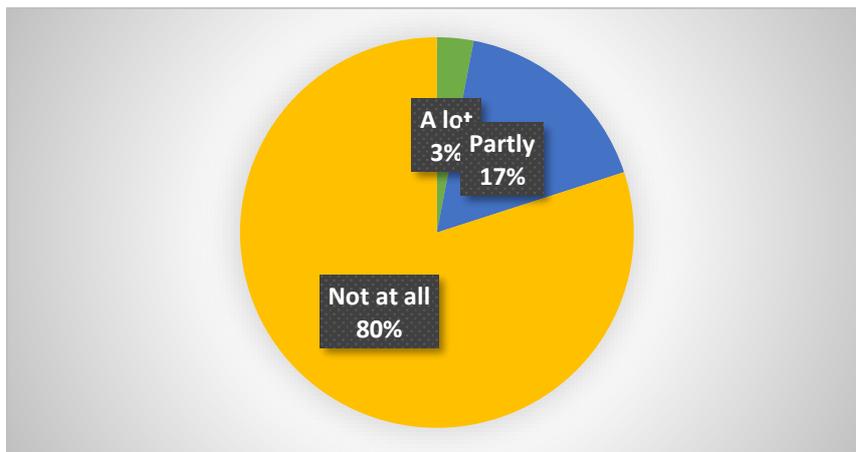
Figure 5.22: happiness depended on physical appearance

5.3. Bivariate Findings

5.3.1 Associations Between Frequency of Social Media Use and Life Satisfaction

As shown in table 5.6. (below) , chi-square analysis was conducted to test associations using cross-tabulations. Findings indicate that there is no significant association between frequency of social media use and life satisfaction among the population under study ($X^{2=}$ 10.5; df = 12; p =0.56). This means that there is no significant difference between participants in terms of their frequency of social media use and life satisfaction.

Table 5. 6: Chi Square Tests of Association Between Social Media Use and Life Satisfaction

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.572[a]	12	.566
Likelihood Ratio	11.132	12	.518
Linear-by-Linear Association	.018	1	.893
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 12 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Crosstab

			Conditions of my life are excellent				
			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagreed	Total
Frequency of Social Media use	3 hours	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.3	.3	.2	1.0
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Conditions of my life are excellent	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	1.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.0%
	6 hours	Count	5	4	7	5	21
		Expected Count	4.2	6.3	6.3	4.2	21.0
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	23.8%	19.0%	33.3%	23.8%	100.0%
		% within Conditions of my life are excellent	25.0%	13.3%	23.3%	25.0%	21.0%
		% of Total	5.0%	4.0%	7.0%	5.0%	21.0%
	12 hours	Count	13	18	12	11	54
		Expected Count	10.8	16.2	16.2	10.8	54.0
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	24.1%	33.3%	22.2%	20.4%	100.0%
		% within Conditions of my life are excellent	65.0%	60.0%	40.0%	55.0%	54.0%
		% of Total	13.0%	18.0%	12.0%	11.0%	54.0%
	18 hours	Count	2	7	10	4	23
		Expected Count	4.6	6.9	6.9	4.6	23.0
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	8.7%	30.4%	43.5%	17.4%	100.0%
		% within Conditions of my life are excellent	10.0%	23.3%	33.3%	20.0%	23.0%
		% of Total	2.0%	7.0%	10.0%	4.0%	23.0%
	24 hours	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.3	.3	.2	1.0
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Conditions of my life are excellent	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Total		Count	20	30	30	20	100
		Expected Count	20.0	30.0	30.0	20.0	100.0
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Conditions of my life are excellent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	20.0%	100.0%

5.3.2. Associations between gender and social media usage

Table 5.7: Frequency of Social Media Use by Gender

Gender * Frequency of Social Media use Crosstabulation

			3 hours	6 hours	12 hours	18 hours	24 hours	Total
Gender	Male	Count	0	11	27	12	0	50
		Expected Count	.5	10.5	27.0	11.5	.5	50.0
		% within Gender	0.0%	22.0%	54.0%	24.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	0.0%	52.4%	50.0%	52.2%	0.0%	50.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	11.0%	27.0%	12.0%	0.0%	50.0%
	Female	Count	1	10	27	11	1	50
		Expected Count	.5	10.5	27.0	11.5	.5	50.0
		% within Gender	2.0%	20.0%	54.0%	22.0%	2.0%	100.0%
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	100.0%	47.6%	50.0%	47.8%	100.0%	50.0%
		% of Total	1.0%	10.0%	27.0%	11.0%	1.0%	50.0%
Total		Count	1	21	54	23	1	100
		Expected Count	1.0	21.0	54.0	23.0	1.0	100.0
		% within Gender	1.0%	21.0%	54.0%	23.0%	1.0%	100.0%
		% within Frequency of Social Media use	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.0%	21.0%	54.0%	23.0%	1.0%	100.0%

