

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS
OF YOUNG MIDDLE-CLASS COUPLES IN KILIMANI DIVISION,
NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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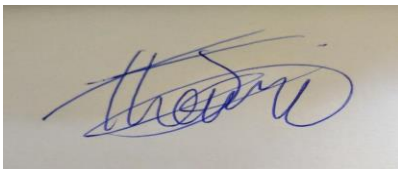
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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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NAIROBI**

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

This research is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in this University or any other University.



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This report has been submitted with my approval as university supervisor.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my loving parents, Wilson Mwangi and Alice Wanjiku Mwangi for their support and encouragement through the period of my studies at the University and in my life in general. I would also like to thank my brothers; Collins Mwaniki, Dickson Macharia and Newton Njaramba, and sisters; Mercy Mumbi and Josephine Wanjiru for their support and provision of an enabling environment that has seen me through this course successfully.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SMN –Social Media Networks

VSM – Verbal Social Media

NVSM – Non-Verbal Social Media

U&G - Uses and gratifications theory

PDA - Paralinguistic digital affordance also referred to as “liking,” or “favoriting” a post

SM – Social Media

ABSTRACT

Social media is a term that refers to internet based platforms that connect people and give them the opportunity to reach out to each other and share information online using smartphones, computers (Cambridge Dictionary); it can be either verbal, non-verbal, video, or picture mode. Social media can also be defined as a community. Social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat amongst others have become very common features in our everyday lives. Social media is now part of most households lives with figures showing that globally on average people spend at least 144 minutes on Social Media daily. Many who have access to social media which according to statistics was around 49 percent of the global population have turned it into a medium of communication due to its affordability, reliability, eases of access, friendly nature among other factors; and not using it is almost unavoidable. Data in this study was mainly collected using questionnaires with contained close ended questions. Interviews were also carried out and they helped provide supplementary information. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data which was then summarized using tables and graphs. It was discovered that more women than men were using Social Media and they exceeded men by 22 percent where in addition it was seen that the women spent at least two hours daily as compared to men. WhatsApp was found to be the most commonly used Social Media site with a 100 percent usage followed by Facebook and twitter. The research also discovered that most of the respondents use the SMNs for socialising with their families and friends followed by entertainment with each at 44 percent and 40 percent respectively. Most couples however indicated that Social Media was taking a toll on their marriages with more than half of the respondents saying that the use of SM had led to an increase in suspicion and jealousy with their spouses. In conclusion it was evident that the use of Social Media was having more of a negative than positive influence on the marriages of young middle-class couples and it is recommended that the usage if these Social Media sites should be regulated amongst the couples themselves and that they should instead focus on using Social Media platforms to bring them closer to each other and in strengthening their relationships for example through more communication with each other.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Social media refers to sites for example short message service platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and WeChat, blogging platforms which include WordPress and Blogger are also included on the list with other social networking sites Facebook, LinkedIn and Xing, Microblogs such as Twitter, and Tumblr are also included with community media sites such as Instagram, Snapchat, Flickr, YouTube, Dailymotion also falling under this list. Other Social Media platforms include wiki-based information sharing sites such as Wikipedia amongst other social Media platforms *SIMElab* and others that are nowadays being used for communication, entertainment, socialising, dissemination of news, dating, influencing people's opinions, conducting meetings, amongst other uses. The invention of these sites has led to the interaction of many people living close to each other and others far away which has led to the coining of the term 'social media community'. It is because of these interactions that behaviours of young couples towards institutions such as marriage have been influenced either positively or negatively.

With statistics showing that at least 49 percent of the global population uses social media sites at a rate of 144 minutes per individual per day, according to *Statista (2021)* an online business platform. This shows how much social networking sites play a big role in people's lives especially the young generation.

People spending too much time on SMNs is now causing concern seeing that it is causing strains in family lives and also preventing these people from sustaining good relationships with their families as has been found out by the following researchers Research by *Valenzuela, Sebastián, Daniel Halpern, and James E.Katzb (2014)*. showed that there was a connection between spousal problems and divorce rates in the United States, with another research showing that a 20 percent increase in Facebook users was seen to have caused a 2.18% increase in divorce rates (Laskowski, 2014).

According to a report published by an online newspaper “Daily mail.com” In 2010, it was found that most cheating among married couples, as was reported by 80 percent of divorce lawyers, was due to the use of Social Media with Facebook being responsible for one out of every five divorces. (*Gardner, 2010*). Research on this area is however limited and material used here is what was available at this time.

Social networking or dating sites are not always harmful to society, even though in some cases they have proven the opposite where Social Media has helped people find their partners. Research by *John T. Cacioppo¹, Stephanie Cacioppo , Gian C. Gonzagab , Elizabeth L. Ogburnc , and Tyler J. VanderWeelehas, 2013*, revealed that between 2005 and 2012 in the United States, SMNs were responsible for a third of all the marriages that occurred. was also shown that in comparison to couples that had met offline, those that had met through SMNS were reported to be maintaining healthy and happier relationships. According to the study, it was seen that most of the married couples who met online had higher levels of income and education and were between the ages of 30 to 39 years *Cacioppo, et al (2013)*

In Asia, SMNs have also been credited with reshaping of traditional cultures when it comes to the aspect of marriage where dating sites are now being used by some members of the Sikh community unlike before where they relied solely on arranged marriages. The Sikh community is known for strictly following their traditions especially when it comes to marriage where their culture dictates that they stick to arranged marriages. Here the young women and men are left without a choice in determining who they would like to have as their partner in marriage. A case at hand is an online dating website, shaada.com, which has become an intermediary among the Indian Sikh community when they are seeking for soul mates and is now widely used amongst marriage seekers in their community (*Maclaran et al., 2008*).

1.2 Statement of the problem

With the increased use of SMN as internet connectivity to most parts of the world was seen to have been growing and technology was also observed to have continued developing while at the same time becoming more affordable, this was bound to have an effect on how populations in this case young married couples used Social Media and this would in turn influence their behaviour towards their marriages in different ways.

Little research in this area had been done and information to guide or compare with was found to be limited. Information that was available mainly focuses on the statistics or the numbers for example how many people were subscribed to certain SMNs, when they used them, the purpose of using the SMNs, the negative effects of the SMNs, the advantages of using the SMNS amongst other logistics.

The available studies done by researchers such as *Kimeto, J. (2016), Okeibunor Ngozi B., Sebastián Valenzuela, Daniel Halpern, James E. Katz (2014) and Hina Gulll, Sardar Zafar Iqbal, Saeed Hussein Al Qahtani, Reem A. Alassaf, Mahi M. Kamaleldin (2019)*, tended to dwell mainly on the negative impacts of SMNs especially on marital relationships. The current study has investigated the negative and positive impact of SMNs when it comes to marriage with the focus being on youthful middle-class couples who fell in the age bracket of between 20 to 40 years of age.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Social Media influences the marital relationships of young middle-class couples, between the ages of 20 and 40.

This target group use Social Media Networks for communication, entertainment, socialising, as a source of information, amongst other uses, in their day to day lives.

I focused on those living in Kilimani Division, Nairobi County, Kenya area which is considered to be a middle-class suburb *Cytonn (2021)*. to represent young married couples of the same social and economic standing.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were;

1. Determining how Social Media Networks use influenced behaviour towards marital happiness.
2. Showing how Social Media Networks use influenced behaviour towards marital commitment.
3. Explaining how Social Media Networks use influenced behaviour towards marital satisfaction.
4. Showing ways in which Social Media Networks use influenced communication in marriage.
5. Establishing the relationship between Social Media addiction and the occurrence of marital dissatisfaction among young middle-class couples in Kilimani area.

1.5 Research Questions

1. To what extent was SMN use influencing behaviour towards marital happiness?
2. In what ways was the use of SMN influencing behaviour towards marital commitment?
3. What were some of the ways in which SMN use influenced behaviour towards marital satisfaction?
4. To what extent did SMN use influence communication in marriage?
5. Was there a relationship between Social Media addiction and marital dissatisfaction arising amongst the youthful middle-class couples in Kilimani area?

1.6 Justification of the Study

Research as seen from examples in this study showed that Social Media use was having an impact on our daily lives as its spread continues. It is because of this that this study was being carried out to show how the use of Social Media Networks is influencing the institution of marriage amongst the middle-class my focus being on Kilimani Division a middle-class area in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was to;

1. Act as a reference for young people in helping them make informed decisions when it comes to using SMNs.
2. Be a source of reference for counsellors, media specialists, religious leaders and other professionals who may need to get information on the topic.
3. The study also aimed at acting as a source of reference to couples that are engaged in long distance relationships who can use it to know some of the advantages of using SMN as a tool to help in strengthening their marriages and how to avoid some of the pitfalls that SMNs consumption may lead to.

1.8 Scope of the Study

I was mainly focused on the video and non-verbal Social Media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, Yahoo amongst others. The study was carried out in Kilimani Division, Westlands Sub-county, Nairobi, Kenya on young married couples between the ages of 20 – 40 years.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The use of SMNs influences the behaviour of youthful couples towards their marriages in this case the middle-class.

