

Psychological Effects in relation to Social Networking Usage among Daystar University Students in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

The use of social media sites has revolutionised global communication. However; it has brought with it profound side effects that include addiction amongst other psychological problems. This study set out to establish the psychological effects of social networking usage among Daystar University students. The study used cross-sectional survey design. The target population was 2061 students who are based in Athi River campus. Opportunity sampling was used to select the respondents. A total of 236 respondents formed the sample size. Data was collected by use of questionnaires which adopted and modified the DASS tool, Life satisfaction scale and the Revised UCLA scale. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS version 23.0 and presented using graphs, tables and charts for the descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation and chi-square for the inferential statistics. It was found that there was a statistically significant moderate correlation ($r = 0.492$, $p = 0.019$) between the frequency of accessing SNS and depression as well as the relationship between anxiety and the frequency of accessing SNS, with a statistically significant moderate correlation ($r = 0.627$, $p = 0.007$). This study recommends that students should limit their usage of social networks so as to reduce the associated negative side effects.

Keywords: Psychological effects, Social Networking Usage, Depression, Anxiety.

1. Introduction

Depression which is also referred to as sorrow is a temperament issue that causes a determined sentiment of pity and loss of intrigue (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Social media does not necessarily cause depression. However, research points to a number of factors that could explain the correlation between social media use and depression. These include overuse, negative experiences, engaging in unhealthy online communities and cyber bullying (Pantic, 2014). According to Wakefield (2018), Dr Chatterjee, a psychiatrist noted that social media is having great impact on mental health. He stated that rules are necessary to be put in place and guidelines established to educate the society.

It is truly surprising to find out that checking emails and Tweeting is a stronger addiction as compared to cigarettes and alcohol in this technological era. People seek validation from others to boost confidence but lack confidence that stems from within (Elenkv, 2017). Kross et al., (2013) investigation on the connection between Facebook use and abstract prosperity in youthful grown-ups points out that clients' emotional impression of prosperity and life fulfillment might

be undermined. It's a given that any decay of this sort may expand depressive signs and indications. Escobar (2018) discovered that while internet based life gives a space to uncover minority encounters and offer approaches to adapt and get bolster, consistent reconnaissance of one's web based life profile can turn into a stressor, possibly prompting depression.

Notwithstanding, it ought to be focused on that there is still no definitive proof that utilization of Facebook and different SNS causes sadness or even a solitary side effect of misery. Kraut et al ., (2013) the creators of the previously mentioned examination on Internet and misery, as of late distributed outcomes showing that online correspondence with loved ones (today for the most part done on SNS) is really connected with a decrease in depression. A study on Social Networking Sites, Depression, and Anxiety was conducted by Seabrook, Kern and Rickard (2016) indicated positive associations, social help, and social connectedness on SNSs were reliably identified with lower levels of despondency and nervousness, while negative connection and social correlations on SNSs were identified with more elevated amounts of depression and tension. It thus appears that when interpersonal organizations and the Internet as a rule are used to fortify and keep up social ties.

Moreno, Jelenchick, Egan, and Becker (2011) assessed depression exposures by undergraduates on a Social Networking Site. They proposed that the individuals who get online support from their companions will probably talk about their depressive manifestations openly on Facebook. Given the recurrence of depression side effect shows on open profiles, informal communication destinations could be an inventive road for fighting disgrace encompassing psychological well-being conditions or for recognizing understudies in danger for depression.

Shields and Kane (2014) demonstrated recurrence of Internet use was not identified with side effects of sadness, but rather three of the sorts of utilization (beginning the day on the Internet, visiting news destinations, seeing recordings) lessened manifestations of dejection. Web use was by far identified with more up close and personal cooperation, recommending that Internet use is used to increase as opposed to supplant social association.

In an ongoing report in Kenya among secondary school understudy populace, Wafula, Washiali and Onyango (2017) found a measurably critical positive relationship between depressive manifestations and time spent on long range social networking sites.

With regards to anxiety, The American Psychological Association (2013) characterizes nervousness or anxiety as a feeling described by sentiments of strain, stressed contemplations and physical changes like expanded pulse. Social anxiety is defined as mood disorder where a person has excess and uncontrollable fear of social situations (Davey, 2016).

Regarding the negative effects of social media use; Nazzal, Rabee and Barte (2015) found a significant relationship between time spent on interpersonal organization destinations, number of Facebook companions, and Facebook force scales scores and an expansion in undesirable propensities including skipping dinners, postponing pee, and late night and interfered with rest. Negative wellbeing outcomes identified with extreme use included eye strain and decrease in

vitality levels. These discoveries display proof that exorbitant social networking online is related with unfortunate propensities and pessimistic wellbeing.