5.8: Chi-Sqaure Tests of Association between Frequency of Social Media Usage and Gender

Chi square test was tested between social media usage and gender and the results indicates that the association was not significance, as shown in table 5.7 (X^2= 2.0; *df= 4; p= 0.71*). This means that there is no difference between male and female when it comes to social media use.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.091[a]	4	.719
Likelihood Ratio	2.864	4	.581
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	1.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 4 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.

5.3.1. Associations between Preferred Social Media Usage Type and Gender

Figure 5.23 (below) shows the cross-tabulation of gender and preferred social media sites by participants. Amongst male participants 20% said they preferred WhatsApp, 11% said they preferred Instagram, and 9% preferred Facebook. Only 5% said they preferred Twitter and 5% said they equally preferred and use all 4 social media platforms mentioned. Amongst female participants, 20% also said they preferred WhatsApp, followed by 13% who said they preferred Instagram, while 10% said they equally preferred and use all 4 social media platforms mentioned. Only 6% said they preferred Facebook and only 1% of female participants said they preferred Twitter.
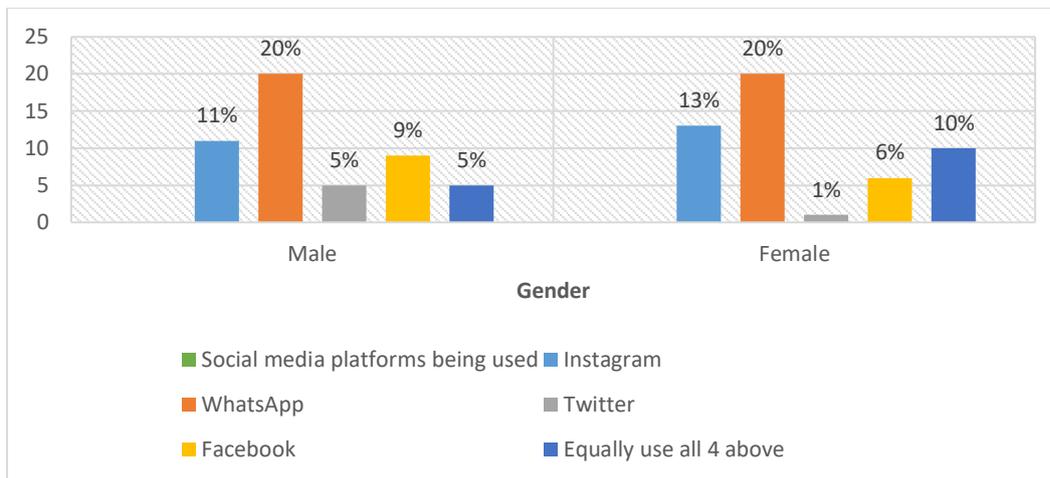
Figure 5.23 cross-tabulation of gender and preferred social media sites by participants

Conclusion

This chapter presented and interpreted the results of the study using the preliminary theme as subheadings to arrange the data logically. Very rich information was obtained under each theme, and this helped to address the research question. The next chapter presents a discussion of the findings.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings based on the data gathered from the study participants. Discussion of findings seeks to investigate, by reasoning, the data collected on the field while giving reasons why the collected data is as it is (Bless et al, 2006). Consequently, the discussion integrates the study findings, reviewed literature, and the theoretical frameworks from which conclusions and recommendations were drawn. The discussion further attempted to respond to research questions and achieve the study objectives.

6.2 Frequency of Social Media Usage

The frequency of the use of social media by social work students supports an observation by Chakrabarti (2018), who noted that although people have been using the Internet to connect with others since the early 1980s; in this decade, social network usage instead has proliferated, and its use has become a widespread practice among youths and students. From the findings of this study, social networking site usage among students are high. Literature (Chakrabarti, 2018 & Mc Larens, 2016), on social networking and social media use by students reveals that females use social media more than males. However, this study found contradictory results. The social networking site usage is evenly distributed between male and female students, therefore challenging the general assumption that females use social media more than males.