1.9.1 Limitations of the Study

When young couples did not fill the questionnaires with utmost honesty fearing the reaction from their partners if they were to be found out. I in this case assured the respondents of anonymity and I did also not require them to give their names in this way assuring them of anonymity.

It was at times difficult accessing the homes of the population being studied due to security concerns. For this I got an official letter from the relevant authorities such as an approval letter from NACOSTI which indicated my intentions was conducting a research when I visited residences.

Timing the young couple, who based on the type of economic class were busy working class people, it proved to be challenging getting them to spare time to fill the questionnaire or their time schedules for when they were or would be available. I in this case liaised with the security guards to assist me in knowing the schedule and which houses belonged to this target group. With the information gained, I was able to know how to time and conduct the interviews or have them fill the questionnaires more effortlessly.

Where one of the couples would influence how the other would answer the questionnaire. In this case, I indicated on the questionnaire that it was to be filled by either the husband or the wife or both. In this way I was able to reduce errors when it came to accuracy of the respondent when answering the questionnaire.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

With the rise and spread in the use of SMNs across the globe and studies also showing that this has also led to increase in marriages with a study in 2009 showing that 1 in 8 married couples in the United States met through SMNs (Minkel, 2012). This study will show how SM is being used to enhance interactions leading to marriages and also show how the same SMNs are leading to breakage in marriage institutions when used uncontrollably

With most of the world accessing SMNs sites daily, evidence has shown that SMNs are offering different experiences for users in a positive way which explains why SM sites are growing at a fast rate the world over. An example is where people are able to keep in touch with their families and friends (*Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009; Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008; Wang, Tchernev, & Solloway, 2012*).

SMNs also make it possible for people who are far away from each other to easily keep in contact and also maintain relationships. An overlap between participants' online and offline networks was seen where many Social Media users use it to connect and reconnect with others (*Subrahmanyam et al. (2008)*). The overlap was however not found to be perfect with patterns suggesting that many Social Media users took part in diverse online activities to keep in-line different areas of their offline lives.

2.1.1 Studies on why people choose to share their lifestyles Social Media

Online profiles on SMNs using Facebook as an example usually show the sort of offline lives that the users live. In the profiles of these SM sites, users show a side of their lives that they would like to be known to other people. Here the user creates a profile that they like and would want to share with others thus creating an online identity (*Pempek et al., 2009*). Apart from assisting in the creation of online identities, Social Media also gives satisfaction in certain intellectual, emotive, characteristic and social parts of the users' life (*Wang et al., 2012*). Some of these areas are however fully satisfied causing a build-up of unsatisfied needs which leads to the consequent use of Social Media, which then leads to the SMNs user falling into addiction or, the users excessively consuming Social Media unless those desires get fulfilled in an offline situation.

A study by *Hayes et al. (2016)* showed that there were four major incentives that led to a person sending a paralinguistic digital affordance (PDA—also referred to as “liking,” or “favouring” a post) and three major gratifications got from receiving a PDA. Drives for sending a PDA were: literal interpretation – here the PDA was an assessment of the message; acknowledgement of viewing – the PDA showed the sender that the message had been read; social support – the ‘like’ showed that one supported the sender in their activities; and lastly utilitarian purposes – where the ‘like’ served as a source of gratification to the sender by making them feel good about sending many PDAs to many people. Three main gratifications from PDAs were also attained by those who originally sent the posts: emotional satisfaction – respondents reported that they felt happy after receiving a ‘like’, status satisfaction – the more likes that a senders’ post received, the more elevated their social status became, social satisfaction – likes helped in building or improving social connections (*Hayes et al., 2016*).

Another study by *Oeldorf-Hirsch and Sundar (2016)* also showed near similar results as that of *Hayes et al., 2016*, when it revealed some of the factors that influenced people to share their photographs on the internet. When respondent were asked why they shared their photographs on the internet, four categories of gratification seeking and showcasing were seen — which in this case meant being in sync with what was

and is happening around the globe and also know what others are up to; technological affordances— the SMNs are user friendly which makes it easy for people to use them for networking; social connection— here people are able to create and sustain close relationships, there was also reaching out — here Social Media users want to reach many people and also get response on their photographs. This showed that sharing photographs is inspired by social needs and that the Social; Media Networks offered a place where this this behaviour was encouraged (*Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2016*).

With the advent of SMNs, communications on Social Networking Sites have commonly been referred to as bridging and bonding social capital. (*Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Putnam, 2000*). Social capital was defined in this case as the amount of the resources in real life or virtual that adds up to a person or a group through having a lasting relationship of friendship and respect for each other (*Bourdieu and Wacquant(1992)*). In relation to Social Media, social capital can therefore be defined as the associations that are built online that enhance computer generated communication. Bridging and bonding are important areas in which various types of social capital can be linked. In this case it can be said that bridging social capital is made up of various elements for example: interacting with other people that have different thoughts from ‘mine’. Here associations between individuals are not as strong and can easily be destroyed, but they however allow for more open communication that is not allowed through bonding, which will most likely enhance social inclusion, are good for dispersing or spreading information, are great for moving forward and can be a source of getting to know more individuals.

2.1.2 Research on the advantages of using Social Media

SMNs as seen in Chapter One, are also being credited for promoting marriages and eroding some cultures such as arranged marriages where the involved partners had no say in the matter. An example in this case an online dating platform, Shaadi.com, which amongst the Indian, Sikh community has become quite popular for marriage seekers (*Maclaran et al., 2008*). Though the Sikh community is known for being strict when it comes to marriage where they follow their traditional culture of arranged marriages, where the young suitors have little say concerning the person that they will

end up with as their life partner. The study conducted revealed that the online dating platforms have a lot of influence when it comes to redesigning traditional cultures. An example is seen where shaadi.com has been seen to be efficiently working as a go-between amongst the Sikh community when it comes to the subject of searching for marriage partners which is changing their traditional marriage practices by changing their current culture. cultures.

SMNs are also helping in eradicating social stratification in occurrences of practices such as racial discrimination when it comes to interracial marriages. Young people, traditionally, could for example be connected to others who were similar to them in terms of religious beliefs, status and race. A study by *Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2012* revealed that the internet was responsible for a drop in the cases of families influencing how young people were searching for their marriage partners. The internet was also seen to be influencing an increase in marriages between people of different races and religions as seen through an increase in these unions. The researchers also found out that the strength of the relationship between couples who married traditionally and those who met through the internet was similar (*Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2012*).

SMNs are also credited for forming strong bonds between likeminded people. Bonding social capital is comparable, however with major differences as illustrated: linking with compatible people: associations are more sound and are generally maintained in a smaller network: it also helps in enhancing social exclusion as a result of strong allegiances between members of the same group: it is also encourages people to get along: and it can also serve as a place for people who are similar or alike in their thoughts or ideas without any differences amongst them. Illustrations for such instances can be seen amongst relatives, closed-group forums and fraternities (*Putnam, 2000*).

2.1.3 Studies on the shortcomings arising as a result of the use of Social Media

When a Social Media Network user communicates with other users through the SM platforms, this integrates bridging and bonding techniques so as to fully utilise the

advantages of their use of Social Media Networks in the form of social capital. In this case, the more engrained a person's social capital is, the larger their scope of influence online. However, online users must be cautious when interacting with their counterparts through avoiding exposing too much of their personal lives which may make them become vulnerable.

According to *Quinn (2016)* sharing of private information by users online had for main concerns: information control – that is regulating the quantity of information that a user releases to other users: power loss – where once a user releases their private information to others, they now have some degree of power over them: identity loss – supposed damage: future life of information – supposed possibility of harm. Seeing how privacy in the realm of SM is handled, this is bound to affect user's behaviours online and even their relationships formed on SM and offline having lost some control over their privacy and information to the SM platforms.

Computers in Human Behaviour published a study in 2012 which compared per-capita Facebook accounts to state-by-state divorce rates. The research showed a connection between the use of Social Media Networking sites and a reduction in the quality of marriages in all the models that were evaluated. The study also revealed that there was a 2.18% to 4.32% rise in divorce cases that was connected to a 20% yearly increase in Facebook subscription. The research's model attained from the individual study outcome likewise forecasts that individuals who are married and do not participate in the use of Social Media Networking sites, are 11% happier in their unions than those that often participate in these online platforms.

2.1.4 Research on Social Media influence on relationships

In addition, further studies on how SMNs have influenced relationships have been done as illustrated by the studies below which further expounds on the influence that SMNs have on relationships and also on people from other demographics.

A research by *Princeton Survey Research Associates International (2013)*. On how digital technology such as Social Media Networking sites and the internet was being used by couples in the United States to help keep in order their lives, logistics and emotional intimacy in their relationships, had the following results:

The general effect of technology on long term relationships was seen to be as illustrated below:

74 % of the adult online users said that the use of the internet had had a positive influence on their marriages or partnerships, 20% however reported that internet use had had a negative influence on their relationships while 4% reported that the experience had been both positive and negative.