Social anxiety will lead to loneliness while loneliness increases social anxiety and may bring about paranoia. This relationship is seemingly cyclical (Davey, 2016). Facebook and Twitter contribute significantly to friendship networks between people. The design and structure of this social media sites brings in the aspect of quantifying friendships, comparing with that of others and updates on social events. People will tend to compare their popularity with that of others. Many people have been found to suffer from the “Fear of missing Out (FOMO)”. However, once the optimum level is passed, social pressure may kick in leading to cortisol increase due to increased stress (Davey, 2016).

In Tanzania, a study led by Futuma and Ohannessian (2016) via social media use and nervousness in developing grown-ups uncovered that additional time spent utilizing internet based life was essentially connected with more prominent side effects of dispositional tension. It is sad that the youth can freely talk about addiction to social media but tread carefully on matters anxiety generated. According to Hoge & Bickham (2017), as cited in Elenkov (2017), emotion regulation difficulties is associated with overuse of internet hence lead to anxiety. This in turn will lead to development of social anxiety disorder where the individual avoids social situations.

In Kenya, Walumbe (2013) noted that facebook use isn't specifically identified with negative enthusiastic states. Be that as it may, time spent on Facebook expands gloom and tension scores. As per Calancie et al., (2014) uncovered six topics identified with Facebook stressors: looking for endorsement, dreading judgment, raising relational issues, needing security, arranging self and social personality, and associating and disengaging. Dehghani and Mahmoodabadi (2018) recognized the effect of virtual informal communities on depression, uneasiness, and worry in youth and inferred that therefore, virtual interpersonal organizations can influence despondency, tension, and worry among youngsters, which features the requirement for training of youngsters and families.

Mwikali (2017) posits that individuals, who claim to use the social media sites a lot, had in excess of multiple times the danger of misery and uneasiness than individuals who used the minimum sum. Okeyo (2016) proposed a connection between investing expanded time in online life and encountering negative emotional wellness results. Going by the findings of previous studies, it appears that frequent and unregulated use of social media can have a negative impact on its users despite it being a tool for social interaction. This study therefore sought to establish the psychological effects of social networking usage among daystar university students in Nairobi, Kenya.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. This study used mixed methods approach that is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods in collecting and analyzing data (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

According to O. Mugenda and A. Mugenda (2003), a sample size of 10% of the total population is considered adequate for descriptive study. The target population was 2061 students in the Athi River campus. In this study 214 students were drawn from the sampling formula however factoring in attrition, the sample size was increased by 10% thus giving a working sample of 236 students. Therefore, the sample size of this study was 236 participants. From the 236 questionnaires issued, 200 of them were duly filled and analyzed.

Pretesting was done prior to the scheduled data collection time. This was conducted among the students of Africa International University (AIU), aged 18-35. This university was chosen owing to its similar situational and geographical characteristics. A total of 48 students formed the sample size for pretesting.

The inclusion criteria for the respondents included; Daystar University students aged between 18-35 years, both male and female could participate, both undergraduate and diploma students from the Daystar University, Athi River campus. The exclusion criteria included students who were pursuing their Masters as well as students below 18 years. Students based at the Daystar University, Valley Road campus could not participate.

The data for this study was collected predominantly by use of questionnaires. The questionnaires contained structured and unstructured questions. The selected students whom filled the questionnaire were given a slated time to fill and the filled in the presence of the researcher or research assistants. The questionnaire adopted and modified the DASS-21 which is a short version of the DASS-42. It was created for self-assessing depression, anxiety and stress levels. It is scored as follows;

For depression: Normal (0-4). Mild (5-6), Moderate (7-10), severe (11-13) and extremely severe (14+)

For anxiety: Normal (0-3), Mild (4-5), Moderate (6-7), Severe (8-9) and extremely severe (10+)

The following are the items for each test;

Depression- 3, 5,10,13,16.17 and 21

Anxiety- 2, 4, 7,9,15.19 and 20

Data was analyzed using the SPSS software (SPSS version 23). Statistical treatment of data included descriptive analysis and frequency distributions. Chi-square and Pearson's correlation tests were also used to determine if there are any significant relationships between different variables in the study. Data was then presented using tables, graphs, and pie charts.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Findings revealed that 11% of the respondents were first years, 34% were in second year 23% in third year and 31% in fourth year. The age bracket for respondents was between 18-35 years. A majority (60%) of the respondents were aged between 21-25 years .Findings on gender indicated that 42% of the respondents were males, while 57% of the respondents were females.

3.2 Psychological Effects of Social Networking Sites

Respondents were required to append their agreement on a list of statements which indicating how much the statement applied to them over the past week in relation to usage of social networking sites. These statements were to assess their anxiety and depressive symptoms. The findings were summarized in Table below.