In this study, three sites were popular amongst social work students. WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram are dominating social media sites being used. This shows the explosion of social media and that there is extensive use of online social networks among

students. In support of social media as their favorites, participants cited reasons around social media as being cheap and affordable. The study also revealed that students' preference of social networks is premised on their convenience and ability to solicit instant connections. . The findings of this study revealed that students apportioned a significant time, on daily basis, to spend social networking on different social network sites.

6.2 Purposes, Roles, and Activities Engaged in on Social Networking Sites

Social media have facilitated several conversations that students participate in such as flirting, gossiping, teasing, boasting behind the bike sheds or school corridors during lessons. The findings of this study showed a variety of reasons students gravitate towards the use of social networking sites. These included, but not limited, to chatting, making new friends, staying in touch with family/friends, looking at other people's profiles and civil and political participation. The overall findings of this study showed that chatting dominated among students.

Chatting dominated among both genders but females made up the greater proportion suggesting that females like to communicate more than males do. Students socialize, make connections, and share aspects of their personal life, which explains their attraction to discussion-based avenues such as social media where they can express themselves. Zeitel-Bank (2014) posit that the main topics students and youth mostly preferred discussing included general banter and talks about parties and photos. From the findings of this study, slightly along the lines of Zeitel-Bank (2014) students discuss entertainment-related issues and personal problems with their online friends as well as educational matters and politics as their preferable topics. The topics they preferred to discuss were a further indication of the freedom of expression that students have on social networking sides.

From the reviewed literature, one notes that social media seemed to be playing a pivotal role in enhancing media literacy, formal and informal education, and creativity (Vogel 2015). In contrast, this study found that social networking was changing the format of personal networks dramatically by strengthening interpersonal relationships, enhancing individual identity and self-expression, belonging and collective identity, as well as civil and political participation. Instead of being used for informative educational roles, the findings of this study signified a shift in students' use of social media primarily for educational roles to communication and entertainment roles. Social media helps to build new relationships with friends from around the world. Findings from this study concurred with these assertions by noting that for some students, especially the socially isolated, social media provided the only opportunity for socialization. The study also demonstrated how social media has helped students with low levels of social skills develop friendships online.

This study also revealed that social media plays a communicative role. The findings of this study showed that social media allows students to converse with people from distances and provide them chances to continue relationships that in the past would have been too distant. Furthermore, the findings of this study corresponded with Vogel (2015) who similarly argued that social media plays a critical role in overcoming the impact that high levels of mobility and complexity can have on long-term relationships.

6.3 Self-Expression

The findings showed that social media are increasingly important for self-expression for students, recording that they use them to articulate and express their views, individuality, and identity/status. Therefore, the findings added to the body of knowledge that social work students would want to achieve social acceptance and status/popularity among others. This marks that students experience their self-image and manipulate their personification to fit stereotypes around them.

Despite not being utilized for media literacy, education, and creativity, the findings of this study show that most students use social media for an educative role as well. Social networking's ability to provide media literacy, attached e-learning frameworks found in most educational settings and its support for informal learning interests enhances its educative role. According to the study findings, the social network's educative role enhanced people's ability to share inspiring life experiences, allowed information sharing and new topic being learnt. Social networking has opened possibilities for users to create and distribute self-generated content using sites such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. The findings of this study showed that students create and share their own "small media" in their everyday communicative, creative, and social activities.

6.4 Social Media and Identity

The findings of this study showed that social networks are important for the expression of identity. This is characterized by an enhanced need for self-presentation, communicating your identity to others, and self-disclosure. The findings of this study showed that despite views that social media promotes individual customization and allow students to work out identity and status; some students denied using social media for personality/identity establishment. The provided reasons included concerns about privacy/respecting their space and some reported they are already confident about who they already are and not in need of social networking sites to establish their identity/personality. Fardouly and Vartanian (2018) cited that socialization processes are essential when socially isolated youths seek to consolidate their identities and discover themselves.

Moreover, since studies suggested that social media gives socially isolated individuals the ground to express their identity, the researcher decided to investigate if the students' relationships with their online friends served an impetus to establish social media personality/identity. The observation made was that the relationship that participants have

with their online friends does not necessarily determine if they will or will not try to establish their personality on social networking sites. However, there was a suggestion from the findings that some students who have a very good relationship with their online friends had attempted to establish their personality/identity on social networking sites.