Technology such as the internet and other Social Media Networking sites act as a basis for support and interaction between users from all walks of life. According to research, it was seen that 21% of mobile phone users or online users in dedicated relationships reported that the use of the internet and the exchange of text messages as a medium of communication made them feel closer to their spouses or partners. 9% also said that they had come into an agreement over an issue that they had disagreed on with their spouses, through the use of the internet or text messages as their medium of communication whereas they had been having a problem solving the issue while they were with their partner in person. (*Princeton Survey Research Associates International, 2013*).

However, tech was also seen as a source of tension mobile phones were seen as a source of distraction by 25% of people in marriages or committed relationships who owned mobile phones where they said they felt that their partners were being distracted by the mobile phones when they were together. 8% of online users in dedicated relationships were also seen to have engaged in a disagreement with their spouses or partners over the quantity of time that one of them was using online at the same time, 4% of online users who were engaged in a dedicated relationship reported to have been irritated by an activity that they had discovered that their spouse or

partner was doing on the internet as was revealed by *Princeton Survey Research Associates International* in their 2013 research.

The study also showed that due to the use of technology, it was more likely that young adults would report feeling closer to their spouse or partner. In this case, 41% of 18 – 24 in committed relationships reported feeling closer to their due to communicating through the online platforms or from the use of text messages to stay in touch. At the same time, 23% of 18-29 year olds in committed relationships said that they were able to resolving arguments that could not be agreed upon personally, through the use of online medium,

Princeton Survey Research Associates International in their research in 2013, also noted that it was more probable for young adults, as a result of using technology, to report incidences of disagreements in their relationships. In this case it was seen that at least 40% of 18-29 year olds who owned mobile phones and were in in committed relationships, said that mobile phones were a source of distraction to their partners whenever they were together(this is a phenomena that was reported to have been experienced by 25% of all couples). It was also reported that 18% of 18-29 year olds who are online users, had had a disagreement with their spouse over the quantity of time that the other spent online (this is compared to 8% of all the couples that are online), this was while 8% of the young adults who are online reported being irritated by activities that they had seen their partners doing online (this was compared with 4% of all the couples that were online users).

Generally, young adults who were internet users were more likely to report that its use had influenced their relationship. A case in hand is where 45% of those between the ages of 18-29 who were internet users and in committed relationships, reported that its use had had an influence on their relationship, while 10 percent of adult internet users aged 65 and above gave a similar response, *Princeton Survey Research Associates International (2013)*

Princeton Survey Research Associates International (2013) also found that, when it comes to sharing of passwords, seven out of ten of the married couples or those in serious relationships shared with their spouses or partners the password of one or more of their online accounts. It was also discovered that for shared accounts, three out of ten people who are internet users and are in a marriage or dedicated relationship, own an email account that they use with their partner. People who have been in long relationships which have lasted more than ten years, and also the older adults, have a higher probability of sharing an email account.

Couples in long-term relationships have the tendency of seeing and using technology very differently from couples that have not been together for a long time, *Princeton Survey Research Associates International (2013)*.

In Kenya research conducted by *SIMElab (2019)*, on social media consumption in Kenya, trends and practices, showed that:

On a daily basis, most of the population between the ages of 21 – 35 years used more than three hours on Social Media Networks. The research also established that, though most of the population used Social Media Networks to communicate with each other, the main incentive that kept them active on Social Media was entertainment, politics and news.

According to the *Communications Authority of Kenya (2019)*, as at December, 2018, 45.7 million was the total internet subscription in the country, (CAK, 2019)

The most popular SMNs were as per the research by *SIMElab (2019)*, were WhatsApp at 88.6%, Facebook at 88.5%, YouTube at 51.2%, Google+ at 41.3%. the

least popular were LinkedIn and Snapchat at 9.3% and 9%. The most active age group was found to be the one between 26 -35 years while the least active is the one above 46 years. Males are more active than females on Social Media with their most preferred SMNs being Yahoo and Twitter while the females mostly prefer using Snapchat.

In terms of education level when it comes to the use of SMNs, *SIMElab (2019)*, found that Undergraduate degree holders use LinkedIn more followed by Twitter at 36.8% and 32.1% respectively, while those holding Graduate and Doctorate degrees use LinkedIn and e-mails more at 19.1% and 6.6% followed by Twitter at 6.4%. Those at the College level are the heaviest users of SMNs while those at the Primary school level are the least users.

In terms of religion as *SIMElab (2019)*, found out, Protestants followed by Roman Catholics are the heaviest consumers of Social Media. Protestants use LinkedIn at 50% followed by Facebook and Yahoo at 48.7% and 48.5% respectively.

Use of Social Media as per Geographical Location indicates that in the rural areas Facebook, WhatsApp and Google are the most commonly used SMNs which can be attributed to free or complimentary services offered by telecom providers, *SIMElab (2019)*.

Use of SMNs by income levels shows that with the majority of Nairobi residents living in urban slums, low income earners mostly use Facebook and WhatsApp while the middle-income earners use LinkedIn, Twitter, Yahoo and Snapchat with those in the lower middle-income bracket using YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp. Those in the high income earning bracket commonly use Snapchat.

The research by *SIMElab (2019)*, also indicates that most Kenyans use SMNs for entertainment, education, job related and social issues with figures showing that for entertainment YouTube leads at 74.4% while for education Google + leads at 57.1% while for WhatsApp lead for family issues at 40% and social issues at 49.3%, for job related issues LinkedIn leads at 61.9% and for education at 42.1%.

Figures show that the highest SMN accessed daily is WhatsApp and Facebook. *SIMElab (2019)* also discovered that at a weekly basis it was Twitter followed by LinkedIn while on a monthly basis it is LinkedIn followed by Yahoo.

The research by *SIMElab (2019)*, also found that mobile phones are the most used devices to access Social Media. LinkedIn and Yahoo are however shown to be mostly accessed using desktop computers and laptops. Facebook and WhatsApp were seen to be mostly accessed through mobile phones. The research also showed that most Kenyans have transformed from using cyber cafes to the mobile age and thus most people browse their internet from home. That is over 50%.

By gender as was seen by *SIMElab (2019)*, it was discovered that Kenyan men spend two to three hours on SMNs while women were found to spend one to two hours.

In terms of geo-location in urban areas people spend two to three hours on SMNs while in rural areas people spend one to two hours on SMNs.

In terms of age as *SIMElab (2019)*, found out, 21 to 35-year-olds were seen to spend more than three hours on SMNs while those in the age bracket of between 14 to 21 years spend two to three hours on SMNs while those above 46 years were found to spend the least time on Social Media. In terms of religion, Protestants lead by religion spending between one to two hours on SMNs followed by the Roman Catholics.

When it comes to the time of day spent on Social Media as found by *SIMElab (2019)*, night-time is when most people are on the SMNs followed by the evening hours then the morning hours before people start working but while they are in their offices. 26 to 35 year olds were found to spend more time on SMNs during the morning hours then in the afternoon hours while those in the age bracket of 21 to 25 spend more hours on SMNs at night followed by evening hours, *SIMElab (2019)*.

Kenyans in urban areas were seen to spend more time on SMNs during the afternoon hours followed by the evening hours then the morning hours while those in the rural areas were seen to spend more hours on SMNs at night followed by morning hours, *SIMElab (2019)*.

The study by *SIMElab* in 2019, also found that most Kenyans were motivated to use SMNs for acquiring information, entertainment and social interactions. The study also found out that the most active age-group on Social Media was those between the ages of 21 to 25 and 26 to 35.

It was also seen that using of Facebook to escape social realities has a slight edge over other motivations for using Social Media such as information acquisition, entertainment and social interactions for those in the age brackets of between 21 to 25 and 26 to 35 respectively.

Rural areas were seen to read sports while urban areas were seen to read mostly travel blogs on the SMNs. Males were also found to read sports blogs mostly while females preferred to read food blogs. Residents of low-income areas in Nairobi were found to read entertainment and sports blogs while those of high income areas preferred to read travel blogs. Social media consumption in Kenya report by *SIMElab (2019)*.

2.1.5 Interpersonal Relationships in a Digital Age

Interpersonal relationships refer to interactions with two or more individuals which may be comprised of online and offline relations. It is concerned with knowing how people use online platforms, in this case the Social Media Networking sites, and to what level these interactions affect individual's offline interactions with others. Social Media Networking sites as has been illustrated through various examples her, is already been seen to be influencing how we relate to other people in our offline lives.

It was through a research in 2016 by *Chotpitayasunondh and Douglas*, that the term 'plubbing' was coined. The term refers to ignoring another person in a social setting for example during a conversation where one is more focused on their phone instead of responding to the other person during the conversation. The researchers discovered that this act of 'plubbing' was becoming very common and that people have even started accepting this as normal whereas it was once considered as bad manners. though this was an act that was earlier on seen as a bad behaviour. The level to which individuals would ignore their counterparts was linked to their level of addiction of using their smartphones. A lasting change in regards to how we communicate with other people may occur as the tendency to use smartphones increases which will also result in the likelihood of phubbing occurring more frequently as the study suggests.