Table 1

Psychological Effects of Social Networking Sites

Statement	Level of Agreement			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
I found it hard to wind down	40, 20.0%	21, 10.5%	129, 70%	10, 5%
I was aware of dryness of my mouth	70, 35%	27, 13.5%	90, 45.0%	13, 6.5%
I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all	47, 23.5%	32, 16%	102, 51%	19, 9.5%
I experienced breathing difficulty	35, 17.5%	34, 17%	92, 46.0%	39, 19.5%
I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things	68, 34%	72, 36%	32, 16%	28, 14%
I tended to over-react to situations	56, 28%	50, 25%	75, 37.5%	19, 9.5%
I experienced trembling	26, 13%	109, 54.5%	51, 34.1%	14, 7%
I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy	56, 28%	33, 16.5%	72, 36%	39, 19.5%
I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself	45, 22.5%	32, 16%	82, 41%	41, 20.5%
I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	27, 13.5%	71, 35.5%	77, 38.5%	25, 12.5%
I found myself getting agitated	25, 12.5%	33, 16.5%	66, 33%	76, 38%
I found it difficult to relax	46, 23%	45, 22.5%	89, 44.5%	20, 10%
I felt down-hearted and blue	51, 25.5%	31, 15.5%	87, 43.5%	30, 15%
I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing	25, 12.5%	25, 12.5%	71, 35.5%	79, 39.5%
I felt I was close to panic	10, 5%	76, 38%	54, 18.5%	60, 30%
I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything	72, 36%	70, 35%	55, 27.5%	13, 6.5%
I felt I wasn't worth much as a person	29, 14.5%	37, 18.5%	55, 27.5%	65, 32.5%
I felt that I was rather touchy	39, 19.5%	33, 16.5%	89, 44.5%	39, 19.5%
I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion	87, 43.5%	67, 33.5%	37, 18.5%	13, 6.5%
I felt scared without any good reason	87, 43.5%	57, 28.5%	29, 14.5%	12, 6%
I felt that life was meaningless	10, 5%	117, 58.5%	32, 16%	41, 20.5%

From the table 1, There were high frequencies among learners who responded as “sometimes” and “often” on the following statements: “I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all” 60%, “I felt that I had nothing to look forward to” 51%, “I felt down-hearted and blue”, 58%, and “I felt I wasn't worth much as a person” 60%. A total of 51% agreed that they experienced dryness of the mouth, while 65% of the respondents agreed that they experienced breathing difficulties. Further, 61% of the respondents agreed that life was meaningless.

3.3 Level of Anxiety and Depressive Symptoms

This study assessed the level of anxiety and depressive symptoms among Daystar University students in relation to use of social networking sites. In order to achieve this objective, responses from items 3, 5,10,13,16.17 and 21 were considered. The scores from these items were to assess the level of depression. On the other hand, to assess anxiety, responses from items 2, 4, 7,9,15.19 and 20 of the DASS 21 scale were considered.

3.4 Depression Symptoms Suffered

Respondents' level of depression was analyzed and results were illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Degree of Depression Symptoms Suffered

Depression	Frequency	Percent
Normal	92	46
Mild	23	11.5
Moderate	50	25
Severe	14	7
Extremely Severe	21	10.5
Total	200	100

From Table 2, Less than half (46%) had normal depression levels, 11% had mild depression symptoms, 25% had moderate, 7% had severe, and while 10% had extremely severe depression symptoms in the past two weeks prior to the data collection date. More than half of the respondents (54%) had some level of depression

Regarding the relationship between time spent on SNS and depression, a Pearson's correlation found the results presented below:

Table 3

Correlation between Frequency of Accessing SNS and Depression

Correlations			
		Frequency of access to social media	Level of Depression
Frequency of access to social media	Pearson Correlation	1	.019*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.492
	N	200	200
Level of Depression	Pearson Correlation	.019*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.492	
	N	200	200

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3 presents the correlation between the frequency of access to social media and depression. The findings showed that there was a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.492$) between the frequency of access to social media and depression. The correlation was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

3.5 Anxiety Symptoms Suffered

Respondents, levels of anxiety were analyzed and their responses were presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Degree of Anxiety Symptoms Suffered

Anxiety	Frequency	Percent
Normal	71	35
Mild	28	14
Moderate	26	13
Severe	18	9
Extremely Severe	57	28
Total	200	100

Findings indicated that 35% of the respondents had normal anxiety symptoms, 14% had mild, 13% had moderate, 9% had severe, while 28% had extremely severe anxiety symptoms in the past week prior to the data collection date.