The findings of this study further revealed that social work students use social media to illuminate their identities and status among friends thus, it appeared that social media benefited those who were already in very good/good relationship with their friends. This study also shows that students use social media to boost their self-esteem and to counter shyness thus complementing the views of Fardouly and Vartanian (2018) who posit that social media helps to excruciate shyness. Furthermore, they argue that social media enhances the need for self-presentation giving students a sense of increased controllability.

6.5 Problems Encountered on Social Networking

This section discusses the findings from the study on the problems encountered by students on social media. The findings of this study showed that students navigate through risks and challenges in social networking. Amongst the challenges faced was the lack of accessibility, threats to privacy, stranger intimidation, and sexual harassment. Strickland (2014:5) stated that social networking has swept the internet-using world seamlessly but the activities that students engage in, expose them to the challenges they face therein. Similarly, in this study, the findings revealed that the activities that students engage in make them vulnerable to similar challenges as mentioned by Strickland.

6.6 Cyber-bullying and Safety and Privacy Concerns

Previous studies have highlighted that in the 1990s many incidents revolved around bullying in the form of physical violence but noted that this form of violence has taken a new form using new technologies such as social networking services (Andreassen, 2015). The findings

of this study suggested that students have been traumatized victims of cyberbullying. These findings consequently confirmed the proposition that cyberbullying could be deeply traumatic and devastating to the victim as noted by Andreassen, (2015).

Students experience cyberbullying in the form of being insulted on social networking sites. Some social work students reported that they were insulted for rejecting and ignoring messages. The findings also showed that some students have been the victims of cyber-bulling for not disclosing private information and sharing their pictures. In terms of safety and privacy, de Vries and Kühne, (2015), noted that there is always the danger of predators lurking when using social media to communicate with strangers. Similarly, the findings of this study showed that in social networking sites the association with strangers put students at risk.

6.7 Relationship of Measured Variables on Students

The findings of this study showed that social media plays the role of self-expression, sexual pleasure, and civil/political participation. It becomes clear that through social networking, the individual identity and self-expression role is pronounced. People turn to media to communicate or make sense of what is happening as the world becomes complex" (Carrillo et al, 2014). Positive self-image and a strong sense of self-worth are likely to influence students to post and participate more often on social media. Self-esteem acts as a booster of life satisfaction, playing a central role in how students view themselves. This suggests that that higher self-esteem and more satisfaction in life are positively correlated with confrontation, emotional expression, self-disclosure, and life satisfaction. This further suggests that high self-esteem has high levels of life satisfaction. Self-esteem among students seems to be influenced by factors such as body image, body weight, academic performance, and sporting ability and participation as revealed by this study.

Conclusion

The findings of the study illustrate that even though social work students spend a significant amount of time on social networking sites, social interactions and connections were increased. The findings also noted that while there were benefits to social networking there were many potential risks and problems. Several social work students in this study encountered them, but the highlight was that most of them were aware of them and despite their prevalence, the majority were able to handle them. This study thus shows that social media has both negative and positive impacts on students.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections that present the conclusions and recommendations for the study. The first section presents the conclusions of the study, and the second section presents the recommendations.

7.2 Conclusions

This study investigated the relationship between social media, self-esteem and the intervening role of life satisfaction and body image. Based on the aim, the study sought to achieve objectives pertaining to the nature and extent of social media usage among university students. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to examine the nature and extent of social media usage and life satisfaction among university students; assess associations between social media and life satisfaction among undergraduate students; assess associations between social media usage and body image among undergraduate students; and examine gender differences in social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students.

Social media usage has been integrated into students' everyday lives. The massive popularity of social networking sites is evident too. The rapid growth of social media usage and the use of new information technologies reveals that social networking is prevalent among students who have embraced it because of variety of reasons. Social media plays a positive role in the lives of students as it made a logical extension of traditional communication methods and is perceived as a much quicker and more convenient way to interact offering students the opportunity to connect with friends and build communities as well as promote self-representation and belonging. This study found that social media is drastically changing the format of personal networks for students through enhanced endless

chatting, strengthening existing interpersonal relationships, and fostering self-expression/establishment.