According to *Hertlein (2012)*, the internet continues creating the more confusion between relationships, in the offline and online worlds. A research conducted by *Hertlein (2012)*, trying to explain the part played by technology in how it was altering relationships in families, it was discovered that how people communicate with others online was affecting people's daily lives in a negative way for example disregarding the importance of one's offline life, diminishing work performance and also raising the possibility of one becoming addicted to the internet. From this research, *Abbasi and Alghamdi (2017)*, also discovered that abusing Facebook, which is an example of a Social Media Networking site, can result to harmful societal outcomes such as secluding oneself from others in society, lack of trust in relationships, unfaithfulness

in relationships, lack of unity amongst members of society, addiction to Facebook and break-ups in marriages.

A study conducted by *Kerkhof, Finkenauer, and Muusses(2011)* found that peoples relationships whether offline or online have become so interconnected that whatever one does in either of the two relationships, influences the other. This occurrence was called 'syntopia' by *Kerkhof, Finkenauer, and Muusses(2011)* and was meant to explain that the environment and background of an individual had an impact on whatever activity one did and learned on the internet and this was then transferred onto their offline lives. *At the same time, Kerkhof et al. (2011)*, also discovered that individuals who were obsessed with using the internet showed a reduction in the quality of their offline lives and they reported that commitment towards their relationships whad decreased and that they were having more frequent disagreements with their partners. Similarly, *Guarnieri, Wright, and Hudiburgh (2012)* also discovered that people who were less competent when it comes to starting offline relationships could have this behaviour linked to the increased use of Facebook, which is in this case considered a Social Media Networking site.

A reduction in interpersonal competency at starting offline relationships can also be linked to heavy social media use. This means that it is much more difficult for one to initiate an offline relationship, the more one increases their use of Social Media Networking sites. T6o support this research, *Seo, Park, Kim, and Park, (2016)* discovered that an individual who had developed a habitual use of their mobile phone had a reduced attention span and also had their level of depression on the rise and this caused a negative influence on the relationship between them and their friends. It was also discovered that people were still reporting that they were neglecting their daily tasks and leaving them incomplete and that there was also a reduction in sexual intimacy with their primary partners, even though they were concealing their internet addictions from them (*Underwood & Findlay, 2004*).

Social Media Networking sites not only influence our affiliation with others, but our own relationship within ourselves and how we see the environment that we live in, *Kerkhof et al. (2011)*, discovered that people who were addicted to the online life were seen to be isolated, more depressed and in general exhibited lesser social skills than people who were not addicted to the internet, this finding proved that these undesirable behaviours were caused by their addiction to internet use. More research on the same showed that the overuse of Social Media Networking sites largely influenced the lives of adolescents with negative outcomes on their individual psycho-social well-being as was discovered by *(Marino, Vieno, Pastore, Albery, Frings, & Spada, 2016)*. *Seo, Park, Kim, and Park, (2016)* who also reported that the more challenging smartphone addiction grows into being, the more individuals will have less self-esteem and decreased emotional well-being.

As seen from the research above, it is evident that our use of Social Media Networking sites has an influence on our offline lives and vice-versa.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Different theories address how SMNs are influencing marriages in this case of young middle-class couples. Many of the theories acknowledge the fact that SMNs are influencing our everyday lives and how we live especially in institutions such as marriage.

2.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications theory (U&G) is the most popular hypothesis that is used to explain why individuals interact in Social Media Networking sites. *Elihu Katz* and his partners *Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in 1973* were the first to introduce this hypothesis and used it to explain the reasons people have for interacting with the choice of media they prefer so as to satisfy their desires, *(Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973)*. U&G is described as a psychological communication viewpoint and hypothesises that people are aggressively involved in searching for media that they

trust will gratify specific desires that they need to be fulfilled, (*Katz et al., 1973; Rubin, 2009*). U&G suggests that people who consume media decide themselves on which media and of what type they will use for them to achieve the fullest satisfaction of their desires, (*Alajmi et al., 2016*). It can thus be said that U&G directs its attention to the reasons why consumers use certain types of media and the gratification that they derive from their consumption, where in this case we are focused on the Social Media Networking sites.

In order to gratify their desires, individuals decide by themselves on which media to use, though they do not always fulfill those desires. More often than not, the satisfaction that is desired is not equivalent to the satisfaction that is received and even if strongly connected, continuous use of a medium over time suggests that the satisfaction gained highly motivates an individual to continue using the same medium so as to continue searching for the satisfaction that the person was initially pursuing. (*Levy & Windahl, 1984; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980*). *Blumler and Katz (1974)* combined U&G by suggesting that it was directed towards social and psychological desires that generate certain expectations of mass media that lead to specific forms of media exposure which resulted into the need for satisfaction amongst other negative outcomes, though the other negative outcomes may not have been intended. *Blumler et al. (1974)* went on to explain that there were five main constituents to U&G:

1. The viewers are seen as active
2. The connection between satisfaction and the choice of media is left to the consumer.
3. The media are in competition with other forms of satisfaction.
4. The goals of mass media are sourced from material made by the customers.
5. Assessment of mass media ought to be put off while customer orientations are looked into.

Uses and gratifications theory was in the past used to look into the satisfaction got from television and radio use, currently, it is being used to look into Social Media and

its different components for example satisfaction derived from the use of Facebook (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010), privacy guidelines on the internet (Quinn, 2016), social media apps being used/made in China (Gan, 2018), social capital (Petersen & Johnston, 2015), and reasons why people use Social Media (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011), amongst others all of which help in showing the reliability of using the Uses and gratifications theory for this study. More proof seconding the use of the U&G theory to conduct research on Social Media and thus can also be applied to Social Media Networking sites. Uses and gratifications theory is largely seen as a pro-social theory that shows the advantages of consuming different kinds of media and some of those advantages are worthwhile for us to take time and study them.

2.2.2 Family Systems Theory

This was a theory that was developed in the 1950's by a psychiatrist called Murray Bowen and it viewed the family as an emotional unit that is interdependent of the actions of each of its members where the change in the action of one member affects the other members of the family. It is from these emotional forces of the individual family that a society's behaviour is also moulded. As was seen from the theory, societal regression was one of the results of the behaviours that came from how an individual's behaviour affected the family and how this as a result also affected the behaviour of the whole society. In this case one the factors that was noted to be influencing societal regression was a growth in science and technology.

A growth in science and technology was one of the symptoms of societal regression and this involved as can be seen from current trends the invention of the Social Media Networking sites. It is the use of this sites that was noted to have led to a regression in society where it was seen as noted in this study and others that have been published in journals such as *Computers in Human Behaviour* in 2012 and Gardner, 2010 which show that this had led to a rise in the cases of divorce, and, as was seen through this study, the use of Social Media had also led to negative impacts on the marriages of the youthful couples who were the centre of interest for this research.

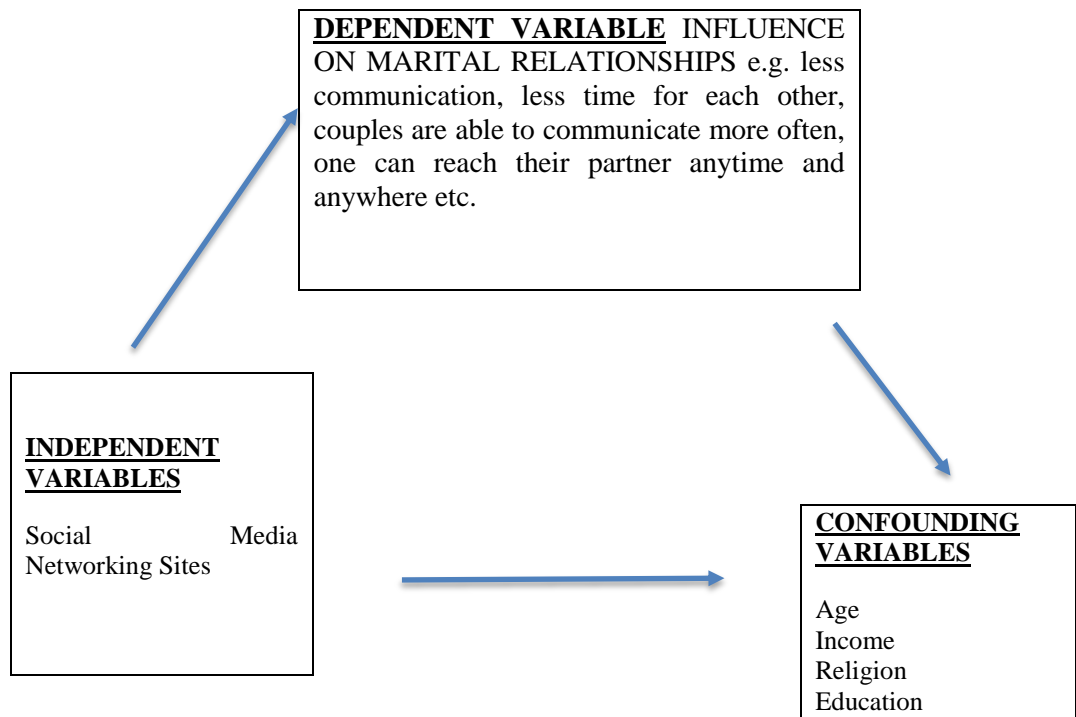
It is through this theory that this study was also able to be conducted using the guidelines that it provided such as where it posited that an individual's behaviour also

moulds that of the family and that of the family also moulds that of the society. In this case it was discovered that the use of Social Media could when used in a controlled and wise manner influenced the behaviours of the youthful middle-class couples in a positive way in their marriages for example they were able to keep in constant communication and it also made them feel closer to each other. It was however noted during the study that the uncontrolled use of the SMNs led to the couples being influenced in a negative way in their marriages where the respondents in the study said that it made them feel suspicious, distant and uncomfortable with their partners whenever they were engaged in using the Social Media Networking sites.