In finding the correlation between the frequency of accessing the SNS and anxiety, a Pearson's correlation was run and the results presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlation between Frequency of Accessing SNS and Anxiety

Correlations			
		Frequency of access to social media	Level of Anxiety
Frequency of access to social media	Pearson Correlation	1	.007*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.627
	N	200	200
Level of Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.007*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.627	
	N	200	200

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table presents the results obtained from a Pearson's correlation. The results revealed that there was a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.627$) between the frequency of accessing SNS and anxiety. The correlation was statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

4. Discussion

It was found that respondents suffered depression symptoms at 54% ranging from mild depression symptoms, moderate, severe and extremely severe depression symptoms. Similarly, 19% of the respondents were slightly dissatisfied with life, while 34% were generally dissatisfied with life. This finding may be interpreted to mean that above average percentage of respondents were presenting with depressive symptoms as a result of SNS usage. The findings are consistent with those Kirashaw (2015) who did a study on the effects of Facebook and social media sites which revealed that increased and regular use of the sites led to increased symptoms of depression if the site triggered feelings of inadequacy. The feeling of inadequacy stems from the constant need of validation of a social media user by other users.

Also, findings showed that there was a moderate positive correlation between the frequency of access to social media and depression. The correlation was statistically significant. This shows that the students who accessed SNS more were more depressed than those who accessed SNS fewer times. This is corroborated by Mwikali (2017) who fronts that individuals who use the social media sites a lot, had in excess of multiple times the danger of misery and uneasiness than individuals who used the minimum sum. Further, Chan (2013) revealed that feelings of negative psychosocial effects on internet addicts were attributed to amount of feedback received on the profiles, either through likes or comments. Another study by Erin Vogel (2014) found that the

more people accessed their Facebook over time in a span of two weeks, levels of life satisfaction declined due to comparison. Use of social media has become notorious for cyber-bullying and has been characterized by a surge in negative comments and content. Some users post bad and insulting comments to other users which are likely to impact negatively on their feelings. This might lead one to have low self-esteem and sink into a state of depression.

Another UK study Abrams (2017) showed that out of 1500 Facebook and Twitter users, 62% of them reported feeling inadequate, while 60 percent felt jealous upon comparing their lives with others (Abrams, 2017). This is true because young people like comparing other people's lifestyles in relation to theirs. What they might not understand is that social media posts might not be a true reflection of the reality. However, Pantic (2014) noted that some studies suggest that it is not conclusive that the sites cause depression. This is only if the users are respectful of each other and intend no harm which in most cases rarely occurs.

With regard to anxiety, this study revealed that there was a moderate positive correlation between the frequency of accessing SNS and anxiety. The correlation was statistically significant. These results imply that the more times a student accesses social media, the higher the levels of anxiety in that student. Anxiety is likely to increase depending on the nature of content watched by the student. This is consistent with assertions by Futuma and Ohannessian (2016) who indicated that additional time spent utilizing internet based life was correlated with side effects of dispositional tension.

The results show that majority of the respondents (64%) presented with some level of anxiety. Though this anxiety could be attributed to the way of life of these respondents, it could also be influenced by the levels of depression due to the comorbidity between depression and anxiety. This is just as Okeyo (2016) stated that there exists a connection between investing expanded time in online life and encountering negative emotional wellness results. Social media users are excited when posting new content and their expectations is that the response will be positive. The end result might be as they expect or turn out completely different. Some posts might receive no response at all; others might attract negative reviews that might discourage the user. Other yet might receive overwhelming positive response. Not knowing what one might get entangled in bringing about a sense of anxiety and some unwarranted tensions.

This study is congruent with the previous findings of other studies. Davilla (2012) stated that usage of social networking site is the basic agent that not only enhances but also nourishes the mental health problems. That excessive use of social media leads an individual to disastrous results that starts with anxiety and leads to the depression. Davilla continued to state that depression has a link with time spent on social networks by a person as symptoms of major depression has been found among the individuals who spent most of their time in online activities and performing image management on social networking sites. In the contrary, evidence of inverse relation between depression and social media usage has been reported by the Shah and Grant (2002) who further suggested that various social forms like gaming and chatting diminished the depression risk.

This study found out that SNS usage may lead to high levels of depression. The findings were indicative of anxiety among the respondents in this study. The presence of these anxiety symptoms among the respondents seem to show that SNS were likely to evoke anxiety among the university students. This was proportional to the nature of content shared through these social media platforms or the conversations they exchange.

5. Conclusion

This study was able to determine that increased and regular use of the social network sites led to increased symptoms of depression. The more time spent using social media over time is significantly associated with greater symptoms of anxiety. Internet use poses a mental health threat to youth because prolonged exposure and dependence can make them susceptible to cyber bullying and other forms of online harassment, which can further produce detrimental outcomes such as depression and anxiety. Given the finding that social networking sites were popular among a large number of Daystar university students and that this can lead to depressive symptoms, parents and health stakeholders need to join forces to address this to avoid mental illness which may impact academic performance.

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