Furthermore, instead of being used for informative educational roles, the findings of this study signify a shift in students' use of social media sites for educational roles primarily for communication and entertainment roles. The findings showed that with this population, there is no association between social media usage and life satisfaction. This means that it does not mean that spending more time on social media will affect your satisfaction with life. It further found that there is no difference between males and females when it comes to social media use, both genders use social media equally.

Nevertheless, despite the positive influence that online social media has on students, it renders them with problems and risks. Problems and risks lie in communication with dangerous strangers or perverse people, lack of face-to-face interaction, and the weakening of family ties. Amongst those challenges the issues that emerge mostly in the study are threats to safety and privacy, exposure to inappropriate content, stranger intimidation, and interference with relationships (anti-sociality) and adverse impact to youths' academic performance.

7.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The results from this study may act as a foundation for any future qualitative or quantitative research in the topic pertinent to social media among students and serves as an appropriate avenue in which to begin exploration.
- The study findings outlined the roles that social media played in the lives of students, but the researcher noted that previous research in spheres of social media sites and its impact on students in different global and demographic contexts tended to over-emphasize the negative aspect of social networking. Therefore, the researcher

recommends that more studies explicitly highlighting the benefits of social media should be conducted.

- From the findings of the study, the astute way in which students handle social networking problems was impressive. Therefore, with such experience, other communities, cities, and even countries should draw from such knowledge in promoting and monitoring social media site safety for students.

- Premised on the findings that some students have found it difficult to navigate the potholes of social media, there is a need to harness, expand, and promote social networking skills and understanding to overcome the issues of concern. Universities must introduce social media education as an extra curriculum program, focusing on privacy settings, protecting students and youths against cyberbullying, meeting with online strangers and the effects of addictive social network engagement on studies (time spent on social networks).

- The study discovered that the involvement and contribution of legal authorities, particularly the law enforcers (police) in handling the problems of social networking encountered by students portrayed a non-existent attitude. Therefore, there should be ways devised to get them involved in helping people handle social networking problems.

- Parents monitor students' usage and activities when on social media. In this way, limiting their intensive engagement on social networks would be possible.

- During the research, parents/elderly people in the study area showed a growing interest in understanding the offline and online behavior of young people. As a result, the researcher recommends more research be conducted to understand the relationship between offline and online behaviors among youths.

- Not much research has focused on how young people perceive online risks and negotiate interactions. Literature exists in the areas of the roles and problems, however, monitoring and evaluation of the problems and problem-handling have not been provided in most studies. As such, this research recommends that research be conducted to understand young people's perceptions of online risks, their eventual outcome in the social behavior patterns of youth, and how they deal with them.

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APPENDIX A: ORIGINALITY REPORT
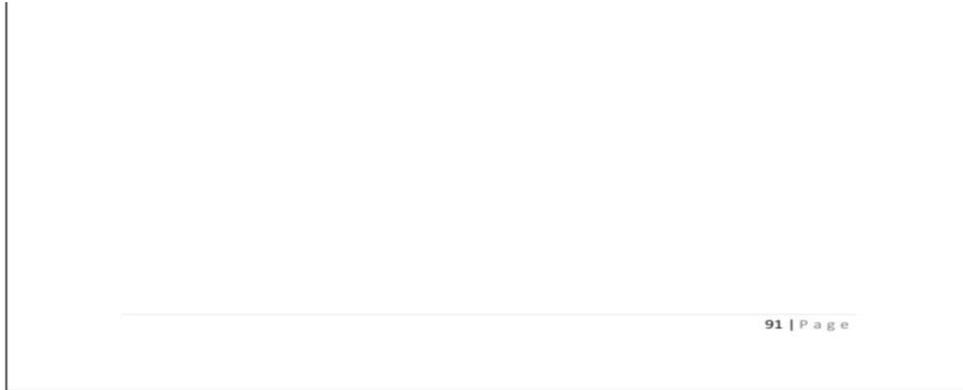
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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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4	J.A. O'Dea. "Body Image and Self-Esteem", Elsevier BV, 2012 Publication	1%

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APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL

SCHOOL OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCE

SOCIAL WORK – HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

PART I: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age on your last birthday?_____ Years.

2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Population group: African ☐ Indian ☐ White ☐ Coloured ☐ Other ☐

4. What is your nationality? _____

5. Level of study? _____

PART II: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

1. Are you a member of any social networking sites?

   If the answer is no, choose the reasons below, you are allowed choosing more than one answer

   ☐ I do not know what social networks are.