As suggested by Bowen, human societies go through a period of regression before they get into the progression stage. From this study it was seen that the young married couples were spending a lot of time on the Social Media platforms and neglecting their roles in their marriages such as spending more time with one's partner to enhance stronger bonds in their marriages. The Family Systems theory posited that as a result of people taking the easy way out of problems instead of solving them for the long-term benefit, this was bound to lead to periods of regression. The use of Social Media as was discovered through this study could lead to a period of regression if not controlled where it could lead to the destruction of many of the young couples marriages when symptoms such as feeling of loneliness, suspicion and discomfort were ignored even where it was seen that they were being caused by the use of these platforms and it is these symptoms that gradually lead to divorce. Through the occurrence of divorce, this would destroy families which are the basic components of what form a society and thus the destruction of societies. It would be through the control of how Social Media platforms are used that this type of regression would be avoided. Control measures could for example, where regression occurred or to prevent its occurrence, be governments regulating the amount of time spent by each individual who has access to these platforms and in this way either help avoid periods of regression or be a solution in leading towards progression. Other measures that could be used to prevent regression could be for example creating awareness to couples and the younger generation on ways of avoiding Social Media addiction and on ways in which they can use these platforms to create stronger bonds in their relationships, awareness could also be created in where those affected by addiction

or were experiencing problems in their lives as a result of the use of Social Media could get help for example from family therapists, counsellors and support groups.

2.3 Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how the study was organised and conducted. It covers the following areas: the site where the study was conducted, the design, the target population and sample. It also discusses the data analysis procedure which includes methods which were implemented to maintain validity of the instrument described.

3.2 Research Design

Descriptive survey design was used; qualitative and quantitative approach was also used. Quantitative research refers to a formal, impartial, methodical procedure to define the test relationships and examine cause and effect interactions among variables.

Surveying was also used to obtain original data for describing a population that was too large to observe directly. Questionnaires which contain simple questions with multiple choices that are clear were also used. The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to the subjects.

Qualitative approach was also used, here where I conducted interviews in the particular area on the young married couples who use SMNs as a part of their daily lives. The interviews were unstructured.

3.3 Target Population

A population is described as all elements (individual objects and events) that fulfil the conditions necessary for them to be included in the research (*Burns and Grove 91993:779*). The household population of Kilimani Location that is in Kilimani

division is 7807 within an area of 9 square kilometres. I was able to come up with a sample size of 84 after dividing the household population by two since I would only be needing one of the spouses, I then divided the answer by the size of the area in order for me to get the number of households living in one square kilometre after which I divided the answer by four where I was able to determine how many households are living in a quarter of a square kilometre. It is from this that I was able to calculate the sample population. The population of this study was 108 middle-class couples who are married and are between the ages of 20 and 40. The population sampled was 84 people after calculating the sample size.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

In this study non-probability sampling technique was used; purposive sampling in which I purposively selected people that I believe had the required characteristics needed for the study in this case young married middle-class couples who were more prone to use SMNs for communication, entertainment, socialisation amongst other uses. The sample size was 85 couples.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

The preferred method of data collection was the use of questionnaires. A questionnaire can be described as a printed self-report form intended to elicit information which can be acquired through written response of respondents. Questionnaires give respondents time to answer questions. Interviews were also used in the collection of data. An interview is an oral administration of a questionnaire (*Mugenda, 1999*).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity describes the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Content validity refers to the degree to which an instrument represents the elements that are being studied. To attain content validity, questions included those on the knowledge of the youthful couples about how they feel SMNs use is influencing their marriages, how much time they spent on the SMNs amongst other questions related to the study. The questions were based on information gathered during literature review. Simple language was used to formulate the questions for clarification and ease in understanding. I also interviewed the respondents personally where necessary. In addition, I enhanced validity by having experts go through the questions to ensure that they were the most suitable for the study.

Reliability is described as the level of consistency with which a tool measures the element it is meant to measure. Safeguarding of reliability was achieved through reducing source of measurement errors such as bias from the people collecting the data. Biased data collector was minimised by I as the researcher being the only one who distributed the questionnaires and regulated conditions such as maintaining the same characteristics when administering the questionnaire to all the respondents. I also did not require the respondents to write their name on the questionnaire to assure them of confidentiality

I also enhanced reliability and validity through the pilot study.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

The aim of data processing and analysis was to comb through the information collected and show the significant and meaningful patterns and connections that are in the data (*Alreck, 1995*)

For data analysis, I used descriptive statistics which included the use of percentages, graphs and tables obtained to mark relevant traits that I was able to study amongst the different couples that I engaged during the interviews.

I also used the Chi-square analysis to determine whether there were any significant relationships between the variables in the study.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

I ensured the anonymity of informants and respondents by keeping their identities confident, voluntary participation was also encouraged as well as informed consent. A letter from NACOSTI was also presented as required and the COVID -19 protocols were also observed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this research was to determine the influence of Social Media on marital relationships in Kilimani Division, a middle-class area in the county of Nairobi, Kenya. This chapter covers an analysis of the findings, results and also includes the discussion of the results as will be seen later on. The first section covers the demographic data obtained from the respondents. The second section covers prevalence of Social Media use among married respondents in Kilimani Division. The third section covers marital issues arising from the use of Social Media among married couples. The fourth section covers the relationship between Social Media use and stability of marriages. The last section covers the strategies that can be used in a bid to manage Social Media consumption for stability of marriages amongst the youthful middle-class couples.

4.2 Demographic Data

This section covers the demographic data consisting of age, religion, level of education and years of marriage.

4.2.1 Age

The distribution of the study findings was as captured in figure 4.1 below. The figures showed that majority of the respondents in the study were aged 30 years and below representing 66.66 percent. The age group between 31 and 35 years represented 25 percent of the total with those of 36-40 years representing 8.33 percent. Based on the findings, the majority of the participants were between the ages of 26 and 35 years.

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
21-25 years	2	3.33%
26-30 years	38	63.33%
31-35 years	15	25%
36-40 years	5	8.33%

Table 4.1: Age distribution

The findings showed that those between the ages of 36 and 40 years were the least in terms of respondents who use social media which shows that this is the age group that least uses the SM platforms and is thus less likely to be influenced by their use in their marriages. The ages between 21 and 25 were also seen to be less in terms of the respondents in the lower age brackets also revealing that Kilimani is a high-end area where people in this age group would be less likely to be found since they are either just fresh from institutions of higher learning such as colleges or universities or out searching for jobs or they could be newly employed which denies them the means to afford living in such an area.

4.2.2 Religion

The respondents were asked to indicate their religious affiliations. The study focussed on Christianity, Islam and other religions category.

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christians	40	66.67%
Muslims	15	25%
Others	5	8.33%

Table 4.2: Religions of respondents

The findings revealed that the Christians represented 66.67 percent; Muslims represented 25% while the other religion represented only 8.33 percent. This agrees with the findings from the Kenya Census report which clearly indicates that Christianity is the most common religion in Kenya. In line with this study as was illustrated by the research done by *SIMELab, 2019*, the above findings support the view that Christians are the biggest Social Media consumers in the country.

4.2.3 Level of Education

The study sought to assess the respondents with the highest level of education. The findings indicate that distribution in terms of their levels of education.

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
College/University	46	76.67%
High school	9	15%
Primary	5	8.33%

Table 4.3: Level of Education

College/University level represented 76.67 percent being the majority, high school represented 15 percent and finally primary level education represented 8.33 percent. From the findings, it can be seen that majority of the respondents have already achieved post-secondary education suggesting that the married individuals in Kilimani Division were relatively highly educated. This justifies the findings that the middle class are associated with high levels of education.

4.2.4 Years in Marriage

The study sought to determine the number of years the respondents had been married.