   ☐ I am not interested in social networks.

   ☐ I do not find it interesting.

2. What is your frequency mode of access to social media

3. which of the following social networking sites do you use the most

   Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ WhatsApp ☐ Instagram ☐

   Snapchat ☐ YouTube ☐ LinkedIn ☐

4. How many hours a day do you spend on social media a day?

   24 hours ☐ 18 hours ☐ 12 hours ☐ 6 hours ☐

   3 hours ☐

5. Have you ever been subjected to any of the following on social media?

   Cyberbullying ☐ Stalking ☐ ☐ Deformation of character

   Harassment ☐ other ☐

PART III: BODY IMAGE

1. Are you happy with the way you look?

Yes ☐   No ☐

2. If you could, what would you change about your appearance?

Face ☐   Body (parts of it) ☐

3. Is others' opinion about your appearance important to you?

A lot ☐   A little ☐   Not at all ☐

4. Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your physical appearance?

Yes ☐   No ☐

5. Have you ever gone on a diet or are you doing it now?

Yes ☐   No ☐

6. If yes, who advised you?

A doctor ☐   a friend ☐   the media (internet, magazine, TV…) ☐   yourself ☐

7. Are you satisfied with the results?

Yes ☐   No ☐

8. If not, are you determined to go on?

Yes ☐   No ☐

9. What do you think makes a person attractive?

Slimness ☐   Beauty ☐   Character/Manners ☐

10. Have you got a model you wish you were like?

Someone in your family ☐   Actor (-tress) ☐   Top model ☐   An intellectual ☐

11. Do you think the media's representations of male/female are a healthy image to follow?

Yes ☐   No ☐

12. After reading a magazine or watching a program full of beautiful models, how do you feel about yourself?

Good ☐   Indifferent ☐   Frustrated ☐

13. Do you think that the media's representation of teenagers encourages people to have positive self-esteem?

Yes ☐   No ☐

14. Does happiness depend on physical appearance?

A lot ☐   Partly ☐   Not at all ☐

PART IV: SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.							
2. The conditions of							

my life are excellent.						
3. I am satisfied with my life.						
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.						
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.						

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Greetings Sir/Madam

My name is Nomfundo Tracy Sibisi from the Discipline of Social Work at Howard College, (cell):082 83 266 52, email: fufutracee97@gmail.com or 215017351@stu.ukzn.ac.za

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research related to the social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students at a South African university. The aim and purpose of this research are to investigate social media usage among university students to better understand its effects on self-esteem. It will involve the following procedures: The collection of data related to your social media usage and how it affects your self-esteem, life satisfaction and body image which will be collected and analysed to contribute to the overall understanding of how social media impacts the self-esteem of university students. The duration of your participation if you choose to enrol and remain in the study, is expected to be not more than 15 minutes.

The study may involve the following risks and/or discomforts: psychological risks such as emotional trauma or distress. We hope that the study will create the following benefits: Awareness of the effects of social media and improved interventions related to student self-esteem, life satisfaction and body image. In the case of emotional trauma/distress, please seek help at the Student Support Services. Contact details: 031 260 2668 Moodleyv28@ukzn.ac.za

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at fufutracee97@gmail.com or my supervisor, contact details are as follows:

Johannes John-Langba, PhD., MPH., MSW

Academic Leader and Associate Professor: Social Work

Vice President, Cape Mental Health (CMH)

F224 Memorial Tower Building

School of Applied Human Sciences

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Durban, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: +27 31 2602792

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation, you will not incur a penalty or loss of treatment.

Steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality of your personal/clinical information. Your name and student number will not be required. The details you have provided will be passcode to ensure anonymity.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled 'Social media usage and life satisfaction among undergraduate students at a South African university' by Nomfundo Tracy Sibisi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been allowed to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits to that I usually am entitled.

I have been informed about any available support services as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

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APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

02 December 2019

Miss Nomfundo Tracy Sibisi (215017351)
School Of Applied Human Sc
Howard College

Dear Miss Sibisi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000871/2019
Project title: The relationship between social media usage and self-esteem among university students: The intervening roles of life satisfaction and body image.

Approval Notification — Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 26 November 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.**

This approval is valid for one year from 02 December 2019.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,
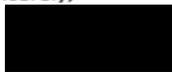
Professor Urmilla Bob
University Dean of Research

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

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