The findings obtained from the study are as shown in the table below:

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	39	76.67%
5-10	11	15%
Above 10 Years	10	8.33%

Table 4.4: Years in Marriage

Therefore, as seen from the table above, majority of the respondents had been married for less than 5 years. This is an indication that most of the respondents were still young in marriage.

4.3 Prevalence of Social Media Use among Married Individuals in Kilimani

This section analyses the various types of social media used through frequency and percentage. The distribution of the respondents by Social Media Networking site is as shown in figure 4.3 below.

Social Media	Frequency	Percentage
WhatsApp	60	100%
Facebook	55	91.67%
Twitter	47	78.33%
Instagram	39	65%
LinkedIn	28	46.67%

Table 4.5: Distribution of Social Media Platforms

The graph below illustrates the prevalence of the Social Media platforms amongst the youthful couples in Kilimani area.

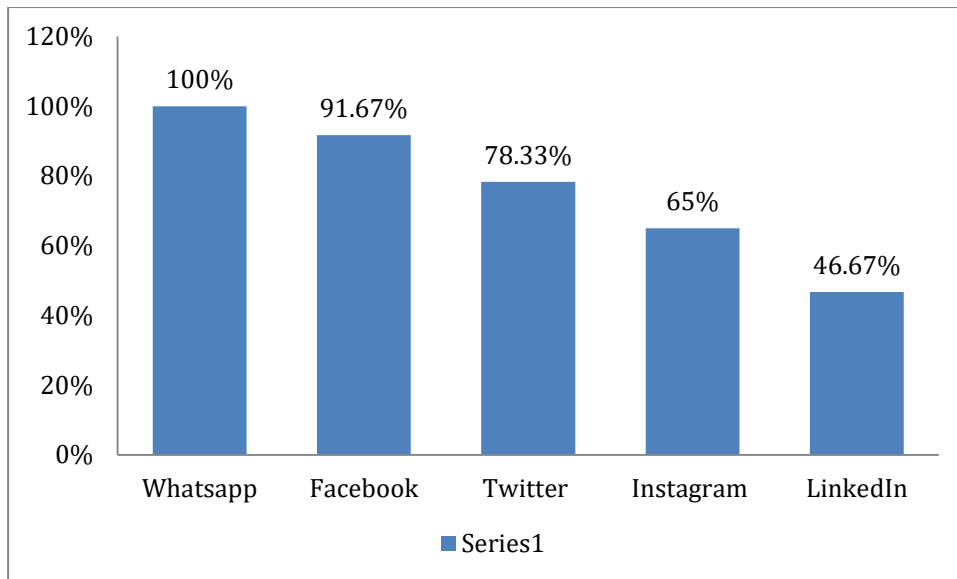


Figure 4.6: Graphical representation of Social Media Platforms

This section above analyses the type of Social Media platforms used by the youthful couples and this is shown in the graphical representation above. The findings indicate that WhatsApp had the highest number of users at 100 percent closely followed by Facebook with 91.76 percent. Twitter came third at 78.33 percent; Instagram also came in at number four with 65 percent and finally LinkedIn with 46.67 percent. Therefore, WhatsApp was the most common Social Media platform with the biggest impact on marital relationships in families.

In terms of distribution of Social Media visits among the couples in Kilimani Division, the findings indicated that most of them visited WhatsApp more frequently than other SMNs to check messages, within a day. This was followed closely by Facebook and Twitter. The results indicated that more than 65 percent of the female population visited the Social Media platforms at least ten times in a day. Only 50 percent of the men visited the Social Media sites at least ten times in a day. This was aligned with the findings that more women were spending much more time on Social Media platforms compared to their male counterparts. The study also sought to determine the time spent on Social Media by the respondents, the findings indicated that 65 percent of the participants spent more than 30 minutes of their time on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in a typical day. The women spent more time by 22 percent compared to the male counterparts in the top three social media platforms.

The study also sought to determine the use of Social Media and how this was beneficial to their relationships. The findings indicated that 44 percent of the respondents used social media to catch up with their families and friends; this was followed with 40 percent for entertainment purposes. 16 percent of the respondents used Social Media for business purposes where they were able to reach out to their customers more conveniently.

The declaration of the marital statuses of the married couples was also a factor studied in this research. The findings pointed to the fact that several married respondents declared their marital status on the various Social Media platforms. The findings revealed that majority of the female respondents at 65 percent declared their marital status online while only 45 percent of the men declared their status on the online SM platforms. The findings further indicated that more than 50 percent of the youthful couples indicated that they were married while others retained single status despite being married.

4.4 Marital problems arising from the use of Social Media by married couples in Kilimani

Social Media was seen to have an adverse effect on the comfort of the youthful married couples. This study sought an opinion of the various respondents on whether they were comfortable with chatting with their spouses in the various Social Media Networking sites. The findings obtained from the study are as shown in the table below:

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	16	26.67%
Disagree	11	18.3%
Agree	25	41.67%
Strongly Agree	8	13.33%
Total	60	100%

Table 4.7: Social Media comfort

The findings indicated that 26.67 percent strongly agreed, 18.3 percent disagreed while 41.67 percent agreed to the argument of discomfort in chatting with their spouses on Social Media. Further, 8 respondents representing 13.33 percent strongly agreed with this argument an indication that Social Media had adversely affected their marriages by causing discomfort amongst them even when it came to communicating with each other, where they would rather be chatting with other people.

The research also studied the feelings of loneliness as an implication of the use of Social Media platforms. The findings indicated that Social Media had exacerbated the feeling of loneliness in many relationships in Kilimani Area. The findings are as indicated in the table below:

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	15	25
Disagree	9	15
Agree	24	40
Strongly Agree	12	20
Total	60	100

Table 4.8: Felling of loneliness in marriage

The findings as indicated in the table above showed that 25 percent strongly disagreed and 15 percent disagreed respectively. However, 40 percent agreed with the other 20 percent strongly agreeing with the issue of the feeling of loneliness in marriage occurring as a result of Social Media consumption. The 20% difference between those in agreement and those disagreeing with the question of loneliness in marriage, was a product of Social Media consumption amongst the married couples, which proved that most of them were bothered by their spouse’s use of Social Media.

Demographics on feeling lonely in marriage cross tabulation						Chi square	df	p
		Feeling lonely in marriage					3	0.00
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree			
Gender	Male	16	4	0	0	48.54		
	Female	0	7	25	8			
Total		16	11	25	8			
Age	21-25	2	5	25	8	45.37	6	0.00
	31-35	9	6	0	0			
	36-40	5	0	0	0			
Total		16	11	25	8			
Religion	Christian	16	11	13	0	31.92	3	0.00
	Muslim	0	0	12	8			
Total		16	11	25	8			
Education Level	College/University	16	11	19	0	59.65	6	0.00
	High School	0	0	1	8			
	Primary School	0	0	5	0			
Total		16	11	25	8			
Years of Marriage	1-5 years	16	11	12	0	65.76	6	0.00
	5-10 years	0	0	11	0			
	Above 10 Years	0	0	2	8			
Total		16	11	25	8			

Table 4.8.1: Demographics on feeling lonely in marriage cross-tabulation

From the results above, there was a significant relationship between gender and loneliness in marriage as a product of Social Media consumption. The chi square calculated value ($\chi^2 = 48.54$) was greater than the critical value (2.35). Further the p value (0.00) was less than 5% therefore confirming the relationship to be significant. Majority of the respondents who indicated to be lonely were females (25)

There was a significant relationship between age and loneliness in marriage as a product of Social Media consumption and the largest age group experiencing loneliness as a result of their partners' usage of the Social Media Networking sites were between 21 and 25 years. The chi square calculated value ($\chi^2 = 45.37$) was greater than the critical value (1.94). Further the p value (0.000) was less than 5% therefore confirming the relationship to be significant.

There was a significant relationship between religion and loneliness in marriage as a product of Social Media consumption. A very interesting observation made in this

study was the level at which the Muslims were lonely as compared to the Christians. The chi square calculated value ($\chi^2 = 31.92$) was greater than the critical value (2.35). Further the p value (0.00) was less than 5% therefore confirming the relationship to be significant.

Education and years of marriage also indicated a very significant relationship with loneliness in marriage as a product of Social Media consumption. Those who had reached college and universities registered high levels of loneliness. In both cases the chi square calculated value ($\chi^2 = 59.65, 65.76$) were greater than the critical value (1.94). Further the p values (0.00) were less than 5% therefore confirming the relationship to be significant.

Social Media use was also seen to have contributed to increased feelings of suspicion amongst the youthful married couples. The questionnaire sought to determine the usage of Social Media and how this made the young couples feel suspicious of each other. The findings from the study were captured in the table 4.7 below:

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	24	40
Disagree	10	16.67
Agree	20	33.33
Strongly Agree	6	10
Total	60	100

Table 4.9: Feelings of Suspicion

Then findings showed that 40 percent and 16.67 percent of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. This means that a majority representing a total of 57 percent were in disagreement while 33 percent and 10 percent agreed and strongly agreed respectively. This reflects the various findings indicating that the use of Social Media has directly exacerbated issues to do with trust in many of the marriages of the young couples interviewed.

The study found out that the more the respondents used Social Media the more they felt distant or suspicious about their spouses engaging in extra marital affairs. This was in line with the findings by *Nitzburg and Farber (2013)* who had revealed that Social Media has contributed to increased levels of distrust among married couples. The time spent on these Social Media platforms also contributed to the continued decline in communication amongst the young married people.

Social Media use was also linked to contributing towards the young couples being exposed to the increased feelings of jealousy towards their partners. This was seen to compel them towards investigating their partners seeking more information on their Social Media activities.

Demographics on Feelings of Suspicion						Chi square	df	p
		Feelings of Suspicion					3	0.00
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree			
Gender	Male	15	5	0	0	50.00		
	Female	0	4	24	12			
Total		15	9	24	12			
Age	21-25	2	2	24	12	53.91	6	0.00
	31-35	8	7	0	0			
	36-40	5	0	0	0			
Total		15	9	24	12			
Religion	Christian	15	9	16	0	36.00	3	0.00
	Muslim	0	0	8	12			
Total		15	9	24	12			
Education Level	College/University	15	9	22	0	53.6	6	0.00
	High School	0	0	0	9			
	Primary School	0	0	2	3			
Total		15	9	24	12			
Years of Marriage	1-5 years	15	9	15	0	61.57	6	0.00
	5-10 years	0	0	9	2			
	Above 10 Years	0	0	0	10			
Total		15	9	24	12			

Table 4.9.1: Demographics on feeling of suspicion

From the results above, there was a significant relationship between all the demographics and the increased feelings of suspicion among the youthful middle-class couples in Kilimani area as a result of Social Media consumption. All the demographics had chi square calculated values ($\chi^2 = 50.00, 53.91, 36.00, 53.6$ and 61.57) greater than the critical value (2.35 and 1.94). Further all the p values (0.00) were less than 5% therefore confirming the relationships to be significant. In terms of gender, females were seen to be the majority when it came to having suspicions of their male partners engaging in extra-marital affairs when they were engaging with others through their Social Media Networking sites.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the influence of Social Media usage on marital relationships among young couples in Kilimani area, Nairobi County. Assessing the prevalence, it was evident that majority of the youthful married couples used Social Media actively in their daily lives. WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter were the most commonly used Social Media sites with WhatsApp recording 100 percent of users from the respondents. In terms of gender, more women visited Social Media sites compared to the men by 22 percent. 70 percent of these women spent more than 30 minutes of their time everyday visiting the various Social Media Sites an indication of the impact of these platforms in their lives compared to only 45 percent of the men.

In terms of gender, 70% of female respondents visited the various Social Media platforms at least four times or more compared to their male counterparts of who had 45% visitation rate. In addition, about 70 percent of the female respondents were found to be spending more than 30 minutes of their time on Social Media for every visit each day in comparison to 45 percent of the men an indication that the women were the highest consumers of Social Media.

In terms of the purpose for visiting the various Social Media sites, it was evident that most of the respondents visited Social Media to catch up with family and friends and also for entertainment purposes. A small percentage however, used Social Media for business purposes. The findings indicated that 44 percent of the respondents used Social Media to catch up with their families and friends; this was followed by 40 percent for entertainment purposes. Additionally, 16 percent of the respondents were found to be using Social Media for business purposes where they were able to conveniently reach out to their customers.

On the issue of marital problems, there was a notable problem amongst most of the couples where they felt that Social Media had contributed to strains in their marriages. There was a close relationship between the use of Social Media and increased feelings of suspicion and jealousy among couples with others adding that their partners using

of the Social Media Networking sites made them feel more lonely in their relationship. More than 50 percent felt that they had developed feelings of suspicion and sometimes they went to the extent of investigating their spouses whenever they felt they needed more information. The findings further indicated that majority of the respondents agreed with the findings that the use of Social Media had adversely affected the success and stability of their marriages and they felt that the use of the SMNs needed to be regulated to help them improve on some of the aspects of their marriages that had deteriorated due to the uncontrolled use of Social Media such as less communication was being experienced and partners who were actively engaged in the use of these platforms also spent lesser time with their spouses.

5.2 Discussion

Following this research where I was able to discover that Christians were the biggest Social Media consumers in the country followed by the Muslims, Christians were seen to represent 66.67 percent of the users while the Muslims represented 25%, other religion represented only 8.33 percent. This agreed with the findings by *SIMELab in 2019* and went to show the degree to which Social Media consumption was also present in the major religions and thus also showed the way in which it was seen to be having an influence in the marital relationships of the followers of these religions either in a positive or negative capacity which was in line with the topic of this research. The study also agreed with the Kenya Census report which indicated that Christianity was the most popular religion in the country and as was illustrated in this study as a result of the huge representation the Christians were found to be the highest consumers of Social Media and were also in turn the most influenced in their marital relationships as a result of their use, they were then followed by the Muslims who are the second most popular religion in the country.

With many of the Social Media Networking sites users spending a lot of their time on these platforms and less with their significant others in the case of the young married couples as seen through this study, this was bound to have a negative influence on their marital relationships for example through causing discomfort, distrust and less communication amongst the youthfull couples as was revealed. This was in line with the study conducted by by *Valenzuela, Sebastián, Daniel Halpern, and James E.Katzb (2014)*. showed that there was a connection between spousal problems as mentioned here which was also connected to the rate of divorce in the United States. Though this

study did not concentrate on the rates of divorce in the country as a result of Social Media consumption, this was a red flag as seen from the study conducted by the mentioned researchers as a result of the use of the Social Media Networking sites.

This study also showed that there were increased feelings of distrust and suspicion amongst the youthful middle-class couples as a result of Social Media use, this meant that they were suspicious of their partners having online relationships and this agrees with a report published by an online newspaper “Daily mail.com” In 2010, where it revealed that most cheating among married couples, as was reported by 80 percent of divorce lawyers, was due to the use of Social Media with Facebook being responsible for one out of every five divorces. (*Gardner, 2010*). This goes to show how the use of Social Media was influencing or fuelling negative behaviours in marital relationships as was revealed in this study.

The use of Social Media was also seen to improve upon communication between the youthful couples, where, as was seen through this study they said that they used the platforms to help them stay in touch with their loved ones and to stay in constant communication which according to the young couples helped them feel closer to each other, this went in line with a study conducted by *Princeton Survey Research Associates International* in 2013, where the study showed that due to the use of technology, it was more likely that young adults would report feeling closer to their spouse or partner. In this case, 41% of 18 – 24 in committed relationships reported feeling closer to their due to communicating through the online platforms or from the use of text messages to stay in touch. At the same time, 23% of 18-29 year olds in committed relationships said that they were able to resolving arguments that could not be agreed upon personally, through the use of online medium. This showed how Social Media when used in the right manner by people in marital relationships could help build stronger bonds between them and even strengthen their marriages.

5.3 Implications

Social Media use was found to be common among the youthful married individuals within Kilimani area, with WhatsApp and Facebook being the most popular Social Media Network sites and were the most frequently used compared to others. There

were clear cut gender differences that were seen in terms of the use of Social Media amongst the young married couples. More females were seen to be visiting the Social Media Sites compared with the men with the women also spending more time averagely. However, it was notable that both genders actively visited the various Social Media sites spending at least 20 minutes navigating through the sites during each visit. The impact of spending this amount of time on Social Media was that it reduced the quantity and quality of time that the married individuals and their families spent with each other, which, as has been seen through this study was causing strains in their marriages.

The research revealed that the use of Social Media was closely associated with several marital problems. It was found out for instance that, the more the time the married couples spent on the Social Media platforms the more this resulted into feelings of jealousy, uneasiness and suspicion among them. It was also seen that, the more time the married couples spent on Social Media, the more their partners felt lonely and emotionally distant further affecting their marriages. As a result of the aforementioned issues trust which is a key pillar of marital success was eroded as distrust and anxiety started creeping into their marriages. This was discovered to be very common amongst the young couples who have only been in marriage for a few years. From the study, there was no defined impact of Social Media on either marital success or failure but there was a defined impact on marital stability. This all depends on the level of marital adjustment of the married individuals. Well-adjusted couples tend to agree on matters of demonstration of affection, friends, sexual relations, proper conduct and the manner in which they wish to conduct their life. This implies that compatibility and flexibility between the couples is paramount for their stability and also for their happiness.

It was also evident that a close relationship exists between marital stability and several other elements designed to ensure a sound relationship among couples in a home. The marital stability in marriage continues to improve when the people feel respected, cared for, share time and are also shown love. When Social Media takes up this space, it can have potentially negative implications on the couples and this may result in conflicts among the married people. Depending on the degree to which these strategies are practiced, Social Media may either enhance the success of the marriage or may precipitate its destruction.

5.4 Conclusions

Conclusively, it can be argued that Social Media will be here for years and couples have to adjust and learn how to cope with it in regards to how it influences their marital relationships. The prevalence of Social Media use among the young married couples is a clear testimony of this fact. It's however evident that it has its advantages and disadvantages hence the married couples must come into terms with these two aspects in an effort to protect their marriages from the negative impacts that the use of these platforms may have on their relationships, and instead use it as a platform that allows them to build their marriages for example through using Social Media for easier communication with each other. Social Media as seen through this study and others that have been conducted before, on one side acts as a catalyst, enhancing the marital success of those who are well adjusted in their marriage and those who adopt sound relationship strategies for the stability and success of their marriages. It can be seen that for those that have come to adjust themselves for example through strategies such as limiting the time that they spend on the platforms or using On the other hand, it is notable that Social Media can result into the escalation of the failed marriages especially those not built on trust and commitment. The young couples should be very vigilant of the behaviours associated with Social Media that may erode trust and arouse jealousy and suspicion in their partners. A common understanding of proper conduct should be fostered with respect to matters of recreation, demonstration of affection, friends and sex relations as they relate to each other's use of Social Media. In addition, unless separated by distance, married individuals should not spend time on Social Media at the expense of quality time with their spouse.

5.5 Recommendations

The study explored two critical areas of the study that other researchers can delve into in the future. This study should be conducted covering a large geographical area such that the findings can cover a larger more diverse population unlike the current situation. Groups such as the lower income earners who are married, those engaged in relationships looking forward to marriage amongst other diverse groups should be

studied in order to have a wider perspective on how Social Media usage is influencing marriages and also people's attitude towards marriage. This will help to confirm or refute the current findings from this study. This study would control various factors but majorly the age, gender, level of education and also the personality of the population. The aim would be determination of whether these factors have an impact on the stability of the marriages and also the relationship with Social Media.

Another area that I would recommend other researchers to focus on is the impact of Social Media on the success of the various long distance marriages. Aspects such as how the use of Social Media Networking sites amongst married couples who are engaged in long-distance relationships should be looked at so as to establish whether this is leading to better relations amongst them or it is leading to them falling apart given that this is one of the most convenient and affordable means of communication for couples in this type of marriages. This will help shed more light on the key success factors for managing long distance relationships also considering the fact that this subject was outside the scope of this study.

After conducting this study, I would also recommend that couples involved in marriage should come up with resolutions on how to use Social Media for example on the time when they should be engaging in it, for what purposes and mainly purposes concentrating on those that help in building their relationship such as constant communication and also easier communication, whether to avoid the use of these platforms if they view them as causing constraints in their marriages amongst other resolutions. It is through this kind of resolutions that the use of Social Media will help in influencing marriages in a positive manner while at the same time reducing the negative impacts that the platforms may be having on marriages.

I would also recommend that the Government come up with strategies that ensure that the use of Social Media is in such a way that it is not having a negative effect on families in this case marriages. This is because it is through marriages that families are formed and if marriages are affected. This would mean that there will be many broken homes and as a result we may end up having weak societies that lack stable families that are the driving force of a strong society. Where controls are not effected this may mean that there will be more divorces, addiction to Social Media amongst other disadvantages that may occur as a result of the use of SMNs. This may lead to a

deterioration in how productive the society is for example where people are addicted and are as a result less productive, this may mean less development for the country. Here the Government may be forced at this time to form commissions or taskforces that will curb or look into how the use of the SM may be controlled to curb the crisis that may be present at that time. This can however be avoided where the Government educates people on the importance of controlling their use of Social Media.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

The answers given will be used for academic purposes alone.

Please answer all the questions in this section.

You are free to ask any questions or seek clarification where necessary.

Please respond to the questions as best as you can.

Instructions: This section will ask questions about you. Put a tick where appropriate

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1) The person filling the questionnaire

Husband • Wife • Both •

2) Please indicate your age

<20 years •
21 - 25 years •
26 – 30 years •
31 –35 years •
36 – 40 years •
40 ears > •

3) Gender

Male • Female •

4) Marital Status: Please put tick in appropriate column

Married • Cohabiting •

5) What is your highest level of education?

No formal education • Primary •

Secondary • Middle level college •

University •

Other (specify) _____

6) What is your religion?

Catholic •

Muslim •

Atheist •

Protestant •

Hindu •

Other (specify) _____

7) What is the nature of your occupation?

Formal employment •

Informal employment •

Unemployed •

Others (specify) _____

8) How old were you when you got married?

<20 years •

21 - 25 years •

26 – 30 years •

31 –35 years •

36 – 40 years •

40 years > •

9) How old was your partner when you got married?

<20 years •

21 - 25 years •

26 – 30 years •

31 –35 years •

36 – 40 years •

40 years > •

10) How long have you lived /dated with your current partner?

- 0-5 years • 6-10 years • 11-15 years •
16-20 years • 20 years > •

11) Which of the following best describes your type of marriage? (Please tick one only)

- Customary marriage •
Christian marriage •
Civil marriage •
Islamic marriage •
Hindu marriage •
Common law (cohabiting) •

12) How many children do you have with your current partner?

- 1-2 • 3-4 • 5-6 •
7> • none •

SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

13) Do you use any of the following Social Media Networking sites? (Please tick all that apply):

- Facebook • Flickr •
Friendster • WhatsApp •
Google+ • Twitter •
Instagram • LinkedIn •
Myspace • Bebo •

Other (Please specify) _____

14) Which of the Social Media sites in (12) do you use most often? (Please tick ONE only)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| Facebook • | WhatsApp • |
| Twitter • | LinkedIn • |
| Bebo • | Flickr • |
| Friendster • | Google+ • |
| Instagram • | Myspace • |

Other (Please specify) _____

15) How often do you visit Social Media Networking sites?

- Daily •
- Weekly •
- Monthly •
- Occasionally •

16) How frequent do you visit Social Networking Sites in a day?

- Once a day •
- Twice a day •
- Thrice a day •
- Four times > •

17) On average, how much time do you spend on Social Media per visit?

- Less than 5 minutes •
- 5 to 15 minutes •
- 16 to 30 minutes •
- 30 minutes > •

18) What time of day do you usually visit Social Media sites?

- Any time •
- Mostly in the morning •
- Mostly in the afternoon •
- Mostly in the evening •
- Mostly at night •

19) While at which place do you most usually visit Social Media?

- While at home •
- While at school •
- While at work •
- While away from home •

SECTION C: SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

20) What do you mostly use Social Networking Sites for? (Please tick and indicate according to rank)

- | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|
| To connect with old friends | • | To make new friends | • |
| For entertainment | • | To share with friends | • |
| For education purposes | • | To get news | • |
| To stay insync with current happenings | • | To catch up with family | • |

21) Do you usually post, or have you ever posted any romantic information such as special moments with your spouse or friend on the Social Media Networks?

- Yes, with spouse • Yes, but not with spouse • No •

22) What was the kind of feedback that you mostly received from other Social Media users? (Please explain)

23) Was the feedback what you expected?

- Yes • No •

24) Did the feedback influence your behaviour towards your spouse? Yes • No •
(Please explain how)

25) Have you declared your status in your profile as married?

- Yes • No •

26) Has your spouse ever sent you a friend request on social media?

- Yes • No •

27) If Yes, to Q25, what was your immediate reaction?

- I was excited about it and accepted immediately •
- I hesitated for a while but eventually accepted all the same •
- I have neither accepted nor declined to date •
- I declined the friend request as I didn't like the idea •

28) Have you ever checked, or felt the need to check on your spouse's Social Network to know whom s/he is friends with?

Yes • No •

29) What do you usually or most commonly post on Social Media? (Please specify)

30) Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure
I often feel comfortable with whatever my spouse is doing on Social Media					
My spouse's usage of Social Media makes me feel uneasy and suspicious					
Generally, my spouse's use of Social Media is straining our marriage					
I often feel jealous whenever my spouse is chatting on Social Media with friends of the opposite sex					
I don't care whatever my spouse does on Social Media					

31) Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:
I use Social Media Networks for;

	Always agree	Almost always agree	Occasionally disagree	Frequently disagree	Almost always disagree	Always disagree	Not sure
Matters of recreation							
Demonstration of affection							
Friends							
Sex relations							
Conventionality (right, good or proper conduct)							
Philosophy of life							

32) Do you ever wish you had not married, with your decision based on the influence that Social Media Networks have had on your marriage?

- Frequently •
- Occasionally •
- Rarely •
- Never •

33) Generally, please rate your level of satisfaction with your marriage given how Social Media Networks use has influenced it;

- Very happy •
- Somewhat happy •
- Rarely happy •
- Never happy •

34) In your view, does the use of Social Media influence the level of communication in your marriage?

- Strongly disagree •
- Disagree •
- Strongly agree •
- Agree •

35) Have you taken any measures on the use of Social Media Networks in regards to your marriage and the influence that they have on it?

- Yes •
- No •

36) What measures, if any have you taken? (Please explain)

37) In your view, is Social Media enhancing marriages or destroying them? Please explain?

****THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION****