

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND  
COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENTS IN TANZANIA**

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undergraduate students in Tanzania**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university

Signature..... Date.....

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my lovely wife Lucy Wanja Ikachoi, my sons Jeff Ikachoi and Rodney Oyaa. I also dedicate it to my parents Rev. Walter Esiromo and Mrs Christine Cherop Esiromo and my sister Emma Esiromo. Their encouragement was highly respected and valued. May God bless them all.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

- FGD** Focus Group Discussion
- PhD** Doctor of Philosophy
- TCU** Tanzania Commission of Universities
- SET** Science Education and Technology
- ICT** Information Communication Technology
- BBC** British Broadcasting Corporation
- CCM** Chama Cha Mapinduzi
- SNS** Social networking site
- NCR** Norton Cyber crime Report
- SECASA** South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault
- AAUW** American Association of University Women
- TCRA** Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority
- USA** United States of America
- SAUT** St. Augustine University of Tanzania
- UNDP** United Nations Development Programme
- R** Respondent (R1, R2 means Respondent 1, 2, and so forth)
- Q** Question
- IBM** International Business Machines
- SSPRA** SAUT Students Public Relations Association

**AIESEC** Association internationale des étudiants en sciences économiques et  
commerciales. In English it means International Association of Students in  
Economic and Commercial Sciences

**BSc** Bachelor of Science

**BA** Bachelor of Arts

**BEd** Bachelor of Education

**BMI** Body Mass Index

**EMC** Electronic Mediated Communication

**CMC** Computer Mediated Communication

**UoN** University of Nairobi

**JKUAT** Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following were key terms used in the study;

**Social media:** In this study, social media referred to various forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content including videos (Berkman, 2013).

However, for the sake of this study, social media, social media sites and social networking sites popularly known as SNS were synonymous.

**Undergraduate students:** In this study this term specifically referred to all students who are pursuing Bachelors programmes in different fields and not diploma or certificate levels.

**Self-esteem:** According to Drussell (2012), self-esteem is an attitude about oneself that varies as either positive or negative within a period of time depending on various factors. A person's self-esteem is typically based on whether he or she perceives oneself as successful, a good person, smart, and so on. In this study, a person may experience either a negative or positive self-esteem at any specific time or period as a result of various factors such as social media, family background, peers among others. Self-esteem may fluctuate depending on the circumstances or factors that influence it. Self-concept is a general collection of beliefs or information about one's own nature, unique qualities, and typical behavior. In essence, self-concept is more static and does not fluctuate rapidly as self-esteem since it is more of a fixed perception about oneself. For example, one can perceive himself as not intelligent (negative self-concept) or very intelligent (positive self-concept). However, for specific purposes of this study, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-

concept will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing. Also, the terms positive self-esteem was synonymous with high self-esteem whereas negative self-esteem and low self-esteem were synonymous.

**Communication skills:** In this study, this is the ability by the sender to convey information to a receiver effectively and efficiently with a common understanding or/ and transfer of meaning taking place between them (Whalstrom,1992). In this case, one is considered to have effective communication skills when he or she is competent in both written, spoken communication, and reading and can listen effectively. The terms communication skills and communication competence will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

**Non-verbal communication:** These included all forms of communication that does not involve speech. These include body posture, body gestures, facial expressions or pauses among others (Whalstrom, 1992).

**Emoji:** These were symbols used on social media platforms to represent actual words. They can be in form of hands, fingers and different facial expressions among others (White, 2014).

**Android:** In the context of the study, this term referred to an operating system that is in mobile phones that allows access to the internet and other social media sites with ease (Grahl, 2014) .

**Profile:** In the context of this study, this term referred to any personal detail or information that a social media user willingly intends to reveal to other online users (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003).

**Mediating variable:** In the context of this study, this term referred to a variable that plays a role between two independent and dependent variables and may in one or more ways determine the balance between

them or influence and/or control the relationship between these variables (Creswell, 2009).

**Moderating variable:** In this study, it referred to a variable that influences the relation between two other variables and produces an interaction effect (Creswell, 2009).

**Social class:** In this study, this term referred to a group of people, in this case undergraduate students who share certain characteristics such as wealth possessions, a certain amount of expenditure and are from a certain type of housing (Emler, 2001).

**Slang:** In the context of this study, this term (also referred to as *sheng*) referred to a kind of language where one mixes some Kiswahili, English and other languages to communicate among a certain group of people, usually colleagues who understand the terms and language used but not easily understood by an outsider (Walther, 1996). It is commonly used by youth in urban areas. The terms *sheng* and *slang* had a similar meaning.

**Communication apprehension:** This referred to one's inability to communicate competently in written and/or spoken form (Seiler, 1996).

**Downward comparison:** In this study, this term referred to a situation where an individual compares himself or herself with other people that he or she perceives as inferior to them in many aspects but not limited to economic, political, and social among others (Seiler, 1996).

**Upward comparison:** This referred to a situation where an individual compares himself or herself with other people that he or she perceives as superior to them in many aspects but not limited to social, political or economic among others (Gummow, 2014).

- Status update:** This referred to a situation where social media users insert or place new pictures or new information concerning themselves so that other colleagues connected to the particular social network site can be aware (Mehdizadeh, 2010).
- Face book:** In this study, this is referred to as a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues (Carpenter, 2012).
- LinkedIn:** In this study, LinkedIn was defined as a social networking website geared towards companies and industry professionals aiming to make new business contacts or keep in touch with previous co-workers, affiliates and/or clients (White, 2014).
- Information Communication Technologies-** Popularly known as *ICTs* was defined as a broad based technology including its methods, management and application that supports the creation, storage, manipulation and communication of information. In this study, social media and various social networking sites are all forms of *ICTs* (Carpenter, 2012).
- Cybercrime:** This term was defined as a situation where an individual uses a communication technological device such as computers, I pads, and internet enabled mobile phones among other devices to commit crimes or any other unlawful act through the internet within a specific territory (Baerendsen, 2015).
- Cyber bullying:** Involved using communication devices that host SNS to harass, intimidate, threaten or harm others to a point that they feel unworthy and are psychologically affected (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010).

- Youth:** For the purpose of this study, youth referred to men and women aged between 18-25years old and are already enrolled at various undergraduate programmes at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza Campus. It is a period between adolescence and maturity (UNDP, 2014).
- Social self-esteem:** This referred to a situation where one's self- esteem is determined, directed or guided as a result of belonging to or being associated to a specific group (Ito, Okabe, & Matsuda, 2008).
- Ujamaa:** This was a Kiswahili term which refers to a sense of communal participation in all tasks and decision making and sharing the benefits accrued from it. In this scenario, nothing is done individually. All citizens are considered equal regardless of their social, political or economic status (Wangwe, 2005).
- Narcissism:** This referred to an excessive interest in or admiration of oneself and one's physical appearance. In this study, an undergraduate student one is considered to be a narcissist or engage in narcissism when he or she is pre-occupied with the self either physically, psychologically or in any other way that he or she reflects selfishness and does not care about others (Mehdizadeh, 2010).
- Social capital:** In this study, social capital referred to a situation where a person obtains benefits that accrue due to his or her social relationships and interactions. These include but not limited to emotional support, exposure to diverse ideas, and access to non-redundant information (Bessiere, Kiesler, Kraut, & Bonera, 2008).
- Flickr:** This referred to a website that allows users to take photographs and videos of their friends and other images that

will aid them in interaction via social networking sites (Counts & Fellheimer, 2009).

**Instagram:** This is a free online photo sharing and social network platform that was acquired by Face book. Instagram allows members users to upload, edit and share photos with other members through the Instagram website, email, and other social media sites (Counts & Fellheimer, 2009).

**Like(s):** In the context of this study, this term referred to a situation where online users click an icon of a social media page of another individual posts indicated “like”. Thus, if a user clicks on this icon it means that he or she appreciates the post and supports it whether information, comments about an issue or a picture. The more “likes” means the post is appreciated by more people and if there are no or fewer “likes” it means that the post is either not appreciated or has fewer appreciations (Carpenter, 2012).

**Body Mass Index:** This is defined as a person’s weight divided by a square of the person’s height. It serves as a measure of leanness. Thus, a high score represents a less lean body that is not desired, whereas a low score represents a more lean body that is desired (Mehdizadeh, 2010).

## ABSTRACT

Social media is an indispensable tool used by undergraduate students. Previous research has shown that in spite of its role in facilitating communication in a convenient way, use of social media adversely influences the communication skills of undergraduate students. The study sought to establish the relationship between social media use and communication skills of undergraduate students in Tanzania.

A total of 503 respondents in the quantitative phase were identified and for qualitative study, purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to identify 39 as respondents in FGDs, yielding to 542 respondents as the target population. To collect data, self-administered questionnaires and focus group guides were used.

Findings revealed that undergraduate students largely preferred WhatsApp and Facebook compared to other social media sites. Social media use does not have a significant relationship to self-esteem of users although it influences their communication skills. Demographic characteristics are not significant moderators between self-esteem and communication skills. Self-esteem does not play a significant role of mediating between social media and communication skills. However, self-esteem of social media users influenced their communication skills. There is need to engage relevant stakeholders to guide students on appropriate use of social media so as to minimize its adverse effects. Also, there is need to implement strategies to address cyberbullying. The research also recommends that further studies should be done to establish if there is a link between use of social media and gender, also the link between stability of self-esteem and cognitive biases. Similar studies should be replicated in other countries to determine if it will yield similar results.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Over the past decade, social media has become popular all over the world with more people using it to communicate to their friends, relatives, colleagues and business partners among others (Berkman, 2013). Social media continues to play an increasingly important part of many peoples' lives, also, it has become of age and continued to evolve with new applications and uses (Berkman, 2013). Social media are irresistible and is applicable on our phones, laptops, I pads among other gadgets (Smith-Duff, 2012). The curiosity into other people's personal and social lives has created a massive social gathering on the World Wide Web with some people having concern about their self-esteem (Smith-Duff, 2012). This in turn, implies that use of social media may directly or indirectly, through self-esteem, influence their communication skills (Chasombat, 2014).

The youth construct their identity by carefully trying to understand their personality and focusing on how they present themselves to others (Sundar, 2008). However, due to social media, there seems to be multiple identities notably from that portrayed on social media and the authentic one that one was born with (Sundar, 2008). Social media users are often exposed to details about their peers' lives that were not actively sought out (Zuo, 2014). The exposure to other people's social activities can lead to social media users comparing their own social lives with that of their peers online which can either have beneficial or harmful effects (Zuo, 2014). Toma, Hancock and Ellison (2013b) found that social media profiles such as Facebook help to satisfy individuals' need for self-esteem with people focusing on their Facebook profiles after receiving a blow to their egos. Social media can be beneficial for youth with low self-esteem by helping their social capital, gaining acceptance from others and adapt to a new culture, especially within a university context, and in some cases enhance subjective well-being (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Kim & Lee, 2011; Yu, Tian, & Chi-wai, 2010). People who use social media such as Facebook, may experience a sense of belonging and social support from others as they compare

themselves to others (Kim & Lee, 2011; Liu & Yu, 2013). Social media can be effectively used to represent selective and, therefore, positively biased aspects of the self, which might raise self-esteem of users (Heine, Takemoto, Moskalkenko, Lasaleta, & Heinrich, 2008).

The use of social media may, in some cases, have a beneficial effect on youth by enhancing communication, increasing their social connection and boost their technical skills (Walther, 1996). Social networking sites offer multiple daily opportunities to connect with friends and share common interests, with Facebook having the ability to stimulate online socialization, which supports self-esteem and various forms of social capital (Amato, Cecchi, Liccardi, Pellegrino, Amato, & Sofia, 2012). Facebook enhances social self-esteem especially when users receive positive feedback from online friends (Ito, Okabe, & Matsuda, 2008). Individuals with low self-esteem can improve their condition through social opportunities provided by social media sites (Valkenburg & Schouten, 2006). Selective self-presentation, which is made possible by social media, can have a positive influence on self-esteem, as shown in a recent study demonstrating that exposure to information presented on the user's Facebook profile enhances self-esteem, especially when the user edits information and pictures about his/herself or selectively self-presents (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007).

However, in spite of the significance of social media, youth who use social media for a longer period of time perceive that others were happier compared to them and that life was generally unfair (Chou & Edge, 2012). Social networking sites are designed to share information about the self with others, including likes and dislikes, hobbies, and personal thoughts (Amato, Cecchi, Liccardi, Pellegrino, Amato, & Sofia, 2012). This information could make people aware of their own limitations and shortcomings, which could lower self-esteem (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011).

Use of social media provides an opportunity for youth to connect with friends and the world around them as part of their daily ritual and what often begins as a harmless virtual habit for some can lead to a dangerous habit which can have adverse impact on their self-esteem and the way they perceive others (Gummow,

2014). Use of social media can give youth a false sense of belonging and connection that is not built on real-life exchanges, thus making it increasingly easy to lose oneself to cyberspace connections and give them more weight than they deserve (Gummow, 2014). When they entirely rely on social media, they end up comparing themselves to what they see which lowers their self-esteem since on social media, everyone's life appears impressive which may not necessarily be a reality (Gummow, 2014).

In essence, upward comparisons done by social media users online makes them feel unworthy, especially when they compare themselves with other who seem to be succeeding in various aspects of life (Gummow, 2014). Although videos and photos posted in a personal profile can only convey a face or appear unemotional, they can sometimes amplify the emotions linked to those images (Amato, Cecchi, Liccardi, Pellegrino, Amato, & Sofia, 2012). The lack of a physical or visual contact blocks the perception of reality and induces false or unreal convictions and distorted emotions (Amato, Cecchi, Liccardi, Pellegrino, Amato, & Sofia, 2012). Pomery, Gibbons and Stock (2012) argue that downward comparisons by social media users are due to their desire to improve self-esteem that is threatened. However, these comparisons are not free of other influences since it has been found that similarity has a bearing on whether or not an individual may compare himself or herself with another person (Pomery, Gibbons, & Stock, 2012). This is mainly because social media users prefer to compare themselves with others who are similar to them. The more an individual identifies with his/her upward comparison target on social media, the greater the negative effect of the comparison, however, the more an individual identifies with his or her downward comparison target, the greater the positive effect of the comparison (Pomery, Gibbons, & Stock, 2012).

Gibbons and Buunk (1999) revealed that people who are more self-conscious and who are highly self-reflective tend to make more social comparisons as they use social media. Higher comparers may have more empathy for others because they are better at visualizing situations from another person's perspective (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Furthermore, high comparers are more likely to experience more mood

swings, have lower self-esteem, and be more depressed than low comparers (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Individuals with low self-esteem make social comparisons to enhance themselves; however, this is done only when such comparisons have a low risk of humiliation (Wood, Giordano-Beech, Taylor, Michela, & Gaus, 1994).

Individuals with initially low self-esteem sought the most social comparisons after receiving feedback about their success (Wood, Giordano-Beech, Taylor, Michela, & Gaus, 1994). Secondly, individuals with initially high self-esteem sought the most comparisons after feedback about their failure (Wood, Giordano-Beech, Taylor, Michela, & Gaus, 1994). Thirdly, individuals with initially low self-esteem who succeeded sought the most comparisons, but only when the comparisons were favorable (Wood, Giordano-Beech, Taylor, Michela, & Gaus, 1994).

In essence, self-esteem and social comparison may be mediated by factors such as mood and perception of risk when making social comparisons (Wood, Giordano-Beech, Taylor, Michela, & Gaus, 1994).

According to Van Thompson (2014), Rajab and Atirah (2010) and Aslan, Erdel and Mustafa (2009), communication and self-esteem are strongly related and affect each other reciprocally. However, it is worth noting that use of social media can affect communication skills of youth directly or indirectly (Aslan, Erdel, & Mustafa, 2009). First, use of social media may affect communication skills directly especially when users engage online or by physical contact using unconventional grammar (or slang) that appears “acceptable” and “standard” especially among their peers and therefore reduces their ability to be conscious of the poor grammar they use either in written or spoken means (Drussell, 2012).

On the other hand, use of social media may affect communication skills indirectly through self-esteem where a user’s self-esteem is influenced negatively as a result of comparison with online colleagues who seem to be succeeding in various spheres of life compared to the respective person (Zuo, 2014). This leads to poor communication skills due to feelings of worthlessness and inferiority complex before others. However, in some cases, use of social media may boost self-esteem of a

person especially when he or she appears to be succeeding in various areas compared to online colleagues (Kim & Lee, 2011). According to Wahlstrom (1992), self-esteem is developed through communication. Self-knowledge is not something we are born with since we have to obtain it by observing ourselves and others' behavior with respect to us (Wahlstrom, 1992). When we interact with other people, we present ourselves to them and their responses to our messages either support or conflict with the self we have presented (Wahlstrom, 1992).

According to Seiler (1996), self-esteem is determined by our experiences and communication with others and our self-esteem affects everything we do, especially our communication with others. On the other hand, communication skills can also affect self-esteem in two ways, first, if a person is appreciated by colleagues as having communicated effectively, their self-esteem is boosted. However, if one is condemned or not appreciated by colleagues due to poor communication, the respective person may feel rejected and unworthy before others and therefore have a low self-esteem. This demonstrates the interrelated relationship between self-esteem and communication skills (Seiler, 1996).

Our self-esteem affect not only the way we feel about ourselves, the way we interpret messages, and our personal performance but also the way we deliver messages and treat other people (Pearson Education, 2009). People have a common style that is identifiable by the habitual ways in which they behave towards others (Pearson Education, 2009). The style we adopt helps others interpret our messages and understand us, other people begin to expect us to behave in a certain way, based on previous associations with us (Pearson Education, 2009). Our self-esteem act as filters in every interaction with others and it also determines how we approach, respond to, and interpret messages (Pearson Education, 2009). Also, self-esteem influences an individual's ability to be sensitive to others, his or her self-fulfilling prophecies, interpretation of messages, one's own social needs and communication style used (Pearson Education, 2009).

University students, most of who comprise youth and who have a high self-esteem, tend to have better communication skills since they are assertive and can effectively present their ideas and arguments in an academic setting (Van Thomson, 2014). In addition, they develop communication relationships easily, are assertive and are open-minded (Dumitriu & Tobolcea, 2010). In addition, they succeed in reaching their goals which consolidates their positive self image besides facing different social situations with confidence unlike those with low self-esteem (Dumitriu & Tobolcea, 2010).

When individuals feel confident in themselves, they feel accepted by others regardless of success or failure whereas, when individuals have a low self-esteem, their feeling of belonging is conditional based upon their success or failure which has a negative bearing on their communication skills (Baldwin, Baccus, & Fitzsimins, 2004). Furthermore, individuals with a low self-esteem appear to be more sensitive to rejection and sometimes perceive rejection where it does not exist thereby adversely affecting their ability to communicate effectively (Koch, 2002). Low self-esteem can undermine assertive communication which causes people who already struggle with their self-esteem to get fewer needs met, potentially lowering their self-esteem even more (Van Thompson, 2014). Youth can have their self-esteem improved or worsened by the messages they are given, and by what they decide those messages mean (South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, 2014).

People can improve their own self-esteem by learning better communication skills, and achieving personal goals that make them appreciate themselves (South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault 2014). In addition, one's self-esteem can be boosted when they receive compliments when they achieve certain things (South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, 2014). Communication messages influence a person's behavior and self-esteem, and also the behavior and self-esteem of others (South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, 2014). The way we communicate with others is important because that is how we let people know about us, what we believe in, what our values are, and how we feel (South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, 2014).

Social media use has transformed the way people communicate interpersonally around the globe (Chasombat, 2014). However, various scholars such as Turnbull (2010) and Chasombat (2014) have concluded that excessive use of social media leads to poor communication since one does not have time for personal and social interaction, hence leading to loneliness and isolation. According to Kuss and Griffiths (2011), youth, especially in universities, are highly engrossed in use of social media which they consider as their personal space and largely determines the way they communicate. This eradicates or reduces their relational and problem solving skills in real life situations and could resort to violence as a way of solving conflicts, thus demonstrating the effect of social media on communication skills (Wolak, *et al.*, 2003). However, use of social media can be used to develop online relationships that enable users to interact freely on a variety of issues (Chasombat, 2014). In addition, information flows freely regardless of distance thus creating an almost 'real' communication experience (Mishna, McLuckie, & Saini, 2009).

Originally, Internet services in Tanzania started in 1995 and five years later, in 2000, the country had only 115,000 people connected to the Internet and since then, the number has grown significantly reaching 9.3 million users in 2014 which is equivalent to 20% of the 45 million people in Tanzania which has grown by about 65 % within one year (Mtweve, 2014). By May 2013, statistics from the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) showed that there were six million Internet users out of the 45 million citizens who had access to the Internet on a daily basis that is at the penetration rate of 11.5 % of the population (Mtweve, 2014). It is due to the emergence of Internet-enabled mobile phones and lower bandwidth adaptations of applications, particularly social media, which is driving the rapid diffusion and growth of mobile internet usage in various sectors of economy (Mtweve, 2014).

An increase in Internet penetration from 5% in 2005 to 11% in June 2010 in Tanzania indicates a gradual increase in Internet usage (Nalwoga, n.d). This increase may be attributed to the proliferation of mobile phones in the country, which allows citizens to access mobile Internet anywhere (Nalwoga, n.d). Political activists, civil

society organizations and journalists are using the Internet to voice their concerns, and to reach a wide range of citizens (Nalwoga, n.d). Organizations like Article 19, the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) and *Daraja* (in Kiswahili means *bridge*) are using online platforms to urge citizens to hold the government accountable (Nalwoga, n.d).

Tanzania has grown in terms of quantity and quality of some indicators of freedom of expression namely in terms of media, associations, political parties, forums, demonstrations, and strikes among others (Ndumbaro, 2016). However, although the media industry is growing, the law has not been transformed to commensurate with the changing media environment since independence (Media Council of Tanzania, 2012). Freedom of the press in particular, has long been considered crucial to democracy, human rights and development because the news media provide a fundamental informational linkage between the government and the mass publics (Ndumbaro, 2016). From the perspective of media consumers, freedom of the media is understood as freedom to consume information or entertainment from any source without government restrictions (Ndumbaro, 2016).

Tanzania has seen an increase in online publishing (Nalwoga, n.d). Currently, politics in Tanzania dominates social networks and as such, new platforms have allowed people to divert their attention to online networking where people comment and express their views on an appropriate method of shaping the country's system of administration, as well as criticizing it (Joseph, 2012). However, there is limited freedom of expression and association with the Tanzanian Government being accused of blocking websites and blogs it perceives as a threat (Nalwoga, n.d).

One such website is JamiiForums.com, which has become a target for the Tanzanian Government (Jamii Forums, 2011). The website publishes and discusses topics ranging from politics and economics to social issues in Tanzania and beyond and on average, over 20,000 people visit the forums daily and spend at least seventeen minutes browsing at least eleven pages on (Jamii Forums, 2011). The membership registration increases at a rate of 25% every month and as at 2011, there were over 40,000 registered members which makes Jamii Forums one of the most popular and

vibrant websites in Tanzania (Jamii Forums, 2011). However, on a number of occasions, the forum has come under attack by the government over allegations that it was working to “undermine” the ruling party and the government (Jamii Forums, 2011). In April 2011, the forum’s hosts reacted with a press release reassuring their members that the government’s allegations were intended to threaten and deter the online community from exercising their freedom of speech and association (Jamii Forums, 2011). The forum’s hosts have on a number of occasions been interrogated by authorities over content that irked the government (Jamii Forums, 2011).

In a recent BBC article, it was reported that the Tanzanian Government is cloning the Jamii Forums website in an attempt to control content produced on that website (Allen, 2011). Although the government has not come out and admitted this new allegation, it was believed that it was attempting to institute a mechanism through which content on social media sites can be controlled or even censored, as seen in China (Allen, 2011).

This is evident in the proposed Information and Broadcasting Policy 2007, which requires all those wishing to establish blogs or websites to register with the registrar of companies and also get a license from the TCRA (Nalwoga, n.d). However, this policy has not been welcomed by media activists, who have proposed a number of recommendations including removal of the proposition on the internet, noting that the internet cannot be treated in the same manner as radio and television broadcasters (Nalwoga, n.d).

The elections in October 2010 won by President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete saw CCM’s popularity slide from 80.2% in the December 2005 elections to 61.2% of the vote and with this came a worrying intolerance for critical media both online and offline (Nalwoga, n.d). A number of journalists have been intimidated and harassed by government officials for questioning the government’s democratic credentials, while some political and social rallies and demonstrations have been repressed and so, to fight this new authoritarianism some Tanzanians, mainly opposition politicians have resorted to social media to express their views (Tungaraza, 2011). However, the

government has also been implicated in attempts to block websites and blogs whose content has been perceived as a threat (Tungaraza, 2011).

Internet access was mainly concentrated in urban areas due to lack of computers, electricity and network connectivity in rural areas where majority of Tanzanians live (Ndumbaro, 2016). However, the trend has now changed with the coming of mobile telephone companies providing both voice and data services which make internet access possible (Media Council of Tanzania, 2013) and as a result, the question of cyber crime is no longer new in Tanzania (Ndumbaro, 2016). Internet service providers are subject to the Electronic and Postal Communications Act (Act No. 3 of 2010), and its regulations as well as the new Cyber Crime Act, 2015 (Ndumbaro, 2016). However, Tanzanian courts are yet to address or provide direction as far as judgment is concerned in cases where the internet service provider or cyber operator is a mere conduit or common carrier of the information considered unlawful (Ndumbaro, 2016). On April 1, 2015, the Tanzanian parliament passed a cyber crime bill that attempts to address child pornography, cyber bullying, online impersonation, electronic production of racist and xenophobic content, unsolicited messages, illegal interception of communications, and publication of false information, all in one law (Baerendtsen, 2015).

During the same parliament session three other bills were presented too namely access to information, media services, and a statistics bill. However, the cyber crime bill is new, and caused debate instantly (Baerendtsen, 2015). As in many other countries, online fraud and financial scams indeed are a persistent threat in Tanzania, however, the bill covers much more than this and passed through parliament despite criticism from opposition politicians, social media practitioners and human rights activists (Baerendtsen, 2015). Leading opponents of the legislation mainly from civil society were agitated by these laws and threatened to sue the government if the president signs the bill into law (Baerendtsen, 2015).

The Tanzanian cyber law did not involve key stakeholders during the enactment process although it gained parliamentary support from both the ruling party and opposition members of parliament (Ndumbaro, 2016). The support is based on the arguments that the law guarantees protection against child pornography, incitement to commit suicide, racist materials, invasion of the privacy, illegal access, illegal interception, data interference, system interference, misuse of devices, forgery, fraud, offences related to child pornography, identity theft and other most serious crimes on social networks that are of global concern (Ndumbaro, 2016). According to supporters, the law is a sign that Tanzania is heading in the right direction, like her counterparts in western countries, thus, using the internet will be enjoyable and comfortable and problems associated with its use can be dealt with accordingly and all those who are responsible for misconduct will be punished as required (Ndumbaro, 2016). The other side of the argument comes forcefully and vigorously criticizes the laws for overstepping the boundary and being draconian as it covers much more than serving the legitimate purposes (Ndumbaro, 2016). It was unfortunate that parliament passed the law and the president assented to it despite criticism from social media practitioners and human rights activists (Ndumbaro, 2016).

The cybercrime law gives police jurisdiction to search homes of suspected violators of the law, seize their electronic hardware, and demand their data from online service providers (Legal & Human Rights Centre, 2015). Also, the state can equally intercept communication of an individual by making an application to the public prosecutor for authorization to intercept or to listen to any communication transmitted or received by any communications (Legal & Human Rights Centre, 2015). The public prosecutor has power to consider whether any communications is likely to contain any information, which is relevant for the purpose of any investigation into an offence before authorizing such access (Legal & Human Rights Centre, 2015). The major concern on powers given to police was vivid during the 2015 Presidential General Election where police searched and seized computers, cell phones and other electronic gadgets of opposition party and human rights organizations (Legal & Human Rights Centre, 2015) that were monitoring the election.

The Electronic and Postal Communication Act has 44 sections establishing different offences, which criminalize freedom of expression and create a harsh environment for one to enjoy the much-needed freedom of expression (Legal & Human Rights Centre, 2015). The law has outlawed the transmission of obscene communications but there is no clarity on what is obscene under the law and other statutes (Legal & Human Rights Centre, 2015). The other bad side of the law punishes anyone who uses a cyber network without authorization as it is spelt in section 124 of the Electronic and Postal Communications 2010 Act (Legal & Human Rights Centre, 2015). The challenge is, when an access is deemed to be authorized and when is deemed not to be authorized? In addition, who authorizes the access and in case of refusal of authorization what are the available legal remedies? According to Legal & Human Rights Centre (2015) and Ndumbaro (2015), the discretionary powers vested to the authority to allow or deny access without assigning any reasons and failure of the law to provide remedial measures is a hinderance to the benefits of freedom of expression

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Social media have immense contributions to the world of communication and therefore cannot be disputed (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Volkmer (1999) and Croteau and Hoynes (2003), these contributions include ease of communicating regardless of distance, faster movement of information and ability to access volumes of information faster among others. University students all over the world utilize social media when sharing a variety of issues they deem important (Council for Advancement and Support in Education, 2013). Van Thompson (2014) and Henderson (2012) argue that in spite of the benefits accrued by undergraduate students in the use of social media, there seems to be a negative effect on their communication skills which could partly be attributed to their self-esteem that plays a mediation role.

Before the advent of digital devices such as computers, mobile phones and Ipads among others, communication, especially among youth in higher leaning institutions, was more personal with effective communication between them and others in society

although there were other means of communicating such as telegrams, letters, telephones among others that did not have high interactive levels (Chasombat, 2014). However, with the introduction of social media sites in these devices, communication trends changed to a method of communication that does not require physical interaction (Drussell, 2012). The increased use of social media sites to communicate has reduced the ability of youth at undergraduate levels in universities to be sensitive to their grammatical expressions used on various platforms since the expressions in coded language or slang is “acceptable” and “valid” as long as the meaning is transferred between them (Drussell, 2012). This is because unlike academic settings that has instructors who evaluate language skills, there are no rules governing how one communicates online and as a result, their academic performance, which depends on effective written and spoken language is adversely affected.

In addition, due to spending more time online, their interpersonal abilities or face-to-face interactions are negatively affected since lots of individual time is spent on the screens of various gadgets. Wolak, Mitchell and Finkelhor (2003), Huang (2010) and Bessiere, Kiesler, Kraut and Bonera (2008) observe that engaging in some academic contexts that require public speaking skills or group discussions are severely affected and can lead to a decline in academic performance. A study was conducted by Pfeiffer (2014) on use of social media by adolescents in Dar es Salaam and Mtwara in Tanzania and findings revealed that they accessed reproductive and sexual health messages apart from other entertainment information. Another study was done by Jagero and Muriithi (2013) about the extent of social media use among private university students in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and it was revealed that students spend about 30 minutes to one hour daily and are connected several times a day.

However, it is crucial to note that use of social media can also influence communication skills of users indirectly through their self-esteem. Mientka (2014) argues that social media users may portray a highly accurate sense of self from the images created and maintained online. Also, people with lower self-regard tend to worry more about what others post about them on social networks, whereas those with higher self-esteem tend to spend more time building their personal brand,

adding increasingly more information about their likes, dislikes, opinions, and perceptions and in effect, those people exhibit a greater sense of personal agency (Mientka, 2014). Conversely, those with more neurotic tendencies spend more time monitoring their Facebook wall, deleting unwanted posts from others (Mientka, 2014).

According to Soltero and Kierce (2012), all forms of social media to some extent measure the levels of popularity, reach or 'effect' that each of their interactions has with their online community such as likes, comments and shares. Soltero and Kierce (2012) also point out that self-esteem of individuals suffers when they compare their own achievements to those of their online colleagues who seem to be more successful in various spheres of life. A student with low self-esteem experiences intense emotional effects since they have less confidence or control over their lives and may be easily influenced by others (Southern Connecticut State University, 2013). Many times, others can identify someone with low self-esteem and take advantage of them by coercing them into doing things they wouldn't normally do (Southern Connecticut State University, 2013).

Carpenter (2012) conducted a study concerning narcissism on Facebook and found out that Facebook offers an opportunity for many shallow relationships and detached communication. Also, Panek conducted a study in 2013 on the use of social media and narcissism and found out that Facebook and Twitter were highly used by narcissists to gain approval from peers (Pfeiffer, 2014). However, although studies by Pfeiffer (2014), Jagero and Muriithi (2013), Carpenter (2012) provided insights on use of social media, none of them linked the relationship between use of social media and communication skills and whether self-esteem plays a mediation role between social media and communication skills, thus, this study intends to focus on these areas. The self-esteem of users, influenced by use of social media, can have an impact on their communication skills.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to establish the relationship between use of social media and communication skills among undergraduate students in Tanzania.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were;

1. To describe the relationship between types of information accessed on social media and communication skills of undergraduate students.
2. To examine the relationship between level of use of social media and communication skills of undergraduate students.
3. To establish the mediating effect of self-esteem on social media use and communication skills of undergraduate students.
4. To assess whether demographic characteristics of undergraduate students moderate the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills of undergraduate students.

### **1.4 Research questions**

1. What is the relationship between type of information accessed on social media and communication skills of undergraduate students?
2. What relationship exists between level of social media use and communication skills of undergraduate students?
3. What is the mediating effect of self-esteem on social media use and communication skills?
4. What demographic characteristics of undergraduate students moderate the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills?

### **1.5 Justification of the study**

Social media are becoming an invaluable tool for university students as they use various social media sites for social and academic (or educative) purposes. However, various scholars such as Drussell (2012), Wolak, Mitchel and Finkelhor (2003) have associated the increased use of social media sites with poor communication and interpersonal skills among undergraduate youth in universities which in turn adversely affects their academic performance. Also, Gummow (2014), Chou and Edge (2012) and Huang (2010), through use of social media sites, undergraduate students tend to compare themselves to their colleagues in terms of their achievements and failures in various spheres of life thus making social media a likely determinant of their self-esteem which influences their communication skills. The focus on undergraduate students is due to their tendency to be more prone to frequent use of social media that is likely to affect their communication skills unlike their postgraduate counterparts (who are often more mature). Scholars such as Kuss and Griffiths (2011) and Vanhergen and Husband (2011), undergraduate youth are likely to be younger in the early adulthood stages, are searching for attention and defining and redefining their identity to their colleagues. This occurrence prompted the researcher to delve in the study.

The findings of this study may be useful to various stakeholders;

*Universities and higher learning institutions:* The findings of the study will benefit various universities and higher learning institutions to either re-evaluate and/or design curricula in their respective academic programmes especially on issues related to social media in society.

*Academic staff:* The study will benefit academic staff be aware of and understand the impact of social media on written and spoken communication skills of undergraduate students, and therefore take appropriate action to address this the problem. Also, the study will be an eye-opener to academic staff to acknowledge the influence of social media on self-esteem of students, which is critical for academic

performance and therefore take appropriate measures. This can be done by guiding students on how to use social media for beneficial purposes.

*Social media providers:* The study may provide insights into the impact of their networks on society especially the self-esteem or/and communication skills of users who comprise of youth. This will provide an avenue to establish measures and ensure that minimal negative effects occur on users

*Government:* The findings of the study may be of use to the Tanzanian Government, through the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and TCRA to develop clear guidelines and laws on the use of social media especially in higher learning institutions and society in general and ensure that it is used for beneficial purposes.

*Students in higher learning institutions:* The study findings may reawaken students to relook at the impact of social media on their communication skills directly or indirectly through their self-esteem.

*Counseling psychologists:* The study may enable counselors publish educative articles in various publications for society or effectively advise their clients, especially youth, on how to use social media for beneficial purposes so that it does not adversely affect their self-esteem.

*Future research:* The findings of the study may open up other areas for further empirical research pertaining to use of social media, self-esteem and communication skills by future researchers.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study focused on the relationship between social media and communication skills among undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania. As such, it was limited to this university and not any other public or private university.

The study used mixed research design (specifically explanatory sequential design) and multi-stage sampling design to obtain data from respondents and not any other method. As such, findings were as a result of using mixed research method and not any other method(s) and sampling designs.

The study focused on the relationship between social media and communication skills. As such, the findings and interpretation were limited to these variables and not any other so as to ensure that the study has focus.

### **1.7 Limitations and delimitations of the study**

Some respondents did not return questionnaires on time nor return them at all. However, the researcher produced more questionnaires in order to have a higher return rate. In addition, with the help of research assistants, there were follow-ups of the filled questionnaires to ensure that they were returned.

Some respondents were not truthful in their answers and some were uncomfortable to share some of their deep personal experiences on their use of social media especially in the FGDs that were conducted. However, the researcher assured them of confidentiality and that this study was done purely for academic purposes and not motivated by any other interests whatsoever. Also, follow-up questions in the qualitative FGD method were used by the researcher to ensure that respondents' answers are consistent for validity and reliability purposes.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter aimed at reviewing literature that is pertinent to the study. The study sought to address the empirical review on various studies done that were related to the study, theoretical review was addressed then the emerging trends or gaps in those studies and finally addressed the main theories that guided the study.

#### **2.2 Theoretical review**

##### **2.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory**

According to Severin and Tankard (2001), the idea of uses and gratifications first came about in 1959 in an article written by American sociologist Elihu Katz. Katz mentioned that the field of communication research was on the verge of dying out because researchers had simply been focusing on what the media did to people (Severin & Tankard, 2001). In order to save the field of communications Katz suggested that the focus shift to what people do with the media (Severin and Tankard, 2001). Katz proposed that the main question should be “What do people do with the media?” and not “What do media do to the people?” Katz, Gurevich and Haas (1973) see the mass media as a means used by individuals to link themselves with others or disconnect. Katz, Gurevich and Haas (1973) listed 35 needs and classed them into five categories (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

First, cognitive needs which include acquiring information, knowledge and understanding. The second need is affective that include an emotional, pleasurable, or aesthetic experience that one encounters followed by personal integrative needs comprising of strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status. Fourth is social integrative needs which include strengthening contacts with family and friends, among others. The last need includes tension release that has escape and diversion.

The *Uses and Gratifications Theory* is based on research that shows media users as active and aware of their choices and decisions in relation to their media interaction. This theory seeks to explain the uses of media and the satisfactions derived from them in terms of motives and self-perceived needs of audience members (McQuail, 2000).

This theory is relevant to the study since it provides insights into the reasons for the use of media (which can include social media in this case) by people. For example, some use social media in order to acquire knowledge and information about certain issues that are relevant to them, including information about the whereabouts about their friends and what goes on in their friends' lives depending on how close they are or were in relation to the person they are striving to get information about. By so doing, they are satisfying their *cognitive needs*.

Secondly, some people use social media as an entertainment and emotional tool to get the latest gossip about their colleagues and other people they feel relevant to them. In this, they are satisfying their *affective need*. Thirdly, others use social media in order to get *personal integrative needs*, namely to be seen as a credible, worthy people that need to be appreciated and respected as they post various updates about events in their lives and their achievements such as marriage, acquiring properties, new job positions or promotion among others. By doing so, they want to assert their presence and therefore be perceived favorably. On the other hand, others have *social integrative needs*, namely, to feel as part of the community and not to feel isolated from the rest. At times, others use social media to *release their tensions* and to have a cover up of their frustrations and use it as a diversion or escape mechanism from life's problems and challenges. They are addicted to social media in order to have peace of mind.

In essence, the satisfaction of all or some of these needs is a way of ensuring that they boost their self-esteem. This theory is relevant to the study since it gives aids in understanding why youth increase their use of social media in order to satisfy or gratify certain needs such as entertainment, need for information, or to boost their self-esteem. However, although this theory is relevant, it appears to limit the

gratification solely to use of media yet many people gratify their desires using other means and not necessarily media. Also, the propositions of this theory do not provide the possible age -groups that are more prone to use media to gratify their desires. The term “audience” is generalized and seems to portray them as one group.

Although this theory is relevant for this study, the researcher does not acknowledge that youth do not only focus on social media to search their identity but also other means to do so. These may be colleagues, parents and relatives among other sources. In spite of this limitation, this theory provides an answer on which group of people are more prone to use social media for gratification purposes that the Uses and Gratification Theory failed to do. Therefore, this theory fills that gap.

### **2.2.2 Media Determinism Theory**

This theory was developed by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 through his statement that “the medium is the message.” McLuhan posited that the effects of technology do not appear at the level of opinions or concepts, instead, they change balance of our senses steadily and without any resistance (Severin & Tankard, 2001). In essence, McLuhan’s theory states that the most important effect of media is that they influence our habits of perceptions and thinking. McLuhan further says that print media emphasized vision that influenced our thinking making it to be linear, sequential, regular and repeated (Severin & Tankard, 2001) and although it led to specialization and technology, it alienated people and made them individualistic. However, television appealed to tactile, visual and aural senses where the audience became a “global village (Severin & Tankard, 2001). McLuhan concludes by stating that the important effects of the medium originate from its form and not its content (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

McLuhan’s theory is relevant to this study because it provides an understanding of the effects of media, in this case social media on audiences. The use of social media influences the way undergraduate students communicate in both spoken and written forms in various contexts since they have created short forms of communication and coded language including *emojis* that are accommodated in social media sites. As a

result, their communication skills are adversely influenced. In addition, increased use of social media destroys interpersonal relationships necessary for social development since lots of time is spent on screens of various gadgets and as a result, the affected user cannot sustain effective interpersonal conversations with others. The form or characteristics of various social media sites appear attractive to users unlike the content or messages sent in them. For instance, one of the attractive features in WhatsApp is its swiftness and convenience as a channel of passing messages to audiences compared to other sites and as a result, users may be more attracted to it. Although social media did not exist by then, McLuhan has nevertheless aided in helping understand the effect of social media in society.

Although Technological Determinism Theory is helpful, McLuhan seems to assume that audiences are helpless and merely wait for media to determine their perceptions. The emphasis on the power of media ignores the reality that in spite of its effect on society, audiences also have the ability to select what is relevant for them and not necessarily for media to shape their thinking or way of doing things.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory show how use of social media aids in gratifying certain inherent needs among undergraduate students in SAUT. However, in gratifying those needs, social media ends up having certain effects on users, hence showing the relationship between the theories.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

From figure 2.3, undergraduate students access and interact with various types of information on various social media platforms which influences their self-esteem (A1) that will either be high or low which eventually affects their communication skills (either verbal, written, non-verbal or reading or both) (A2). However, in some cases, the way the student communicates may make him or her to either have a high or low self-esteem which may direct the person to resolve to use social media to boost their self-esteem further in case it was high or use it to boost if it was low (A3 and A4). On the other hand, demographic characteristics may make the undergraduate student have a high or low self-esteem depending on the way he or

she perceives himself or herself in terms of the respective demographic characteristics (**B1**) which may influence their communication skills. Demographic characteristics may also directly influence communication skills of the student while use of social media may also directly influence communication skills of the respective user (**B3**).

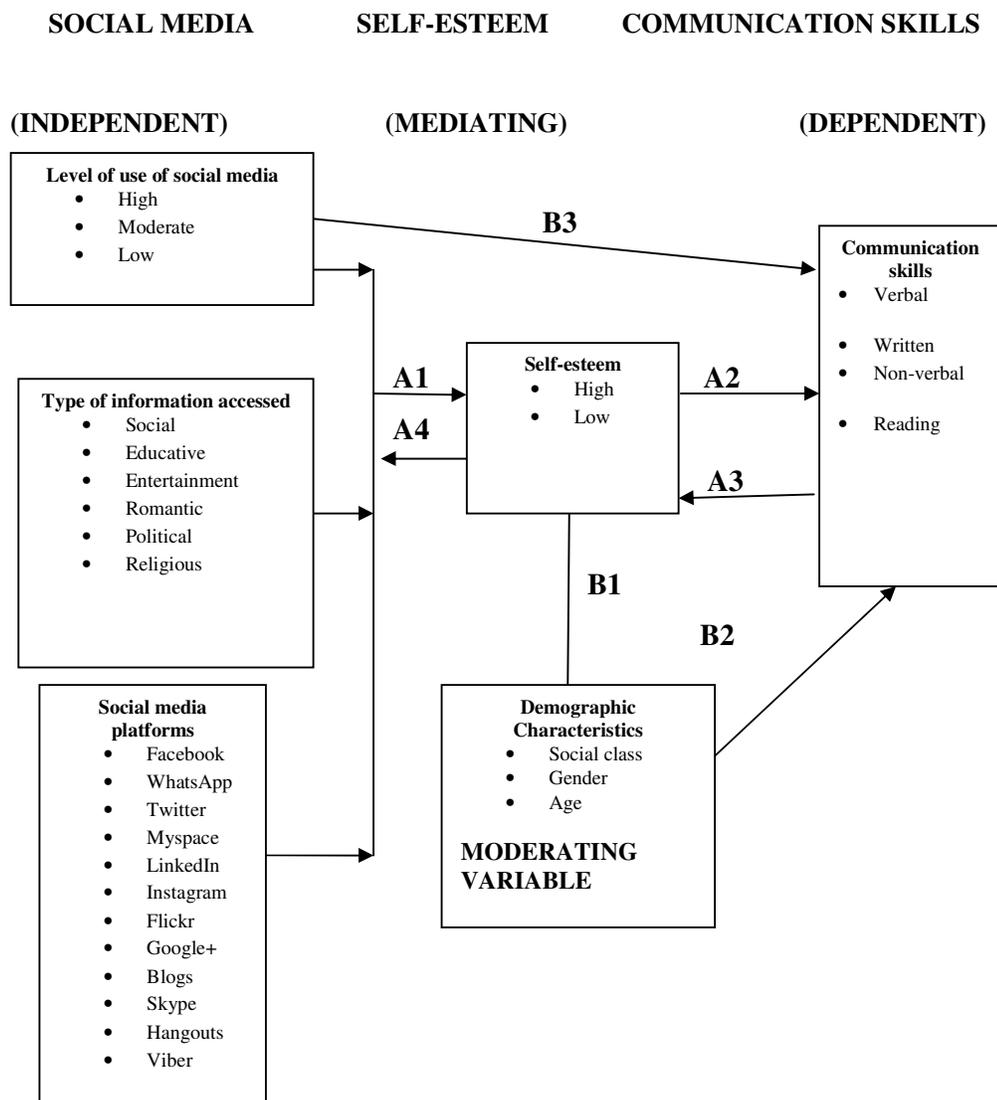


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework (Researcher, 2017)

## **2.4 Review of variables**

### **2.4.1 Types of information accessed on social media and communication skills**

Developmental psychologists have long identified the early 20s as a crucial time for learning and applying problem solving skills (Head & Eisenberg, 2011). Basically, the college experience increases students' cognitive development and they are often asked about differences in perspective, what aspects of a topic may remain unexplored, and how a piece of knowledge or an issue may serve as a call for individual action later in life (Head & Eisenberg, 2011). At the same time, students must perform information-seeking tasks for school, work, and their personal, daily lives, often for the first time (Head & Eisenberg, 2011). As a result, information-seeking activities may be equally or more complex for students than those undertaken by full-fledged adults who have already adjusted to life at large (Rieh & Hilligoss, 2008).

A parade of new digital technologies has been a constant feature in most of their lives. For this generation, information-seeking strategies are being formed, practiced, and taught (Head & Eisenberg, 2008). These methods are put to the test in the vast information landscape of their college years (Head & Eisenberg, 2008). Undergraduates struggle with finding different kinds of contexts (namely big picture, language, situational, and information gathering) when conducting course-related research, and to a lesser extent, everyday life research (Head & Eisenberg, 2009; 2008). Regardless of the abundance of online and off-line sources available to them, most students rely on a small collection of reliable sources namely course readings, search engines, and Wikipedia for course-related research (Head & Eisenberg, 2010).

Scanfeld, Scanfeld and Larson (2010) and Wicks and others (2010) posit that the impact of social media has extended to the health care domain, as consumers seeking health information online have begun to share their experiences and knowledge. Preece (1998) and Wing and Jeffrey (1999) together with Bahr, Browning, Wyatt and Hill (2009) point out numerous studies on consumers' communication and

information behavior in various online communities which revealed that participation in these communities provides effective emotional and informational support to users, as well as helping them initiate and sustain behavioral changes. Also, Christakis and Fowler (2007) and Hoffman, Monge, Chou and Valente (2006) note that people's social networks have long been recognized as an important factor in shaping their lifestyle and health related behavior. These networks are also a major source of information and care when a person is unwell (Smith & Christakis, 2008). As a digital counterpart of the physical social network, social networking sites could offer users opportunities for improving personal health (Morris, Consolvo, Munson, Kramer, Patrick, & Tsai, 2011).

Social media users use various sites to trace their colleague's personal health experiences or updates, to remember or memorialize other people who suffered from a particular health condition and died, get health information, fund-raise or draw attention to a health related issue, post comments, queries, or information about health or medical matters or start or join a health related group (Fox, 2010). At the same time, many researchers and organizations suggest that online social networking sites, especially when the network includes people who knew each other personally, could be a compelling chance for health promotion and patient support (Skeels, Unruh, Powell, & Pratt, 2010).

Such information behavior plays an important role in individuals' daily life and is constituted by two major modes of information seeking, namely seeking problem-specific information and seeking orienting information. The former refers to the acquisition of information that is needed to solve individual problems and the latter refers to the acquisition of information concerning current events or keeping up to date (Savolainen, 2007). The main goal of such behavior is to bridge gaps in daily life and achieve coherence (Spink & Cole, 2001). Everyday life information behavior is culturally influenced, socially located and affected by individuals' *'way of life'* and *'mastery of life'* (Savolainen, 1995; Spink & Cole, 2001). Searching for health and wellness related information is a typical and popular type of daily life information seeking (Bishop, Tidline, Shoemaker, & Salela, 1999) (McKenzie, 2003).

Although SNS can be beneficial for health information, its use for health queries is sparing and those who use the platform for health updates, lifestyle information and treatments of mild conditions use it mostly, rather than for more serious health issues (Zhang, 2013). Social media users, especially college students, are wary about the quality of information, are concerned about the lack of medical knowledge of their peers and worried about possible threats to their privacy and potential misuse of their health information (Zhang, 2013). The type of information accessed on social media has drastically changed how we communicate (Zhang, 2013). Social media users get various information for various uses some of which disregard proper use of language (Zhang, 2013) which can negatively influence fluency in language. This scenario has a powerful effect since the paradigm of social media has changed the basic rules of communication (Zhang, 2013). The key objective of users is accessing information by a mere click and as long as this objective is met, language proficiency is considered secondary or less important (Zhang, 2013).

#### **2.4.2 Level of use of social media and communication skills**

The extent of use of a particular social media platform is determined by its characteristic features such as convenience, speed of sending messages or capacity to accommodate volumes of information among others. These features and many others appear attractive to the respective user, hence the relation between type of social media site and how it is used (Richardson, Third, & MacColl, 2007).

##### **2.4.2.1 Types of social media sites**

There are various social networking sites used. According to International Business Machines (IBM) (2013), Grahl (2014) and White (2014), these include the following.

The first type of social media are the *social network* (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014). This is most likely what many people think of when they hear the words “social media” and are sites that allow one to connect with other people via Internet (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014), in addition, they also allow one to meet and connect with other people with similar interests as the user. Normally, there

is a profile and many ways to connect with people and create groups. The most popular social networking sites are *Facebook*, *Linked In* and *MySpace* which used to be popular, but is being reinvented (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014). However, *WhatsApp* is the most popular social media since it allows better accessibility and ease of communication offering fast messaging, empowerment, sense of belongingness and sociability, enjoyment, quick information-sharing and cost benefits (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014) (Soliman & Salem, 2014) (Devi & Tevera, 2014).

The second type of social media are the *social news* that allows users to post outside articles and news links to a website that the community votes as relevant or interesting, also, they are very democratic, and is entirely in the hands of the community (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014). This is a very powerful tool because it is the market deciding what is worthy and what is not with the most popular social news sites as *Digg* and *Reddit* (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014). The third types of social media are the *book marking sites* that essentially organize and manage users' web links (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014). It makes it much easier to search for them and what makes it social is that users are able to share their information with anybody they select with the most popular web sites are *Delicious* and *Stumble Upon* (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014). The fourth type of social media are *Media Sharing* with sites like *You Tube* and *Flickr* where users can upload and share pictures and videos with people all around world (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014). In addition, they also have features like profiles and commenting so that one is able to interact with other users. The fifth type includes *micro blogging sites* like *Twitter* which are basically short updates that people who "follow" you receive. It is a rapid way to spread any information or content one may want with his or her audience (IBM, 2013) (Grahl, 2014) (White, 2014).

#### **2.4.2.2 Benefits of using social media sites**

The role of media literacy for digital literacy and cyber safety has been well established, although policy and practice has been slow to respond to new ways of

thinking about media literacy in a digital world (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010). Traditionally media literacy has been understood and taught in relation to mass media, addressing issues of media ownership, censorship and advertising (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010). However, today's online and networked media environment requires a more complex digital or web literacy that is often not explicitly taught in school (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010). This environment requires that young people develop new skills to participate and stay safe in the new digital media environment (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010).

There are literacies that accrue from using SNS (Richardson, Third, & MacColl, 2007). First, SNS provides users with *technological literacy* where users develop simple skills (Fuentz, 2013). All social networks rely on advanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) that work to build and support technological literacy for people which in turn helps learners to link in an economy and become valuable contributors (Fuentz, 2013). The creation and sharing of content on sites such as MySpace has increased peoples' "technical literacy", as they learn to use code to create their profiles, and "creative content and visual literacy" as they draw from and re-use media in appropriate ways to communicate and express themselves that can at times lack in school curricula (Skaar, 2008) (Perkel, 2008).

Given that written text, photos, animation, sounds, music, video clips are core components of SNS, young people develop a deeper understanding of the production, nature and use of various forms of content, which is Secondly, SNS provides *critical content literacy* which is the ability to effectively use search engines and understand how they "order" information, who or what organizations created or sponsored the information and where the information comes from and its credibility and/or nature (Richardson, Third, & MacColl, 2007). Third is the *Communicative and social networking literacy* which involves an understanding of the many different spaces of communication on the web namely the formal and informal rules that govern or guide what is appropriate behavior, level of privacy (and therefore level of safe self-disclosure for each) and how to deal with unwanted or inappropriate communication through them (Richardson, Third, & MacColl, 2007).

Fourth, *creative content and visual literacy*, which is in addition to the skills to create and upload image and video content which includes an understanding of how online visual content is edited and “constructed,” what kind of content is appropriate and how copyright applies to their activities (Richardson, Third, & MacColl, 2007). Lastly, in terms of literacy is *Mobile media literacy* which involves familiarity with the skills and forms of communication specific to mobile phones (for instance, text messaging), mobile web literacy, and an understanding of mobile phone etiquettes (Richardson, Third, & MacColl, 2007).

Social media provide education as shown in much interest in schools, universities and other higher learning institutions in the potential of SNS to leverage or complement formal educational activities and enhance learning outcomes (Notley&Tacchi, 2005). Although e-learning frameworks are now integrated into most educational settings, the use of SNS is less comprehensively utilized (Notley & Tacchi, 2005). Consequently, there is a dearth of evidence on the impact of SNS on young peoples’ formal education (Notley & Tacchi, 2005). Nevertheless, pilot projects and research are being rolled out which highlight both the potential and the need for social software, services and practices to be integrated into school and higher education frameworks (Notley & Tacchi, 2005). Evaluations of e-learning strategies have found SNS platforms allow for the extension of learning discussion outside the formal classroom setting, therefore promoting deeper learning as young people not only engage with the material for longer but are more likely to relate to it and incorporate it into their everyday lives (Notley& Tacchi, 2005). Finally, studies conducted on the use of hand held devices to deliver workplace learning demonstrated that regular accessibility means people can access resources in a way that is both convenient and relevant to them which in turn translates into increased levels of implementation into work practice (Huffstutler, Wyatt, & Wright, 2002).

Social media allow creativity (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010). Rapid uptake of digital technologies has opened up unprecedented possibilities for amateur users to create and distribute content (Burgess, Foth, & Klæbe, 2006) such that media users have become producers (Burns & Morey, 2009). User-generated content describes

both the generation of original creative content and remixed content that creatively reworks or repurposes existing content (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010). The interrelationship between SNS and social media has provided a key impetus (via platforms such as youtube.com and flickr.com) for the sharing of this self-generated content with broader networks (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010).

Social media are increasingly important for the expression of identity (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This articulation is not merely narcissistic, but supports critical peer-based sociality (Boyd & Ellison, 2007a). Because SNS are essentially flexible and designed to promote individual customization (Valtysson, 2010), young people use SNS to experiment as well as find legitimacy for their political, ethnic, cultural or sexual identity (Valtysson, 2010). SNS can also reinforce parts of their identity, such as ethnicity or cultural background (Blanchard, Metcalf, & Burns, 2008), and is particularly important for young people with identity crisis, newly-arrived migrants and minority ethnic groups (Stephens-Reicher, Metcalf, Blanchard, & Burns, 2010).

Young peoples' use of SNS is important for strengthening interpersonal relationships, especially when online and offline worlds converge (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010). Having positive interpersonal relationships is an important predictor of well being (Hartup & Stevens, 1999) and can buffer individuals from many of the key stressors that characterize the transition from childhood to adulthood (Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996) (Hartup, 2000). Internet use, generally, has been found to strengthen young peoples' existing interpersonal relationships (Valentine & Holloway, 2002) (Gross, Juvonen, & Gable, 2002) (Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield, & Gross, 2000) (Valkenburg & Schouten, 2006).

According to Montgomery (2007) and Vromen (2007), social media constitute new spaces for civic engagement and political participation including information sharing and bringing together new networks for action utilizing email, user-generated content and other networking practices. For young people who do not consider their participation in civic or issue-based activities as "political" in the traditional or institutional sense, SNS are considered more important than "civic sites (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010). Social networking services, such as

www.myspace.com are used to find out what other people are doing by connecting with individuals with similar interests, existing campaigns or disseminating information about their own projects (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010).

Young people are creating “new participatory communities by and for their peers” (Harris, 2008) and the new forms of self-expression enabled via SNS allows for “generating public selves in their own ways in what Boyd claims is a way to “write themselves and their community into being (Harris, 2008) (Boyd & Ellison, 2007a). Furthermore, organizations and services are increasingly viewing social networking practices as the next step in youth participation in government and community decision making (Collin, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2010) although there are still questions as to the extent to which SNS operate as virtual public spheres, enabling and fostering deliberation and direct participation (Vromen, 2007).

Social media is crucial in boosting social connectedness, self-efficacy, general knowledge and/or life skills and is critical for the promotion of young peoples’ overall mental health and wellbeing (Burns & Morey, 2009). The personalization of SNS profiles is not only important to young peoples’ relationship with others but is positively associated with the individual’s sense of self -efficacy or personal agency (Notley & Tacchi, 2005). A young person’s sense of “ownership over the online space also enhances their sense of empowerment and accomplishment which reinforces the sense of belonging and attachment to community (Richardson, Third, & MacColl, 2007).

Social media acts as a tool for entertainment especially when users access various music videos and movies from different genres which help in minimizing boredom (O’Keeffe, Clark-Pearson, & Council on Communications and Media, 2011). The entertainment is also visible in form of sharing pictures about different issues of interest.

#### **2.4.2.3 Challenges associated with the use of social media**

Social media are becoming popular platforms of expressing views or ideas that are uniquely mediated by the internet (Drussell, 2012). However, in spite of all the benefits that accrue from SNS, there are concerns about their impact on society (Drussell, 2012). Social networking sites represent a moving target for researchers and policy-makers (Madden, et al., 2013). Having recently reached the mass market,

they continue to evolve as domestic broadband access increases and digital technologies of all kinds, including tracking on mobile platforms, become more available (Madden, et al., 2013). Several previously ‘closed’ social networking sites now allow their users to incorporate features created by third parties and allows users to log into third party sites (Madden, et al., 2013).

Currently, access to pornography either in words or images is increasing especially on mobile phones, laptops and I pads among others at a mere click that youth access (Drussell, 2012). This damages the *moral fabric* of society and exposes them to risks such as Human –Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS), sexually transmitted diseases and early or unwanted pregnancies among other negative effects (Drussell, 2012). Drussell (2012) further points out that unlike the traditional media, SNS are user driven and the users, rather than editors, determine the content, hence the risk. Drussell (2012) argues that excess use of the social media leads to decreased social involvement, feelings of loneliness and increase in depressive symptoms which adversely affects communication between family members or colleagues. The amount of time spent on these social networks has led to concerns about the safety, and content of these sites, as well as the effects of these on social relationships (Drussell, 2012).

Social media provide opportunities for unscrupulous people to hack or access confidential information or interfere with another person’s privacy (Madden, et al., 2012). This infringes on basic human rights to privacy and creates tension and suspicion between people since it erodes trust (Madden, et al., 2012). SNS users may be more open with what they share because they don’t adequately understand how their data is stored and used and just because they are comfortable posting some information publicly does not mean they have quietly surrendered all control over the information they choose to share online (Madden, et al., 2012). Drussell (2012) observes that the emergence of new media or EMC creates an ability to spread digital messages or evil words about groups or individuals which disrupts their privacy, thus making it difficult for someone to be sure that he or she is responsible for the sensitive information. This explosion of communication has changed what people’s

perceptions on what is or is not private with social media making it nearly effortless to share personal information in an instant, for instance post pictures of your children, express political or religious views, and even disclose current location (Drussell, 2012). Society is becoming more comfortable with less privacy since it appears everyone is doing it, as a result, our sense of how safe all this information sharing is can be skewed, hence increasing risks (Drussell, 2012).

Social media creates a society that spends more time on internet surfing and exchanging ideas some of which are irrelevant to their psychological or social development due to its addictive characteristic on users, as they communicate with their peers (Madden, et al., 2012). The mass appeal of social networks on the Internet could potentially be a cause for concern, particularly when attending to the gradually increasing amounts of time people spend online (The Nielsen Company, 2010). People engage online in a variety of activities some of which may be addictive (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Instead of being addicted to the medium, some users may develop an addiction to specific activities they carry out online (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Kuss & Griffiths (2011) observe that *Generation Y*, also referred to as the “net generation” is addicted to social media due to pressure to conform to their digital colleagues and not appear outdated.

Young and Mroczek (2003) argues that there are five different types of internet addiction, namely *computer addiction* (computer game addiction), *information overload* (web surfing addiction), *net compulsions* (online gambling or online shopping addiction), *cyber sexual addiction* (online pornography or online sex addiction), and *cyber-relationship addiction* (an addiction to online relationships). SNS addiction appears to fall in the last category since the purpose and main motivation to use SNSs is to establish and maintain both on- and offline relationships (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Social media can be a dangerous and addictive medium due to the hours spent in various social networks is time taken from other constructive activities and can be a growing social problem (Kwiatkowske, Ziolk, Krysta, Mucwierzgon, & Brodziak, 2007) (Echebura & De Corral, 2010).

The use of social media are easily a source of addiction and affects many who are fascinated with it regardless of demographics such as gender and age (Szczezielniak, Palka, & Krysta, 2013). Addiction is reflected in more frequent use and spending more time online and manifests itself in obsessive thinking including in our dreams of what can occur in the networks (Szczezielniak, Palka, & Krysta, 2013). Although addicts would like to control their internet use, they have no will power and currently, Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) constitutes a variety of impulse-control problems that concern various addictions (Murali & George, 2007) (Shapira, Lessig, Goldsmith, Szabo, Lasoritz, & Gold, 2003).

According to a report by the National White Collar Crime Centre in 2011 in the USA, the tremendous rise in popularity of social media over the past five years has led to a drastic change in personal communication, both online and offline (Drussell, 2012). The report observes that social media has made communication not only convenient, but downright instantaneous by allowing users to connect and communicate and that due to increasing adoption by many in society, white-collar and hi-tech criminals adapt their skill to match the dynamic landscape of the internet (Drussell, 2012). The report points out that cyber criminals hack into the e-mail accounts of users and access the financial accounts of victims and withdraw money without the owners' consent, also, they access any other confidential information of organizations among other ills (Drussell, 2012).

Also, the report observes that many companies and individuals are at risk due to lack of awareness of the threat (Drussell, 2012). The report further observes that although the current level of cyber security in East Africa is in the immature stage and some progress made recently, not enough is being done to secure vital information (Drussell, 2012). According to NCR, an international computer security company finding in 2012, around 556 million adults in the world faced cyber crime, which is more than the entire population of the European Union (Mahai, 2012a).

#### **2.4.2.4 Level of use of social media by undergraduate students**

Social networking is one of the topics being talked about by university students in East Africa (University of New Hampshire, 2010). Social networking became popular between 2004 and 2006 after Facebook and MySpace were created with studies showing that 63% of heavy users received high grades, compared to 65% of light users (University of New Hampshire, 2010). Unlike Tanzanian universities, Kenyan universities continue to lead the way in the use of social media and ICTs. In a recent survey by research firm CPS International, Kenyan universities lead other East African countries in the use of and accessibility to ICT in education, followed by Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and lastly Burundi (Ng'anga, 2012). The survey also showed that Kenya invested more heavily in ICT than other East African countries of which Tanzania is included while Burundi invested the least (Ng'anga, 2012). However, according to various scholars such as (Mahai, 2012a) and Shembilu (2013), there is very scanty research that has been published on issues to do with ICT and social media use among undergraduate students in Tanzanian universities.

The extensive distribution and growth of SNSs, has drawn the attention of researchers, leading to a wide range of studies focusing on uses and social implications of SNSs (Karim, Rouhdlah, Maryam, & Muhammad, 2014). Most students in universities are motivated to use Facebook so as to learn about their classmates and keep in touch with them and to help them pass time and be entertained (Acquisti & Gross, 2006) (Clark, Lee, & Boyer, 2007). Students in universities use social media such as Facebook in order to facilitate social relationships with their friends compared to parents and strangers (Pempek, Yermorayelva, & Calvert, 2009). Pempek, Yermorayelva and Calvert (2009), Reich, Subrahmanyam and Espinoza (2012) and Tosun (2012) reported various studies which reveal that nurturing or maintaining existing relationships has been the most mentioned motivation for using Facebook, also, seeking new relationships has been a frequently mentioned objective for using Facebook.

Other motives that have been sometimes reported include enhancing one's reputation (being cool), avoiding loneliness, keeping tabs on other people, (seeing who has joined on Facebook or what they are doing), and entertainment (Joinson, 2008) (Sheldon, 2008) (Tosun, 2012).

Communication in some universities in East Africa has for a long time been based on non-interactive means where information intended for students is pinned on notice boards, in university websites, daily newspapers or even newsletters (Mugera, 2013). These channels are faced with a myriad of challenges as most students, due to their busy schedules rarely find time to visit notice boards, have no access to newspapers due to their exorbitant prices. In addition, websites of some universities are rarely updated thus making leading students to miss out on important information (Mugera, 2013). However, social media promises new ways and means to reach target publics with great interactivity and the current practice is to take advantage of social media and make user generated content possible (Mugera, 2013).

In most universities in East Africa, students own mobile phones and are completely engrossed in the social media craze as they peruse through various social networks (Mugera, 2013). Despite these new trends, there are various challenges affecting universities' adoption such as lack of social media communication policy, lack of clarity on the choice of media to use and unwillingness by some universities to fully embrace new technologies (Bernado, 2013). However, due to the need to digitize information and be relevant in this era, most universities have embraced social media where students are updated on various information pertaining to them in their respective universities (Ridley, 2014). Using the power of different networks and engaging content, some universities in East Africa are using social media to attract students, interact with current students and stay connected with alumni (Ridley, 2014). However, most of the data required to assess readiness in East African universities is actually not available from any public sources (Kashorda & Waema, 2011). Huang (2010) acknowledges that there are differences between developed and developing economies with respect to e-readiness assessment models. Universities that are doing a great job connecting with students also know how important it is to

maintain connections throughout and not only after graduation (Ridley, 2014). Social media now plays an important role in helping universities stay connected with alumni and also increasing the value of their education by expanding their school's recognition (Ridley, 2014).

#### **2.4.2.5 The relationship between level of use of social media and communication skills**

Social media is increasingly becoming the primary means of communication among youth, however, they have a negative impact on the communication skills of young people (Drussell, 2012). Popular social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter have become mainstream methods for communication across the board as it has become well integrated into our lives (Drussell, 2012). As technological advancements are made, the residual impact of social networking on society's youth is significant to researchers in the field of social work (Drussell, 2012) and if ignored, the lack of skills to effectively communicate and resolve conflicts in a person may negatively affect behavior and impair one's ability to develop and maintain relationships (Drussell, 2012). This is despite the potential benefits of using various SNSs (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2003). Studies reveal that excess use of social media may inhibit proper interpersonal skill development (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2003).

According to *Displacement Hypothesis*, time spent on SNS replaces time spent on important communication experiences like face-to-face interaction (Huang, 2010). Valkenburg and Peter (2007) argue that online contacts are superficial with weak-tie relationships that lack feelings of affection and commitment. This ends up reducing the quality of relationships and well-being and although SNSs appear more attractive, they are ultimately a leaner and less satisfying medium of human interaction which increases loneliness (Song, et al., 2014). Weiser (2001) observed that university students who use SNS entirely for personal rather than social purposes had problems linked to depression, life satisfaction and loneliness. An emerging trend reveals a decline in existing face-to-face social interaction due to high SNS use and communicating with colleagues with the size of social groups reducing thus

affecting communication skills (Nie & Hillygus, 2002). However, other studies suggest that lonely people with communication challenges tend to use SNS more frequently than those without such challenges (Song, 2012). The *Social Augmentation Hypothesis* explains that social communication via SNS amplifies individuals' total social capital by providing more possibilities for interaction with others (Bessiere, Kiesler, Kraut, & Bonera, 2008). In this hypothesis, individuals who are lonely offline may be encouraged to use SNS to augment their social world (Bessiere, Kiesler, Kraut, & Bonera, 2008). Another explanation, namely the *Social Compensation Hypothesis* explains that using SNS to meet new people and to contribute in online groups can have favorable effects for those with poor offline world social resources (Bessiere, Kiesler, Kraut, & Bonera, 2008).

Thus, individuals with poor face-to-face self-presentation and communication skills may prefer CMC to interact with others (Moharan-Martin & Schumaker, 2000). CMC provides a less risky and more anonymous arena in which to communicate with others more confidently than usual face-to-face interactions, which may be more enticing for people with loneliness and depression (Moharan-Martin & Schumaker, 2000). These observations clearly demonstrate that SNS and communication skills have an effect on each other through their inter-relationships (Moharan-Martin & Scumaker, 2000).

### **2.4.3 Mediating effect of self-esteem on communication skills**

#### **2.4.3.1 Self-esteem**

It is generally believed that there are many benefits to having a positive view of the self and those with high self-esteem are presumed to be psychologically healthy (Taylor & Brown, 1988), whereas those with low self-esteem are believed to be psychologically distressed and perhaps even depressed (Tennen & Affleck, 1993). A high self-esteem enables people to feel good about themselves including the ability to cope effectively with challenges and negative feedback and live in a social world where they believe that others appreciate them (Heatherston & Wyland, 1991).

According to Brown (2000), there are three levels of self-esteem namely global, situational and task self-esteem. Global self-esteem is the general assessment one makes of one's own worth across different situations, thus, it is an overall self-appraisal (Brown, 2000). Situational self-esteem involves one's self-appraisal in specific traits such as intelligence and athletic ability or particular situations such as education, work or home (Brown, 2000). Task self-esteem is one's own assessment in certain tasks in certain situations, for instance, second language acquisition domain (Brown, 2000). Task self-esteem may concern certain language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing (Brown, 2000).

Although there are negative consequences associated with having extremely high self-esteem (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), most people with high self-esteem appear to lead happy and productive lives. However, people with low self-esteem perceive the world through a more negative filter, and their general dislike for themselves shapes their general perceptions (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Substantial evidence shows a link between self-esteem and depression, shyness, loneliness, and alienation (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). Thus, self-esteem affects the enjoyment of life even if it does not have a substantial impact on career success, productivity, or other objective outcome measures but given the choice, however, most people would prefer to have a high self-esteem (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991).

Many of the most popular theories of self-esteem are based on Cooley's (1902) notion of the looking-glass self in which self-appraisals are viewed as inseparable from social milieu (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). Mead's (1934) Symbolic Interactionism Model outlined a process by which people internalize ideas and attitudes expressed by significant figures in their lives and in effect, individuals come to respond to themselves in a manner consistent with the ways of those around him (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). Low self-esteem is likely to arise when key figures reject, ignore, demean, or devalue the person (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). Subsequent ideas by Coopersmith (1967) and Rosenberg (1965, 1979), and most contemporary self-esteem research, concurs with the basic propositions of symbolic interactionism (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991).

For most of human evolution, survival and reproduction relied on affiliation with a group and those who belonged to social groups were more likely to survive and reproduce than those who were excluded from groups (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). According to the Sociometer Theory, self-esteem is a monitor of the likelihood of social exclusion and when people behave in ways that increase the likelihood of being rejected, they experience a reduction in state self-esteem (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). Thus, self-esteem serves as a monitor, or sociometer, of social acceptance–rejection (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). At the trait level, those with high self-esteem have sociometers that indicate a low probability of rejection, and therefore, such individuals are not concerned about how they are being perceived by others (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991).

#### **2.4.3.2 Other sources of self-esteem**

The scientific search for the determinants of self-esteem has been guided by the various theories regarding its nature (Emler, 2001). Also, there has been a raging debate among researchers on whether self-esteem changes with age (Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010). Wylie (1979) concluded that self-esteem does not show systematic increases or decreases in at any point in the lifespan of a person. However, researchers doubted this conclusion (Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010). Self-esteem tends to increase from adolescence to middle adulthood, peaks at age 50 to 60 years then decreases at a faster pace into old age (Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010). However, although some studies suggested relatively strong decreases (Shaw, Liang, & Krauss, 2010) (Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012). However, other studies revealed that self-esteem decrease in old age is small (Wagner, Ludtke, Jonkmann, & Trautwein, 2013) (Wagner, Lang, Neyer, & Wagner, 2014). This lack of consensus is due to the paucity of studies conducted on samples beyond adolescents (Trzesniewsky, Donnellan, & Robins, 2003).

According to Van Thompson (2014), Rajab and Atirah (2010), Aslan, Erdel and Mustafa (2009) it is important to observe that determinants of self-esteem to an extent affect communication skills or competence of respective individuals, hence the need to discuss the way self-esteem and communication skills are affected under

the same source(s) due to their interdependence. In line with these, Emler (2001) classifies sources of self-esteem into three categories, namely factors that have weak effects or none, factors that have modest effects and factors that have a more significant impact.

#### **2.4.3.3 Factors that have weak effects or none on self-esteem**

The first factor in the weak effect or none category is *ethnicity or race* (Emler, 2001). Given that membership of a racial or ethnic minority so frequently results in exposure to rejection, abuse, discrimination and persecution, such membership carries with it a clear message that one is not valued by the majority culture (Emler, 2001). It is also possible that the meaning of responses to self-esteem measures varies across cultures and if the cultural norms prescribe modesty, then the members of that culture may be less inclined to claim that they are highly worthy people (Emler, 2001).

If a degree of boasting or aggressive self-promotion is culturally approved, self-esteem scores could be higher (Emler, 2001). These possibilities should be taken seriously, but there are also good theoretical grounds for concluding that membership of an ethnic minority will in itself have no adverse effect on self-esteem (Emler, 2001). Emler (2001) spells out three reasons why self-esteem is not damaged by membership of a stigmatized group. First, the negative reactions to which they are exposed are attributed to prejudice and the fault is located in the person who reacts and not in the target of their negative reaction (Emler, 2001). Second, minority group members do not directly compare their circumstances with those of higher status groups since their social comparisons are made with other members of their own group (Emler, 2001).

Third, minority groups reject the value of the qualities they supposedly lack, for example, if their persecutors allege lack of academic competence, the relevance of this particular quality will be discounted and other qualities will be emphasized, for example athletic talent (Emler, 2001). Gray-Little and Hafdahl (2000) suggest a fourth reason which is the approval that matters most to people and that has the

greatest impact on their self-esteem is the approval of those close to them, their family and friends, and not the approval of strangers or of a wider society.

The second factor in the weak effect or none category is the *social class* (Emler, 2001). Social class membership carries some of the same implications for personal identity as ethnic group identity (Emler, 2001). Because social classes correspond to an order of status and prestige, and because they carry implications of relative social value, a person's position in the class structure might be expected to have consequences for their view of their own personal worth (Emler, 2001). However, position in the class structure differs from ethnic identity in at least one important respect in the sense that although people cannot change their race or skin color, it is implied that they can alter their own social class position (Emler, 2001).

Aspirations to upward mobility are regarded as both appropriate and realistic and correspondingly, if one occupies a lowly position, the implication is that one lacks the talent or application necessary to have escaped it (Emler, 2001). Class position therefore seems to carry a different and perhaps clearer message about one's relative worth as a person. Social class position is linked to adult self-esteem (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978 in Emler, 2001) but only modestly. One reason for this is that the level of self-esteem in adulthood is already substantially determined in adolescence (Emler, 2001). The same study shows that adolescent and childhood levels of self-esteem are not related to social class position (Emler, 2001). Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) as cited in Emler (2001) argue that this is because class position is an acquired or inherited status for children and adolescents, one derived from their parents' position. It therefore carries no direct implications for their own worth or lack of it (Emler, 2001).

The third factor in the weak effect or none category is *gender*. The AAUW had a clear view that women do lack self-esteem compared to men and also a clear view as to how this comes about. Nonetheless, other arguments can be adduced for such a difference (Kling, Hyde, Sowers, & Buswell, 1999 in Emler, 2001). One is that the gender roles for males and females prescribe different qualities, also, boys are encouraged to be assertive and self-promoting, in other words, girls, compared to

boys, are not encouraged to make strong claims about their self-worth (Emler, 2001). Also, boys and girls develop within the single-sex peer groups that dominate childhood, different interpersonal strategies and when they interact in mixed-sex groups, the strategies developed by boys tend to prevail, leaving girls feeling less competent, important or powerful (Emler, 2001). Differences in the size and body strength of males and females might lead one to the conclusion that females will more often be the victims of male physical violence than the reverse which could have damaging effects on their self-esteem (Emler, 2001). We grow up learning that some behaviors and attributes are male oriented and some as female oriented (Emler, 2001). Also, their behaviors are differently valued which significantly affects their communication skills especially in the African traditional context that is patriarchal in nature where females are not as confident as males (Emler, 2001).

#### **2.4.3.4 Factors that have moderate effects on self-esteem**

The first is *success and failure* (Emler, 2001). Real successes should raise self-esteem and real failures should lower self-esteem (Emler, 2001). A history of continual success should secure permanently high self-esteem while an experience of continual failure should result in chronic low self-esteem (Emler, 2001). These assumptions are embedded not just in popular suppositions about self-esteem but in much of the scientific thinking about the phenomenon (Emler, 2001). They also underlie several measures of self-esteem, which essentially assess people's beliefs about their successes and failures, their assets and liabilities (Emler, 2001).

Self-esteem does appear temporarily to rise or fall depending on the feedback, however, it is perhaps more pertinent to show that successes and failures have more than short term effects (Emler, 2001). The assumption that this is the case is the logic for some measures of self-esteem and the so called aggregate measures presuppose that a person's self-esteem is based on a kind of audit of their successes and failures in various domains (Emler, 2001). The results of this audit are added together, either in the mind of the individual or through the scoring procedure for the measure, to produce an overall or summary self-esteem (Emler, 2001).

Fear of failure is the tendency to appraise threat to the achievement of personally meaningful goals when one fails in the performance (Emler, 2001). Failure is perceived as threatening, and feared, by individuals who associate it with aversive consequences such as inability to communicate effectively (Pfeiffer, 2014). Another perspective is that perfectionist strivings (that is, self-oriented perfectionism) have been generally associated with positive affect such as effective communication ability due to positive feelings of the self (Pfeiffer, 2014).

The second factor includes *rejections and acceptances* (Emler, 2001). Another possible source of esteem to have been studied in some detail relates to people's experience of the labor market (Emler, 2001). In a sense, this represents another domain of successes and failures, though the judgment of an intermediary is more obviously involved, losing one's job, failing to find work and spending time unemployed are all associated with lower self-esteem (Emler, 2001). Moreover, these experiences appear to produce the differences in self-esteem rather than being produced by them. Several studies compare the self-esteem of employed and unemployed adults and report that the latter score lower on measures of self-esteem (Emler, 2001).

Unemployment and unsatisfactory employment was associated with lower self-esteem and the size of the effects was related to the length of these experiences (Pfeiffer, 2014). Unemployment can have a number of consequences each of which may themselves have a direct impact on self-esteem (Pfeiffer, 2014). Among these are social isolation and loss of social support, economic stresses and loss of routine (Emler, 2001). A range of public attacks on a person's worth, that is, being diagnosed an alcoholic or convicted of child abuse, for example – can lower self-esteem (Emler, 2001). However, some of the standard defensive tactics may be less effective against these assaults (Emler, 2001).

According to Pfeiffer (2014), hostility may create refraction of messages. This can occur when communicating with a person with whom you are angry or it may be a carryover from a recent experience. It may also be the subject matter that arouses hostility (Pfeiffer, 2014). When two people are engaged in a hostile confrontation,

each often distorts messages from the other in such a way that provides fuel for further venting of hostility which adversely affects communication competence (Pfeiffer, 2014). On the contrary, the probability of effective communication is increased if both the sender and receiver accept each other mutually and each feels positive or respectful toward the other (Emler, 2001). Positive or respectful feelings usually carry a built-in commitment and/or desire to share communication (Emler, 2001).

The last factor is *appearance* (Emler, 2001). One factor young people consistently mention when asked what particularly affects the way they feel about themselves is their physical appearance (Emler, 2001). Furthermore, the correlations between self-esteem and perceptions of physical appearance are high, and exceptionally so in adolescence (Emler, 2001). Physical attributes is a form of difference between people that is highly obvious, conspicuous and undeniable and whatever comforting myths about beauty and the eye of the beholder, shared standards for attractiveness do exist (Emler, 2001). To be beautiful or handsome, to have the ideal body shape is to be desirable and desired and to differ from these ideals is to be less desirable, in direct proportion to the disparity (Emler, 2001).

The evidence concerns self-perceptions of physical appearance and not actual physical appearance (Emler, 2001). The relation between self-evaluated appearance and evaluations made by uninvolved observers (not family members or friends) is only moderate (Emler, 2001). It is clear that self-esteem is related to self-evaluation and not to the objective reality and as a result, it is still to be explained why people believe what they do about their own appearance since the larger part of what they believe is not determined by the reality (Emler, 2001).

Physical appearance has a considerable influence on communication skills and is likely to influence a communicator's behavior and impressions towards other people in the communication process (Emler, 2001). Attractive people are more popular and can exert more social influence thereby enhancing their communication skills to be effective (Emler, 2001).

On the contrary, people who are either perceived as or perceive themselves as unattractive face challenges in communication due to the possibility of being perceived negatively (Emler, 2001).

#### **2.4.3.5 Factors that have a more significant effect on self-esteem**

Throughout childhood at least, no other people will assume so much emotional significance for us like our parents since our *parents'* views has a strong impact in our lives (Emler, 2001). The key role of parents in the development of self-esteem and concluded that four qualities of their behavior towards their children would be crucial (Harter, 1999). These include the amount of acceptance, approval and affection shown, the degree to which clear standards of behavior were promoted and expected and the degree to which discipline and control were based on explanation rather than force or coercion (Harter, 1999). Also, the level of acceptance depended on the extent to which they invited their children to express views about family decisions, in effect valuing the child as a contributor (Harter, 1999).

Another review of this evidence singles out approval and acceptance (Kashubeck & Christensen, 1995). There are also indications that the support of mothers is more important to sons whereas the support of fathers is more important to daughters, a surprising endorsement of Freudian Theory (Emler, 2001). Emler (2001) argued that parental influence on self-esteem would decline across adolescence, to be replaced in importance by the approval and acceptance of peers although other research only partly supports this prediction. Self-esteem becomes more aligned with peer approval but parents' opinions remain significant well into the adolescence and even adult years (Kashubeck & Christensen, 1995).

Quality of communication between parents and their children also regularly emerges as linked to levels of self-esteem because the effort by parents to communicate well signals the degree to which they value the child (Emler, 2001). Given the manifest importance of the quality of parental involvement, it is not surprising that parental abuse has a devastating effect on self-esteem with studies showing that experiencing physical abuse in childhood from one's parents or guardians causes significant and

lasting damage to self-esteem and the effects of sexual abuse are even more damaging (Emler, 2001).

Positive parental influence on an individual's self-esteem is directly linked to one's perception about oneself which favorably affects one's communication abilities in different contexts unlike those whose parents played a role in damaging their children's self-esteem (Emler, 2001).

*Interpersonal relationships* have an important influence on self-esteem development because a satisfying and supportive close relationship or marriage promotes self-esteem (Harter, 1999). Receiving support from peers is linked to increased self-esteem in contrast to those who did not receive support (Emler, 2001). People in interpersonal relationships tend to influence each other, share their thoughts and feelings, and engage in activities together.

Interpersonal relationships begin and develop through communication and the quality of communication has a direct impact on the quality of interpersonal relationships, hence, the relationship between the two cannot be overemphasized (Egan & perry, 1998). Poor interpersonal relationship damages one's self-esteem which affects effective communication (Egan & perry, 1998). On the other hand, positive interpersonal relationships facilitate a high self-esteem which can enhance communication ability (Egan & perry, 1998).

#### **2.4.4 Communication skills**

Communication is a process that requires understanding which involves perceiving, interpreting, and comprehending the meaning of the verbal and non-verbal behavior of others (Eiselberg, 2010). In addition to understanding, communication involves sharing, that is, interaction between people in order to exchange meaning (Pearson & Nelson, 1997). Communication is viewed from the perspective of self since it begins with the self and involves others (Eiselberg, 2010).

Effective communication is when we view from one's own personal perspective with the "six persons" involved in each two-person communication situation (Eiselberg, 2010). These six persons emerge in the following ways namely how you perceive yourself, how you perceive the other person, how you believe the other person views you, how the other person views himself or herself, how the other person views you and lastly how the other person believes you view him or her (Eiselberg, 2010). We "construct" ourselves, as well as other persons, through the relationships we have, wish to have, or perceive ourselves as having and we should consider the various perspectives in communication and to recognize the centrality of the self in communication (Whalstrom, 1992). Even when we "talk to ourselves," communication involves other people because we communicate through our own unique perceptual processes, however, it is important to note that the self we know is largely learned from others (Whalstrom, 1992). We establish our self-image, the sort of person we believe we are, by the ways other people categorize us through the positive, negative and neutral messages others offer us which enable us to determine who we are and as a result, our self-definition, then, arises through our interactions with others (Eiselberg, 2010). Communication also involves others in the sense that a skillful communicator considers the other person's needs and expectations when selecting messages to share (Eiselberg, 2010). A skillful communicator understands that a large number of messages can be shared at any time, but sensitivity and responsiveness are essential and in essence, communication begins with the self, as largely defined by others, and involves others, as largely defined by the self (Eiselberg, 2010).

#### **2.4.4.1 Barriers to effective communication**

Eiselberg (2010) observes that there are four types of barriers to effective communication namely process barriers, physical barriers, semantic barriers and psychosocial barriers.

Process barriers involve the blockage of steps that facilitate the smooth flow of communication (Eiselberg, 2010). These include *sender barrier* where the sender fails to forward the message intended for the receiver ((Eiselberg, 2010). *Encoding*

*barrier* is failure by the sender to interpret the message appropriately before sending to the receiver (Eiselberg, 2010). *Medium barrier* is where the channel used interferes with the message carried which adversely influences communication effectiveness (Eisenlberg, 2010). *Decoding barrier* is where the receiver misinterprets the message received (Eiselberg, 2010). *Receiver barrier* is where the receiver fails to interpret the message appropriately due to his or her own factors (Eiselberg, 2010). *Feedback barrier* is failure by message recipients to ask questions for clarification purposes which makes the sender fail to understand if the message was accurately understood (Eiselberg, 2010).

Physical barriers include any physical distraction that can interfere with the effectiveness of communication, these include but not limited to a telephone call, drop-in visitors, distance between people, walls, and static on the radio (Eiselberg, 2010). Semantic barriers include the words we choose, how we use them, and the meaning we attach to them cause many communication barriers (Eiselberg, 2010) especially where technical words that are only understood by experts in a particular field. The problem is semantic, or the meaning of the words we use where the same word may mean different things to different people (Eiselberg, 2010).

Psychosocial barriers are where three important concepts are associated with psychological and social barriers namely fields of experience, filtering, and psychological distance (Antos, 2011). Fields of experience include people's backgrounds, perceptions, values, biases, needs, and expectations where senders can encode and receivers decode messages only in the context of their fields of experience (Eiselberg, 2000). When there is little overlap between the sender's and receiver's field of experience, communication becomes difficult (Eiselberg, 2000). Filtering means that more often than not we see and hear what we are emotionally tuned in to see and hear. Filtering is caused by our own needs and interests, which guide our listening (Eiselberg, 2000). Psychosocial barriers often involve a psychological distance between people that is similar to actual physical distance (Eiselberg, 2000). For example, the school administrator talks down to a staff member, who resents this attitude, and this resentment separates them, thereby

blocking opportunity for effective communication (Eiselberg, 2000). These barriers adversely influence one's ability to engage in effective communication thus having poor communication skills.

#### **2.4.4.2 Values of communication**

Baumeister and Leary (1995) observe that from birth to death, communication shapes our personal, professional and social lives as well as the culture we live in. In terms of *personal values*, we gain our personal identity as we communicate with others as we see ourselves through the eyes of others, which in essence form our self-concept (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Communication with others not only affects our sense of identity but also directly influences our physical and emotional well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Communicating with others promotes health but social isolation has disastrous effects on a person's physical and psychological development (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Communication skills is crucial in *relationships* because we link with others by revealing our private identities, listening to learn about others, working out problems, remembering shared history and planning a future (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Regular talk between people who are intimate continually weaves their lives together (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Communication skills affect *professional success* in professions all over the world and cannot be disputed (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In professional life, the costs of poor communication are large since errors and misunderstandings occur, messages have to be repeated, productivity is adversely affected and can lead to massive job losses and as such, developing strong communication skills will enhance professional success (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Communication skills are important to the *cultural health* of the society (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). For a culture to develop, its people must be able to communicate effectively where they express their ideas and objectively evaluate the idea of others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

#### **2.4.4.3 Characteristics of communication**

According to O’Hair and Wiemann (2012) and Gamble & Gamble (2005), communication has several key characteristics namely in terms of the message being *symbolic*, the extent to which the *code is shared*, the degree to which the message is *culturally bound*, the perceived *intentionality* of the sender, the presence of a *channel*, the degree to which the process of encoding and decoding messages is *transactional*, communication being *unrepeatable and irreversible*, *competence based*, communication being influenced by *ethics* and communication being *dynamic*.

First, communication depends on the use of symbols that refer to people, things, and concepts. The stronger the link between symbol and object, the clearer the intended meaning, and vice versa and people create and negotiate meanings in the course of their interaction (O’Hair & Wiemann, 2012) (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). A symbol can take a new meaning if at least two people agree that it will have the meaning for them. Second, communication needs a shared code. Symbolic behaviors are grouped in terms of patterns to create a code, thus, for communication to occur, participants must share a code used to encode and decode messages (O’Hair & Wiemann, 2012) (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). O’Hair & Wiemann (2012) and Gamble & Gamble (2005) further observe that if the relational partners are using the same code, they are more likely to encode and decode messages more accurately and create a shared meaning they are seeking to communicate.

Third, communication is influenced by culture. Cultural diversity such as age, race, ethnicity and gender influence the meanings we assign to communication (O’Hair & Wiemann, 2012) (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). Cultural variations exist not only between people who speak different languages but also between those who speak the same language (O’Hair & Wiemann, 2012) (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). Each cultural group consist of its own guidelines for preferences for interaction, however, when these are ignored or unknown, there is a likelihood of misinterpretation of the message received and a miscalculation of the impact of messages sent (O’Hair & Wiemann, 2012) (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). Fourth, communication is not

necessarily intentional. Communication is largely based on the expressions of emotions and body movements (O'Hair & Wiemann, 2012) (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). This widely shared code has few cultural boundaries, namely being spontaneous, and is therefore unintentional (Buck, 1988) (Motley, 1990) which is the difference between *giving* information and *giving off* information (Goffman, 1967).

As society becomes complex, communication can be maintained through a variety of channels (O'Hair & Wiemann, 2012) (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). The information superhighway, which links an increasing number of people to one another has facilitated an increase in long distance relationships between people (Buck, 1988). According to McLuhan (1994), different channels of communication influence the way the sender encodes a message and the way a receiver decodes the message. Apart from the medium, the content also changes communication (McLuhan, 1994). The content of books, newspapers, radio, television, and film for instance, also influence our cultural values and reinforces the stereotypes we have of gender, race, ethnicity, and contributing to the perceptions we have of various people and groups in society, including ourselves (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

Communication is a transactional process. Communication involves two or more people acting as sender and receiver whose messages are dependent or influenced by those of their partner (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). All parties in an interaction are responsible for the outcome of communication and all have a role in whether or not goals are met (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

A communication encounter affects and changes those who interact so that the encounter can never occur in exactly the same way again (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). A communicator cannot return something said nor erase the effects of something done and although one may be greatly influenced by the past, it cannot be reclaimed (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). Communication requires knowledge and commitment and development of skills that can be applied in various communication contexts so as to be competent (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). The ability to think critically is one of the skills required to be competent through examining ideas reflectively and deciding

what to believe, think or do depending on the circumstance (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

Communication consists of consequences because it involves judgments of right and wrong, however, when the accepted standards of behavior are violated, the respective behavior is judged as unethical. Thus, each time we communicate, we decide implicitly or explicitly whether we all do so ethically (Buck, 1988).

Communication is dynamic since all its elements constantly interact with and affect each other and since all people are interconnected, whatever happens to one person partly determines what happens to others (Buck, 1988). Every aspect of communication is accumulative and not static because as long as we live, we always communicate and engage with each other (Buck, 1988). Also, all our present communication experiences are points of arrival from past encounters and as points of departure for future ones (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

#### **2.4.4.4 Functions of communication**

Communication serves certain key functions in society namely understanding and insight, creating meaningful relationships and influence and persuasion (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

First, communication helps in promoting self-understanding by providing insights into ourselves and others (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). Communicators need feedback all times and others are constantly in need of feedback, also, interpersonal, small-group, public, and media communications offer various opportunities for self-other discovery (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). Through communication experiences we learn why we are trusting or untrusting, whether we can make our thoughts and feelings clear, under what conditions we have the power to influence others, and if we can effectively decide and resolve conflicts and problems (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

Communication offers us a chance to satisfy our needs for inclusion, control and affection (Schutz, 1966). The need for inclusion is the need to be with others in social contact where we like to feel that others accept and value us and the feeling of

the need to be a full partner in a relationship (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). The need for control is our need to feel that we are capable and responsible, that we are able to deal with and manage our environment (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). The need for affection is the need to express and receive love and through communication, the feeling of being unwanted, unloved or incapable of loving is addressed (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

Communication helps in influencing and persuasion. In various communication settings, people have ample opportunities to influence each other subtly or overtly (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). Our experiences with persuasion gives us a chance to influence others so that we may try to realize our own goals (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

#### **2.4.4.5 Non-verbal communication**

According to Verderber and Verderber (2008), effective nonverbal communication, which is part of communication skills, consists of five major characteristics namely as *continuous, multichannelled, intentional or unintentional, ambiguous* and a *primary conveyor of our emotions*.

First, nonverbal communication is continuous. This is mainly because one can choose to form and send a verbal message but cannot control whether the nonverbal behavior is interpreted as a communication message. This means that as long as one is in the presence of another, the other person may perceive the behavior as communication (Verderber & Verderber, 2008).

Second, nonverbal behavior is multi-channelled since we perceive meaning from a variety of nonverbal behaviors such as postures, gestures, body movements, body appearance among others (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Third, nonverbal communication can be intentional or unintentional. This means that although we can carefully control verbal messages we send, because nonverbal behavior is continuous, we often display behaviors that we are not controlling (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Because nonverbal behavior is not controlled, it is perceived to be

more accurate than verbal communication, therefore, in cases where nonverbal behavior contradicts verbal message, people are more likely to believe the nonverbal communication they perceive (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Fourth, the meaning of a particular nonverbal communication can be ambiguous with many meanings interpreted differently by different audience members (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Finally, it is the major conveyor of our emotions because in communication when we listen to others, we base our interpretation of their feelings and emotions completely to their nonverbal behavior (Verderber & Verderber, 2008).

#### **2.4.4.6 Sources of nonverbal communication**

Verderber and Verderber (2008) describe sources of nonverbal communication. For one to have effective communication skills depending on context, the following areas need to be included. These include use of *body* (kinesics), use of *voice* (vocalics/paralanguage), use of *space* (proxemics) and *self-presentation*.

The use of kinesics includes gestures where movements of hands, arms, and fingers are used to describe or emphasize (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). However, people vary in the amount of gestures that accompany their spoken messages (Verderber & Verderber, 2008).

Eye contact is also used to communicate since it shows how much we look at others when communicating (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). However, although eye contact differs among people and situation, people who talk hold eye contact about 40% of the time and listeners nearly 70% of the time (Knapp & Hall, 2006). It is by eye contact that we express our emotions and monitor what occurs in the interaction (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Speakers who fail to maintain eye contact with their audience are perceived as insincere and not honest (Burgoon, Coker, & Coker, 1986). Facial expression is another aspect of kinesics used in nonverbal communication. Ekman (1999) observes that our facial expressions are crucial in expressing sadness, surprise, happiness, anger, disgust and fear. Facial expressions for each of these emotions are global and do not vary by culture (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Posture, as part of kinesics is another aspect which helps people

interpret how attentive, respectful, or dominant one is (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). In nonverbal behavior touching behavior is crucial through haptics where we use our hands, arms and other body parts to communicate (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Through touch, people communicate a variety of emotions and messages. However, due to individual preference, family background, or culture, people differ in their use of haptics and their reactions to unsolicited touch from others (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Touching behavior that seems appropriate to one person may be inappropriate to another as it may appear overly intimate or threatening (Verderber & Verderber, 2008).

Use of voice (vocalics) is another source of nonverbal behavior and comprises of pitch, volume, rate, quality, intonation and vocalized pauses (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). In the use of pitch, people raise or lower the vocal pitch and change volume to emphasize ideas, indicate questions or show nervousness and may also raise the pitch when nervous or lower pitch when trying to be forceful (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). In use of *volume*, whereas some people have booming voices that can be heard over long distance, others are normally soft spoken and regardless of their normal volume level, people vary their volume depending on the situation and topic of discussion (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). *Rate* is used when people talk more rapidly either when happy, frightened, nervous or excited and more slowly when they are problem solving out loud or are trying to emphasize a point (Verderber & Verderber, 2008).

Verderber and Verderber (2008) also note that each human voice has a unique *tone* since some voices are raspy, bell-like qualities and other voice qualities. Also, some voices have less intonation and sound monotone while other voices have more melody and may have a child like quality in them and as a result, people may prefer to listen to voices that have a moderate amount of intonation (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). *Vocalized pauses* also comprise of paralanguage, however, because they are not part of the intended message, occasional vocalized pauses are usually ignored by those interpreting the message but if used excessively, the audience perceives the speaker as lacking confidence (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Use of space

(proxemics) is another source of nonverbal communication as it involves the use of space and it includes personal space, physical space, and artifacts (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). Our need for and use of *personal space* arises from our biological territorial natures that view space as a protective mechanism because the amount of space needed or perceived as appropriate depends on one's personal preference, the nature of one's relationship to the other people or person or one's culture (Gamble & Gamble, 2005).

However, the key concern is the intimate distance which is regarded as appropriate for intimate conversation with close colleagues and people become uncomfortable when those perceived as "outsiders" violate this the intimate distance (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). *Physical space*, which is part of the physical environment that one exerts control not only lead us into maintaining personal space but also lead us to assert ownership claims to sections of the physical space that we occupy (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). *Artifacts* also communicate the nonverbal aspect depending on the way we arrange them in our space, however, it is worth noting that they are not merely for the function it serves but the message the artifact conveys (Verderber & Verderber, 2008).

Self-presentation cues consist of our physical appearance, clothing and grooming and our use of time (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). *Physical appearance*, which concerns the body, is one of the first aspects that others note about us with culturally based stereotypes linked to different body shapes and sizes and is used to form first impressions of others (Verderber & Verderber, 2008). *Clothing and grooming* communicate a message about a person through body art and other means and usually creates first impression of them depending on how the person dresses and is personally groomed, however, people use these nonverbal cues to help them understand who we are and how to treat us (Verderber & Verderber, 2008).

It is crucial to observe that different cultures view time differently with others having a monochronic time orientation that emphasizes on doing "one thing at a time" approach to time while others have a polychronic time orientation that focuses on doing multiple tasks at a particular time (Dahl, 2004). Thus, depending on the time

orientation used, people view appointment times and schedule as subordinate to our interpersonal relationships and as such, we alter or adapt our schedule to meet the needs of our relationships (Dahl, 2004).

#### **2.4.4.7 Functions of nonverbal communication**

O’Hair and Weimann (2012) describe key functions of nonverbal communication in society. These include *reinforcing verbal messages*, *substituting verbal messages*, *contradicting verbal messages*, *controlling interactions*, *creating immediacy* and *deceiving others*.

Nonverbal behavior clarifies meaning by reinforcing verbal messages in three ways namely repeating, complementing and accenting (O’Hair & Weimann, 2012). Repeating mirrors the verbal message, offering a clear nonverbal cue that repeats the verbal message, also, people can reinforce nonverbal messages by complementing nonverbal behavior that corresponds the verbal message it accompanies (O’Hair & Weimann, 2012). Nonverbal behaviors are used for accenting, or clarifying and emphasizing specific information in a verbal message (O’Hair & Weimann, 2012).

Nonverbal communication also substitutes verbal messages especially when words are not available or when words are inappropriate such as in situations that need silence or when signaling information that one would rather not say aloud (O’Hair & Weimann, 2012). Contradiction of verbal messages is another function of nonverbal communication either intentionally or unintentionally in order to serve a particular purpose on the part of the communicator (O’Hair & Weimann, 2012). Nonverbal communication is also used to control verbal interactions in an appropriate manner by navigating the back-and-forth of communication and if conversational regulation does not succeed, there are adverse consequences but on the other hand, if interruptions are allowed, other may perceive one as less influential (Farley, 2008).

Creating immediacy is a function of nonverbal communication with a number of nonverbal behaviors together help to create it (O’Hair & Weimann, 2012; Prager, 2000). Immediacy behaviors help one to form and manage impressions, especially

when one wants to have more social influence (Carey, 2010). Last, nonverbal communication is used to deceive others in order to protect them or out of fear, however, it can arise from self-serving motives (Carey, 2010). People look for others who appear or sound anxious, who avoid making eye contact, blink frequently or have frequent body movements (Leal & Vrij, 2008). Nonverbal behaviors can help in detecting lying and deception although this is not always the case (Canary, Cody, & Manusov, 2008).

#### **2.4.5 The relationship between level of social media use and self-esteem**

Social media complement the network of relationships present in the offline world by providing a platform for active communication between friends and more passive observation through aggregated streams of social news (Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2010). People who are active on Facebook, for instance, feel higher levels of both forms of social capital, and the effects are greater for people with lower self-esteem (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Heavy users of social media also portray greater social trust and are active in civic issues (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009) while those who feel more socially connected gravitate toward technical systems that reify those connections using sites like Facebook that allows people to reinforce fledgling and distant relationships (Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2010). Directed communication plays the expected role in bonding social capital and messages exchanged between friends are a result of both a product of the friendship and a means of facilitating and maintaining such friendships (Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2010).

Self-disclosures in social media are not a single communication act but rely on how others interpret these disclosures and the subsequent communication behaviors (Jiang, Bazarova, & Hancock, 2011). Social support from others on social media determines how an individual discloses oneself (Lui & LaRose, 2008). Individuals receive social support from other users which helps to maintain existing relationships which was found to improve quality of life in college students (Lui & LaRose, 2008) while on the other hand obtaining comments from other users on pictures and wall postings improves images that individuals have on themselves and is a way of

receiving attention from a broad spectrum of people in an indirect way (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2012). A timely response generates gratification and good feelings of self and satisfaction of personal and interpersonal desires (Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009). This self-disclosure provides a framework for a theoretical model that high disclosure generates relationship intimacy (Jiang, Bazarova, & Hancock, 2011). In one's search for intimacy, a good self-concept is a prerequisite (Sponcil & Gitimu, 2012).

Boyd and Ellison (2008b) observe that social networking sites are egocentric sites since it is the individual who is the main focus on these sites rather than the site itself. This links in with self-presentation which is a main factor with self-esteem and personalities (Boyd & Ellison, 2008b). Egocentrism is linked to internet addictions since the egocentric construction of SNS can facilitate the engagement of addictive behaviors and therefore serves as a factor that gets people using the sites in an excessive way (Boyd & Ellison, 2008b). According to psychologists, "Facebook is to blame for "friendship addiction" and fuelling insecurity in users which can be related to self-esteem" (The Telegraph, 2008, p.14). In addition, women are more prone to friendship addiction since their self-worth is largely determined by the number of online colleagues they have (The Telegraph, 2008). Researchers have also suggested that excessive use of new SNS is addictive to youth. (Echebura & de Corral, 2010).

Online social media represents significantly new opportunities for involvement in broader media cultures (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). People including celebrities use micro blogging platforms like Twitter to communicate with "followers" and "focus" and provide personal photos to be commented upon and discussed by friends and strangers (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). An evolving culture of transparency and disclosure has been noted and often lamented by scholars and traditional media yet the use of online platforms for intimate self-expression has become a key element of the overall social environment for many (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). Previous studies have found relationships between traditional media and new media behaviors suggesting that a cultural

fascination with celebrities may contribute to the ways new communication platforms are appropriated (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011).

Counts and Fellheimer (2009) observe that photo sharing serves to enhance the social presence of individuals to their close friends and family and helps to establish a common social milieu among groups. However, when presented in public or semipublic fora such as Flickr album, or Facebook profile, photos may signal the existence of relationships or even a desire for attention (Counts & Fellheimer, 2009). Online communication platforms are one space where the strategic manipulation of relational and social information is readily evident (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). Online spaces like SNS and media sharing sites can increase peoples' consciousness of the ways in which their identities are socially constructed (Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008a).

Ramirez and Boneck (2009) discovered that women are more likely to use instant messaging for maintaining relationships than men. Also, women share more photos on SNS and spend more time maintaining those sites (Rosen, Stephanone, & Lackaff, 2010). In social network analysis, the most frequently measured aspect of interpersonal relationships is tie strength, or intensity showing how close a person reports being to each network member (Ramirez & Broneck, 1996). Strong-tie contacts are characterized by frequent, reciprocal communication and usually a long stable history of interaction and consist of relationship with close family and friends (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). In contrast, weak ties consist of infrequent communication, low reciprocity and a lack of emotional closeness (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). Some people have large egocentric networks comprised of various weak-tie contacts while others have smaller egocentric networks with few strong ties (Stephanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011).

Cyber bullying is one of the challenges facing SNS users since it affects self-esteem of victims being bullied (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Common forms of cyber bullying include sending threatening text messages on SNS or uploading unflattering or humiliating pictures or videos to the internet without permission (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010) (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2007) (Lenhart, 2007). Cyber

bullying behaviors can remain “virtually” anonymous through the use of temporary throwaway e mail and instant messaging accounts, anonymous people, and victims of bullying tend to have lower self-esteem than non-victims (Wild, Flisher, Bhana, & Carl, 2004) (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008) (Glover, Gough, Johnson, & Cartwright, 2000) (Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi, & Lagerspetz, 1999).

It may be that the experience of being victimized decreases one’s self-esteem, or that those with low self-esteem are more likely to be targeted as victims (Egan & Perry, 1998). Other studies have suggested that bullies tend to have both high and low self-esteem than non-bullies (Rigby & Slee, 1991). However, other studies have consistently found that the relationship to self-esteem, regardless of its direction, is weaker among bullies than among victims (Jankauskiene, Kardelis, Sukys, & Kardeliene 2008) (Yang, Kim, Kim, Shin, & Yoon, 2006).

SNS use is related to self-esteem and psychological well-being (Ahn, 2011). Youth who frequently use SNS have more friends in the site and also more reactions on their profiles (that is, friends posted more comments and wall posts) (Ahn, 2011). Also, having more positive reactions on one’s SNS profile is correlated with higher self-esteem which is significantly correlated with satisfaction in life (Ahn, 2011). In essence, use of SNS itself does not cause feelings of well-being, rather, the positive or negative reactions that youth experience in the site are a key mechanism for their social development (Ahn, 2011).

Self-esteem also influences the way one uses social media (Lou, Nickerson, & McMorris, 2012). According to McKenna, Green and Gleason (2002), lonely people were more likely to use online communications to form close relationships with those they met online. Online communication often does not reveal visible shyness and social anxiety, which help individuals who are less socially skilled foster online friendship (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002b). Lonely people eventually brought this kind of online friendship into their real lives, through telephone conversations, exchange of letters and pictures, and face-to-face meetings and as a result, internet acquaintanceship could and did develop into close and even intimate relationships (McKenna & Bargh, 1999a).

Students in universities face various problems and challenges which may lead to other psycho social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse (Capone, Wood, Borsari, & Laird, 2007) (Walters, Vader, & Harris, 2007). Studies have shown that loneliness and low self-esteem are more prevalent among university students (Nicpon, Huser, Blank, Sollenberger, Befort & Kurpius, 2006). However, with the advent of various forms of SNS, students can use various online communication tools to communicate with their colleagues and thereby strive to address these issues (Lou, Nickerson, & McMorris, 2012).

#### **2.4.6 The relationship between self-esteem and communication skills**

Many of the descriptions of the individual with low self-esteem and the individual with high communication apprehension appear similar (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977). Research in both areas emphasizes the possibility of such a relationship and previous research in communication apprehension has clearly indicated its pervasive nature in social interaction (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977). In any interpersonal encounter, the basic requirement is communication and to function effectively, individuals must communicate with one another (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977). However for some, communication experiences have been unrewarding, indeed punishing, and as a consequence these individuals avoid situations where communication might be required (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977).

People with high communication apprehension had a high tendency to worry, be ineffective in social interaction and generally withdrawn from others and they tend to avoid situations where communication may be needed and as a result fail to get rewards associated with interaction (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977). Similarly, when they interact with others, they engage in less socially acceptable behaviors and find themselves being negatively evaluated by others (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977). All of this should be reflected in the way others act towards the apprehensive and since one's self-esteem is to a large extent a function of his or her interaction with others, the apprehensive individual

should clearly report a lowered self-image (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977).

Bean (1992) observes that self-esteem is the basis for all behavior which yields possible selves, and it is the selves that create the motivation for behavior. We develop and maintain our self-esteem through the process of taking action and then reflecting on what we have done and what others tell us about what we have done (Bean, 1992). We reflect on what we have done and can do in comparison to our expectations and the expectations of others and to the characteristics and accomplishments of others. In essence, self-esteem is not innate, but is developed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction (Bean, 1992).

In developing a new approach to building self-esteem for elementary and middle school students, Bean (1992) suggested that there are four conditions which make up children's self-esteem: the sense of connectivity, the sense of uniqueness, the sense of power, and the sense. Bean (1992) pointed out that people with high self-esteem tend to be proud of their accomplishments, act independently, assume responsibility easily, tolerate frustration, and approach new challenges with enthusiasm and feel capable of influencing others. However, those with low self-esteem tend to avoid situations that stimulate fear or anxiety, demean their own talents, feel disliked and unwanted, blame others for their failures, are overly influenced by others, become easily frustrated and feel powerless (Bean, 1992).

A positive self-evaluation leads to successful interpersonal relationships (Sternberg & Vroom, 2002). When individuals value themselves, they tend to contribute more to their interpersonal relationships. When individuals have a low self-esteem, they tend to be more defensive and contribute less to their relationships (Kernis, Golman, Paradise, Wheatman, & Whitaker, 2000). Acceptance in social relations also differs between high self-esteem and low self-esteem individuals. However, it should be noted that the relationship between communication apprehension and self-esteem does not necessarily imply that one variable is the cause of the other (Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly, & Falcione, 1977). Rather, these variables should be viewed as

involved in a reciprocal causal relationship because one is raised or lowered by external forces and an associated impact on the other should follow and therefore, it is appropriate to hypothesize that the presence of either will be highly predictive of the other (Witherspoon, Long, & Nickell, 1991) (Baron, 1998) (Burnett, 1998) (Phillips, Bobbi, & Liz, 2001). For instance, effective communication can lead to high self-esteem and vice versa (Baron, 1998). Excessive communication apprehension may be correlated with low self-esteem, poor communication skills and low educational achievement especially among students (Witherspoon, Long, & Nickell, 1991). Communication apprehension could be a factor that adversely affects students' participation and learning of adequate communication skills which leads to academic failure, which adversely affects self-esteem (Witherspoon, Long, & Nickell, 1991).

University students with a low self-esteem are less adaptable to interpersonal relationships and in contrast, those with high self-esteem have a more competent and positive self-image, leading to self-confidence and active participation in interpersonal relationships (Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). Self-esteem is therefore closely associated with interpersonal relationships (Eom & Choi, 2010). Research has shown that self-esteem is a crucial factor in determining communication competence (Park & Adam, 2005). Self-esteem and communication skills are strongly related and has a significant bearing to second language acquisition (Park & Adam, 2005) because affective factors such as motivation, personality, inter-group environment and self-esteem underlie a willingness to communicate and the factor of self-esteem including overall self-esteem and self-confidence play an important role in determining the learner's willingness to communicate (Mc Intyre, Dornyei, Clement, & Noel, 1998). Self-confidence is the most essential factor that determines learners' willingness to communicate in various contexts (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). However, lack of self confidence is a dangerous barrier to effective communication (Al-Hebaish, 2012). A number of studies have been conducted on the effects of self-esteem on communication skills (Molberg, 2010) (Al-Sibai, 2005) (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). These studies revealed that university students with high self-esteem can take

risks in learning new ideas without fear of failure since they learn from their mistakes, they work hard and eventually enhance their academic performance and communication skills (Al-Hebaish, 2012).

On the other hand, those with low self-esteem feel uncomfortable and fear academic failure because they are concerned about criticisms or being disapproved of and as a result tend to perform less successfully academically and may even be less competent in communication (Al-Sibai, 2004). Al-Hebaish (2012) argues that self-confident students are those with high self-esteem, are ready to communicate competently, they work hard, perform well and are likely to achieve academic progress. On the contrary, the issue of developing oral communication skills is more problematic when learners lack self-confidence (Al-Hebaish, 2012). Low confident learners feel uncomfortable and are afraid to communicate which can in turn affect their academic performance (Al-Hebaish, 2012). In essence, people with high self-esteem can effectively communicate unlike those with low self-esteem (Al-Hebaish, 2012).

#### **2.4.7 Moderating role of demographic characteristics**

##### **2.4.7.1 Relationship between social class and self-esteem**

Social class is typically measured using proxies such as occupational status, income, and education (Emler, 2001). In general, adults who have lower occupational status, income, and education are likely to have lower levels of self-esteem than their respective counterparts (Emler, 2001). For instance, individuals who are employed in good jobs that are characterized by high autonomy, high prestige, and low routinization have higher levels of self-esteem than do unemployed individuals or individuals who work in bad jobs (Emler, 2001). Furthermore, individuals with more income and education have higher levels of self-esteem than do persons with lower incomes and less educational attainment (Emler, 2001).

Aspirations to upward mobility are regarded as both appropriate and realistic and correspondingly, if one occupies a lowly position, the implication is that one lacks

the talent or application necessary to have escaped it (Emler, 2001). Class position therefore seems to carry a different and perhaps clearer message about one's relative worth as a person. Social class position is linked to adult self-esteem (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978 in Emler, 2001) but only modestly. One reason for this is that the level of self-esteem in adulthood is already substantially determined in adolescence (Emler, 2001). Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) as cited in Emler (2001) argue that this is because class position is an acquired or inherited status for children and adolescents, one derived from their parents' position. Social class has an influence not only on communication skills but academic performance as well (Emler, 2001). This finding is most often attributed to differences among groups in their opportunities to learn, the quality of the education to which they have access, and to their home environment (Emler, 2001).

#### **2.4.7.2 Relationship between social class and communication skills**

There is evidence that class differences impact on communication patterns (Rahman, 2014). According to Rahman (2014), the cues we use to show class differences include way of life, family, job, money and education levels. Social class is not merely about economic aspects but an entire socialization process that influences the nature and quality of the interpersonal relationships we engage with others (Rahman, 2014). Thus, a person's social class has an effect on his or her thought patterns and behavior which also influences their way of communicating (Rahman, 2014). Differences in social class and attendant differences in various related aspects such as education and lifestyle influence whom we talk with and what we talk about and as such, these differences influence our overall cultural perspective from where we perceive the world around us (Rahman, 2014).

People who interact with each other over a period of time tend to communicate in similar ways through similar speech patterns and expressions (Emler, 2001) and as a result, we are likely to interact with people from our own social class. Lott (2012) notes that parents with low income are less worried about their children's education since they could be struggling economically to buy essential commodities like food, shelter among others compared to those from middle to high economic class. As a

result, parent's social class determines the level and type of educational facilities their children will have which in turn influences their language, grammar or communication competency depending on which class of educational facility they can afford for their children (Lott, 2012).

#### **2.4.7.3 Relationship between gender and self-esteem**

Gender, like race and ethnicity, may also influence self-esteem (DuBois, Tevendale, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, & Hardesty, 2000). Males may have greater positive gender identity than females and this could account for boys' overall higher levels of self-esteem when compared to their female peers (DuBois, Tevendale, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, & Hardesty, 2000). Moreover, differential rewards for active versus passive behavior based on gender may lead male and female early adolescents to base their personal self-worth on different characteristics. Boys tend to derive self-esteem from their competence or talents and girls are more likely to develop feelings of personal self-worth based on their physical appearance (American Association of University Women, 1992).

For men, the relationship between weight and self-esteem is most visible during middle adolescence, with overweight men displaying lowest scores of self-esteem (Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001) compared to adult men. As for women, the relationship between weight and self-esteem is most visible during late adolescence, with overweight women displaying lowest scores of self-esteem compared to adult women (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003). However, the relationship between weight and self-esteem is less clear during late adolescence/early adulthood. There appears to be conflicting findings among studies using college student samples (Hyde, 2005). This means that self-esteem among undergraduate university students needs further research (Hyde, 2005).

Men need to show dominance in order to secure their place as the ideal male and retain women's attraction and have a muscular build (Olivardia, Pope, Borowiecki, & Cohane, 2004) in order to maintain their dominant status. Given that this may be an unattainable ideal, one's self-esteem could be affected and as a result, those who

fail to achieve this standard may experience changes in their self-esteem (Olivardia, Pope, Borowiecki, & Cohane, 2004). Most research, though, provides evidence that both genders, under significant pressure to maintain perfect body image, experience negative effects on their self-esteem (Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001). The societal pressure to maintain a slender physical appearance has turned BMI into a standard of achievement. BMI is a strong predictor of self-esteem for adolescent boys and girls, and this relationship does not differ between genders. People with high BMI scores tend to have lower self-esteem scores regardless of their gender (Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001).

#### **2.4.7.4 Relationship between gender and communication skills**

According to Merchant (2012), men and women perceive conversations differently. Although women use communication as a tool to enhance social connections and create relationships, men use language to exert dominance and achieve tangible outcomes (Mason, 1994). Generally, women are more expressive, tentative, and polite in conversation, while men appear to be more assertive (Merchant, 2012). These gender differences in communication styles put women at a disadvantage when interacting with others because they speak more tentatively than men, who are known to speak more assertively, thus leaving the impression that men are more confident and capable as leaders (Lakoff, 1975). Many of these gender differences in communication styles outlined make women appear subordinate to men, suggesting they should be viewed as second-class to men.

Men are goal and results-oriented as they define their sense of self through their ability in both areas (Gray, 1992). However, women are relationship oriented as they define their sense of self by their feelings and by the quality of their relationships (Gray, 1992). Men and women also differ in their communication style when they are faced with resolving a crisis or coming to a mutual conclusion (Gray, 1992). The most common communicative mistake made by both males and females occurs when talking about and resolving conflict (Gray, 1992). When resolving a problem, men follow their natural tendency to offer a solution while women seek empathy and understanding and are naturally inclined to offer unsolicited advice (Gray, 1992).

These natural tendencies often create a rift between men when communicating with the opposite sex as men and women have different approaches to conversations (Merchant, 2012).

#### **2.4.7.5 Relationship between age and self-esteem**

Mroczkowska (2003) argues that there is a positive correlation between self-esteem and age. As girls and boys go through adolescence and become adults, their self-esteem has also been shown to increase (Mroczkowska, 2003). However, previous research on self-esteem development has yielded inconsistent results with several studies reporting an increase in self-esteem (Cairns, McWhirter, Duffy, & Barry, 1990). On the other hand, other studies revealed that self-esteem does not change (Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997) or even decrease (KeltikangasJaärvinen, 1990) (McMullin & Cairney, 2004). Concerning young adulthood, the few available longitudinal studies suggest that self-esteem increases during young adulthood (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006).

Fluctuations in self-esteem reveal the changes in our social environment and maturational changes such as puberty and cognitive declines in old age (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). As these changes are experienced by most individuals at about the same age and influence individuals in a similar manner, they will produce normative shifts in self-esteem across developmental periods (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). Young children have relatively high self-esteem, which gradually declines over the course of childhood (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). Children have high self-esteem because their self-perceptions are unrealistically positive (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). However, as they develop cognitively, they begin to base their self-evaluations on external feedback and social comparisons that forms a more balanced and accurate appraisal of their academic competence, social skills, attractiveness, and other personal characteristics (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002).

During adolescence, self-esteem continues to decline (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). This is partially attributed to a decline to body image and other problems associated with puberty, the concern about the future and the challenge of academic performance (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). As time goes on, self-esteem increases gradually throughout adulthood, and reaches its peak around the late 60s where individuals increasingly occupy positions of power and status that enhances feelings of self-worth (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2002). Self-esteem declines in old age. The few studies of self-esteem in old age suggest that self-esteem begins to drop around age 70 (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). This decline may be due to the dramatic changes that occur in old age such as loss of a spouse, physical functioning and retirement among others (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). Their self-esteem reduces since they acknowledge their faults and limitations and have a diminished need to present themselves in a positive light to others. Foster, Campbell and Twenge (2003) observes that in line with this, narcissism tends to decline with age.

#### **2.4.7.6 Relationship between age and communication skills**

Communication skills partly change because of changes in physical health, depression, and cognitive decline due to aging (Zraick, Gregg, & Whitehouse, 2006). Aging is responsible for physiologic changes in hearing, voice, and speech processes (Caruso, Mueller, & Shadden, 1995). A person's age can be predicted with fair accuracy by speech characteristics including voice tremor, pitch, speaking rate, loudness, and fluency (Ryan, 1996). Some language skills remain intact, whereas others tend to decline (Ryan, 1996). For example, vocabulary, grammatical judgment, and repetition ability are relatively stable with age while comprehension of complex utterances and naming may decline (Ryan, 1996). Although changes in communication skills such as voice may be subtle and gradual, they have clear life consequences such as avoidance of social situations (Verdonck-de Leeuw & Mahieu, 2004).

## **2.5 Empirical review of related studies**

### **2.5.1 Types of information accessed on social media**

A 2002 study with 2,501 student respondents conducted by Maddens and Jones (2002) found that 42 percent of USA college students sample used the Internet to communicate socially with friends and only 10 percent of college students used the Internet primarily for entertainment (Madden, et al., 2013). In a follow-up longitudinal study, findings were compared with the 2002 study and a 2005 replication study with 7,421 student respondents (Jones, Johnson-Yale, Millermaier, & Perez, 2009). Results from this study showed Internet usage for entertainment almost tripled for students between 2005 (28 percent) and 2002 (10 percent) (Jones, Johnson-Yale, Millermaier, & Perez, 2009). Researchers suggested that e-mailing, searching, and browsing habits might have been replaced within three years by the use of Web 2.0 sites like Facebook and You Tube (Jones, Johnson-Yale, Millermaier, & Perez, 2009).

More recently, a 2010 study reports how different generations use the Internet, including millennials or those born between 1977 and 1992 (Zickuhr, 2010). All in all, the study found millennials (676) respondents frequently engage in a variety of information-seeking activities using the Internet (Zickuhr, 2010). They rely on search engines to do so with a majority of them searching for health, news, purchasing, and trip planning information (Zickuhr, 2010). Taken together, studies such as these provide trend data about students' online activities (Head & Eiselberg, 2011). In particular, the data have measured college students and their increased use of the Internet for social communication (Head & Eiselberg, 2011). A large body of scholarly studies has also delved into college students and their use of social network sites, specifically to acquire online social capital (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009).

### **2.5.2 Level of use of social media**

A study was conducted by Pfeiffer (2014) concerning the use of social media among adolescents in Dar es Salaam and Mtwara, Tanzania to determine young peoples' user behavior on social media as a platform for sexual health promotion in Tanzania. The study used questionnaires on 60 adolescents and in-depth interviews on eight students aged between 15 to 19 years in Dar es Salaam and in Mtwara, southern Tanzania. The findings revealed that youth in both regions access social media mainly on their mobile phones with Facebook as the most common social media site. Adolescents highlighted their interest in reproductive and sexual health messages and updates being delivered through humorous posts, links and clips, as well as by youth role models like music stars and actors that are entertaining and reflect up-to-date trends of modern youth culture.

Another study was conducted by Jagero and Murithi (2013) concerning the extent of social media use among private university students in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The research design used in this study was cross-sectional descriptive research design in which the target population was 7,337 students and a sample of 356 was selected through simple random sampling. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, tables, standard deviation and percentages. The findings revealed that many students spend 30 minutes to one hour in a day and get connected several times per day. However, they disagreed that they spend excess time using social media than studying. From these findings, it seems that despite using social media, users succeeded academically.

A study was conducted by Mehdizadeh (2010), which was published in the journal *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking* of 100 Facebook users and measured activities such as photo sharing, wall postings and status updates and frequency and duration of use. After measuring each subject using the Narcissism Personality Inventory and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Mehdizadeh discovered that narcissists and people with lower self-esteem were more likely to spend more than an hour a day on Facebook and were more prone to post self-promotional photos and showcase themselves through status updates and wall activity. Also, gender

differences were found to influence the type of self-promotional content presented by individual Facebook users (Mehdizadeh, 2010).

Carpenter (2012) conducted a study entitled *Narcissism on Facebook: Self-promotional and Anti-Social Behavior* which was published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*. Carpenter found that for the average narcissist, Facebook offers a gateway for hundreds of shallow relationships and emotionally detached communication. More importantly, he found that generally, social networking allows the user a great deal of control over how he or she is presented to and perceived by peers and other users (Carpenter, 2012).

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) survey sample included 292 individuals, which measured self-promoting Facebook behaviors, such as posting status updates, photos of oneself and updating profile information and several anti-social behaviors, including seeking social support more than providing it, getting angry when others do not comment on status updates and retaliating against negative comments (Carpenter, 2012). The University of Georgia (2012) revealed that social networks play on our self-esteem and to some extent on more narcissistic tendencies. The researchers asked college students to either edit their social networking page on MySpace or Facebook or to use Google Maps. Those who edited their MySpace page later scored higher on a measure of narcissism, while those who spent time on their Facebook page scored higher on self-esteem (University of Georgia 2012). The findings further reveal that editing and constructing oneself on these social networking sites, even for a short period of time, seem to have an effect on how one perceives himself or herself and users are feeling better about themselves in both cases. However, it was also found out that in some cases they are tapping into narcissism and in other cases into self-esteem (University of Georgia, 2012).

A study was conducted by Paramboukis, Skues and Wise in 2016 on the relationship between narcissism, self-esteem and Instagram use. This study was motivated by unsubstantiated media claims that increased narcissism was due to excess use of social media. A sample of 200 respondents responded to an online survey consisting of the Five Factor Narcissism Inventory (FFNI), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale,

and the Instagram usage, Behaviors and Affective Responses Questionnaire constructed for the study. The results showed that there was weak relationship between Narcissism and Instagram use which showed that media concerns were exaggerated. However, the negative correlation between vulnerable narcissism and self-esteem warrants more research (Paramboukis, Skues, & Wise, 2016).

Among undergraduate students in the USA, 68% surveyed used social media sites at least one hour a day to communicate and socialize (Lin, Peng, Kim, Kimand, & Larose, 2010). At University of Punjab, in Lahore, Pakistan, studies show that despite spending time on internet, students seem to succeed academically with a majority (62.3%) not facing any deficiency in achieving their academic targets (Ahmed and Qazi, 2011).

Oluwatoyin (2011) observes that in Nigeria, users of social media spend an average of two to six hours studying while non users spend between eight and 17 hours studying per week which led to lower academic performance in form of lower grade points. This study contradicts the one conducted among university students in Pakistan by Ahmed and Qazi (2011) who revealed that students manage their time efficiently and fulfill their study requirements effectively, and that use of social media does not have an adverse impact on their academic performance. Schulten (2000) observes that students spend an average of 40 to 50 minutes a day surfing on Facebook. Many students revealed that they spend three to four minutes during each visit on social media to check updates, making several visits a day and others spend eight hours a day on the website (Rouis, Limayem, & Sangari, 2011). In a study conducted at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota among male and female students, the findings revealed that time spent on social media decreased with the age of the respondents (Tham, 2011). Also, the results revealed that female college students spent more time on social media compared male students (Tham & Ahmed, 2011).

### **2.5.3 Mediating effect of self-esteem**

A comprehensive USA study by Hart and Risley in 1995 showed that class and language development are clearly linked (National Centre for Education Statistics, 1995). Once a month for two-and-a-half years they went into the homes of 42 professional, working-class and welfare families recording every single word that was uttered to the child concerned (National Centre for Education Statistics, 1995). They found that by the age of four the child from a professional family already had 50 million words spoken to him, the child from a working-class family 30 million, and the one from the family on welfare just 12 million (National Centre for Education Statistics, 1995). It was also found that the vocabulary of a child of three from the professional class was greater than that of an adult from a family receiving benefits. This clearly showed that those from a higher social class had a higher self-esteem which enhanced their communication skills unlike those in lower social class (Emler, 2001).

### **2.5.4 Moderating effect of demographic characteristics between self-esteem and communication skills**

In a study conducted by Commonwealth Fund Health quality survey in 2001, it was found that there were substantially higher rates of difficulties in communication for minorities such as African-Americans, Hispanic and Asian patients than their white counterparts (Collins, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2002). The minorities believed they would receive better health care if they belonged to the white race that is a majority in the population (Collins, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2002). The whites had a higher self-esteem than their minority counterparts therefore affecting their communications skills positively unlike the minority group (Collins, Rahilly, & Richardson, 2002).

In a study conducted by Street, Gordon, Ward, Krupat and Kravitz in 2005 among patients at a health care facility between doctors and patients, doctor's information giving was positively influenced by the patient's communication style such as question asking, affective expressiveness and opinion-giving (Emler, 2001). More affective expressiveness and being assertive on the patient's side, which is strongly

related to his or her educational level leads to more information giving on the doctor's side (Emler, 2001). More educated patient's receive more diagnostic and health information than their lower educated counterparts (Emler, 2001).

In another study by Street, Gordon, Ward, Krupat and Kravitz in 2005, a comparison was done to test the degree to which parent's personal and interactive characteristics determine the variation in doctor-parent interactions during pediatric consultations (Emler, 2001). Social class was measured as educational level and more educated parents are not only more expressive and assertive but also ask more questions (Emler, 2001). In another study, in a patient-doctor interaction, doctors noted that they explained and listened more to patients from higher social classes and also examined them more than those from lower social classes since those from higher social classes are more inquisitive and appear knowledgeable than those from lower social classes who were passive (Emler, 2001).

## **2.6 Critique of the existing literature relevant to the study**

The views by various scholars in the literature offer insight into the study. However, there are some shortcomings noted. First, in discussing about various sources of self-esteem, Emler (2001) did not mention use of social media as one of the key factors and yet other scholars such as Patchin and Hinduja (2010), Ahn (2011), Heine, Takemoto, Moskalenko, Lasaleta and Heinrich (2008), Ito and others (2008) just to mention a few emphasized the role of social media in shaping self-esteem of users.

Secondly, Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi and Lagerspetz (1999), Rigby and Slee and (1991) Jankauskiene, Kardelis, Sukys and Kardeliene (2008) pointed out that self-esteem and cyber-bullies have both high and low self-esteem than non-bullies. However, there was no clear explanation as to why this is the case.

Third, throughout the literature provided by scholars such as Gummow (2014), Pomery and others (2012) and Gibbons and Buunk (1999) just to name a few, the cultural orientation element was not highlighted or mentioned. There seems to be an assumption that social media influences self-esteem and communication skills of

users yet they have different cultural backgrounds that cannot be ignored. It is worth noting that social media does not operate in a vacuum since users exist in varying cultural contexts.

Fourth, all scholars have only linked social media and self-esteem and social media and communication skills separately. It would have been worth specifically to investigate whether the self-esteem of social media users influence their communication skills.

Fifth, although a high self-esteem is desirable among humans for effective communication, there appears to be an over-emphasis of its benefits by scholars such as Baumeister and Leary (1995), Heatherton and Wyland (1991) and Taylor and Brown (1988) to name a few without providing information on its shortcomings as well. For instance, a high self-esteem, if uncontrolled, may lead to poor interpersonal relations and communication since a person may undermine colleagues and assume that he or she is superior compared to the rest.

Lastly, none of the scholars discussed whether gender orientation has a role, if any, on the influence of the use of social media on self-esteem and communication skill. In other words, is there a difference in self-esteem and communication skills between men and women as a result of using social media?

## **2.7 Research gap**

The empirical studies conducted by various scholars have provided insights into how social media are used for different purposes and the length of time spent on various sites online, in addition, these studies have to some extent, shown the relations between use of social media and influence on self-esteem. However, none of these studies investigated the influence of social media use on communication skills of users. Also, none of the scholars attempted to investigate whether there is a relationship between social media use, self-esteem and communication skills among those who use social media. This study specifically extends and attempts to find out

how the self-esteem (as a result of using social media) of social media users influences their communication skills. These are gaps that the study intends to fill.

## **2.8 Summary**

Undergraduate students use social media sites to search for various information depending on the needs that they want to satisfy. It was also noted that use of social media has a profound influence on written and spoken communication skills of users who spent time surfing online. Use of social media influences the self-esteem of undergraduate youth who often compare themselves in terms of achievements in various spheres. A high self-esteem is experienced when users compare themselves to those perceived as not achieving much in their life or those perceived as ‘failures’. However, low self-esteem is experienced by users when they discover that their online colleagues seem to be achieving more than them in various spheres of life. A high self-esteem and low self-esteem positively and negatively influenced communication skills respectively although use of social media was not mentioned as one of the sources of self-esteem. Demographic characteristics such as social class, age and gender influence self-esteem and communication skills of social media users.

## CHAPTER THREE

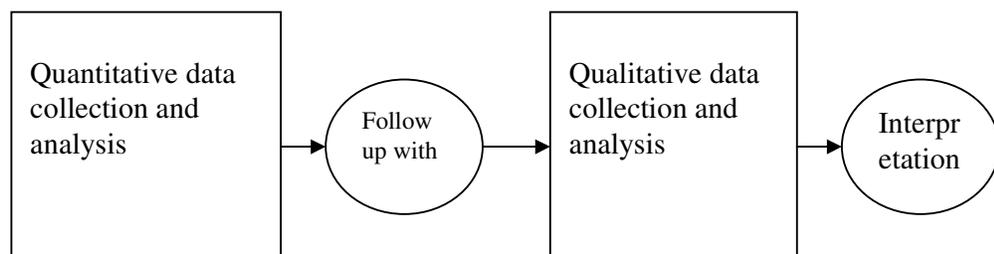
### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods of research that were used. The following sections were addressed namely research design, study population, sampling size and techniques, data collection instruments and procedure, pilot testing, data analysis and presentation before concluding with ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Research design

This study used mixed methods research. Mixed methods research is defined as a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to understand a research problem (Creswell, 2009). Mixed research is increasingly recognized as valuable because it can use respective strengths of each approach (Curry, Nembhard, & Bradley, 2013). Pairing both methods achieved various aims including corroborating findings, generate more complete data and using results from one method to enable insights attained with the complementary method (Curry, Nembhard, & Bradley, 2013). Data produced by combined methods enhances the validity and reliability of research findings (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2004).



**Figure 3.1: The Explanatory Sequential Design** (Adapted from Creswell, et al., 2003)

This study used explanatory sequential design which is one of the methods of mixed research. This design is characterized by first collecting and analyzing quantitative data and in the second stage, collecting and analyzing qualitative data as a follow-up to the quantitative results (Creswell, plano, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). In the third phase, the researcher connects the first two phases by using the quantitative results to shape the qualitative research questions (Creswell, plano, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

This design was useful for confirming results from one type of data with those of another or developing a multi-faceted, complementary picture of a phenomenon (Stentz, 2012). This approach aided the researcher to obtain complete findings from both quantitative and qualitative data and therefore establish valid conclusions. The explanatory sequential design was advantageous since it was conducted conveniently in two separate stages thereby minimizing confusion on the part of the researcher between quantitative and qualitative data, also, it lends itself to emergent approaches that can give the researcher more insights (Creswell, plano, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem, while qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth (Creswell, plano, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

### **3.3 Population**

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), a population is a group of individuals, objects or items that have at least one thing in common from which samples are taken for measurement. In this study, the population included undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza Campus. The general study population has one thing in common, namely being undergraduate students in a private university with 10,807 students (SAUT Prospectus, 2014). The selection of this university was guided by the following. First, it has consistently been ranked among the best top ten universities out of 26 universities (16 comprising of private and 10 comprising of public) in Tanzania and the best private university in Tanzania

owing to its advanced ICT facilities, a well-equipped library and an increasing number of academic staff with rich experiences drawn from various parts of the world that share different perspectives on various issues with students in class sessions. The exposure among students was appropriate especially on issues that deal with social media that changes with new trends periodically and which formed a rich source of data (Berkman, 2013).

Second, SAUT has the largest population of all other private universities in Tanzania (Tanzania Commission of Universities, 2016) which is a unique characteristic considering that it is a relatively new university having been established in 1998 (SAUT Prospectus, 2014). This gave the researcher an opportunity to get a large sample from various programmes. Third, owing to its international partnership with many other higher learning institutions, SAUT was ranked among institutions that engaged in student exchanges that exposed them to global environments, a characteristic that exists to date (SAUT Prospectus, 2014) (Tanzania Commission of Universities, 2016). This exposure led to students becoming keen to engage on various social media sites. The selection of undergraduate students as respondents in this study was informed by the fact that they are prone to or more likely to spend most of their time using various SNS (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011) (Wecker, 2012) (Vanhergen & Husband, 2011). Also, the study was done in Tanzania because unlike her East African neighbors and other North African countries that have experienced wars and political instability partly exacerbated by the increased use of social media, Tanzania has continued to enjoy political stability and national unity in spite of the same effect of the social media wave experienced all over (Nalwoga, n.d).

### **3.4 Sampling frame**

The sampling frame in table 3.2 below provides the overall population in the university (10,807) that was used to obtain valid and reliable results for the study. There are 12 academic programmes at undergraduate level at SAUT. This population in the sampling frame is comprehensive and necessary since it guided the researcher in data collection.

**Table 3.1: Sampling frame with a list of undergraduate programmes at SAUT, Mwanza Campus** Source: SAUT Prospectus (2014)

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> YEAR</b>	<b>4<sup>TH</sup> YEAR</b>
BBA	179	282	340	NIL
BSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	152	254	168	NIL
BSc in Tourism	36	17	46	NIL
BSc in Electrical Engineering	31	19	20	12
BSc in Civil Engineering	22	3	10	2
BA in Mass Communication	171	258	262	NIL
BA in Public Relations and Marketing	480	762	788	NIL
BA in Economics	31	86	179	NIL
BA in Sociology	117	310	371	NIL
BA with Education	1041	1158	1198	NIL
BA Philosophy with Education	35	192	176	NIL
Bachelor of Laws	249	511	463	376

### 3.5 Sample and sampling technique

#### 3.5.1 Sample size

In the quantitative method, the total population for the study was 10,807 undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza Campus (SAUT Prospectus, 2014). Yamane (1967) provides a formula for calculating sample sizes. Therefore, in order to arrive at the required number of undergraduate students for the study, the following formula was used

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = the total population size. In this case, 10,807 students.

e = the level of precision which is 0.05

Therefore, n= 10,807

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{10,807}{1 + 10,807(0.05)^2} \\ & \frac{10,807}{10808(0.0025)} \\ & = 399.96 \text{ which is approximately } 400 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the sample size of 400 students was used as a study proportion that aided in obtaining the actual number of respondents in the quantitative stage.

As for qualitative data, the researcher had six FGDs comprising of two programmes with one student representing each year of study. For example, BBA and BSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management, both three year programmes, had three students each representing a year of study to make a total of six to make one FGD such that first year for a programme had one representative, second year with one

representative followed by third year respectively. However, four year programmes such as BSc Electrical Engineering and BSc Civil Engineering had four students each representing a year of study. This process was done for all the 12 academic programmes leading to a total of six FGDs and a total of 39 students (see figure 3.3 below).

**Table 3.2: Sampling frame for population for FGDs** (Researcher, 2017)

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> YEAR</b>	<b>4<sup>TH</sup> YEAR</b>
BBA (FGD 1)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management (FGD 1)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BSc in Tourism (FGD 2)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BSc in Electrical Engineering (FGD 2)	Student X	Student X	Student X	Student X
BSc in Civil Engineering (FGD 3)	Student X	Student X	Student X	Student X
BA in Mass Communication (FGD 3)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BA in Public Relations and Marketing (FGD 4)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BA in Economics (FGD 4)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BA in Sociology (FGD 5)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BA with Education (FGD 5)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
BA Philosophy with Education (FGD 6)	Student X	Student X	Student X	
Bachelor of Laws (FGD 6)	Student X	Student X	Student X	Student X

### **3.5.2 Sampling techniques**

For quantitative data, multi-stage sampling design was used to select the sample from the survey. Multistage sampling refers to sampling plans where the sampling is carried out in stages using smaller and smaller sampling units at each stage (Creswell, 2009). Stratified multi-stage designs are the commonest of all types of research designs since they combine, as regards to cost and efficiency the advantages of both stratification and multi-stage sampling (Creswell, 2009). Multi-stage sampling design is appropriate since the study sample was selected in stages using stratified random and systematic random sampling techniques respectively.

In the first stage, students were stratified into the various undergraduate programmes to create a sampling frame showing how many students are enrolled in each programme from first year to third or fourth year respectively, depending on the programme duration (see table 3.4). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Ndati (2013) observe that the goal of stratified random sampling is to achieve desired representation from various sub-groups in the population. Subjects are selected in a way that existing sub-groups in the population are more or less reproduced in the sample, hence the need for stratification.

**Table 3.3: Total population per academic programme (Researcher, 2017)**

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>TOTAL POPULATION FOR PROGRAMME</b>
BBA	801
BSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	574
BSc in Tourism	99
BSc in Electrical Engineering	82
BSc in Civil Engineering	37
BA in Mass Communication	691
BA in Public Relations and Marketing	2030
BA in Economics	296
BA in Sociology	798
BA with Education	3,397
BA Philosophy with Education	403
Bachelor of Laws	1,599

The second stage was to determine how many students in each undergraduate programme will be selected between first to fourth years depending on the programme duration (see table 3.5). This was acquired by multiplying the overall number of students in each programme with the sample size (proportion) used in the study (in this case 400) divided by the total population of the undergraduate students in the university which is 10,807.

**Table 3.4: Proportion of students selected per academic programme** (Researcher, 2017)

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>CALCULATIONS</b>	<b>STUDENTS TO BE SELECTED PER PROGRAMME</b>
BBA	$801 \times 400 = 29.64$ 10,807	30
BSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	$574 \times 400 = 21.24$ 10,807	21
BSc in Tourism	$99 \times 400 = 3.6$ 10,807	4
BSc in Electrical Engineering	$82 \times 400 = 3.035$ 10,807	3
BSc in Civil Engineering	$37 \times 400 = 1.36$ 10,807	1
BA in Mass Communication	$691 \times 400 = 25.57$ 10,807	26
BA in Public Relations and Marketing	$2,030 \times 400 = 75.13$ 10,807	75
BA in Economics	$296 \times 400 = 10.95$ 10,807	11
BA in Sociology	$744 \times 400 = 27.53$ 10,807	27
BA with Education	$3,397 \times 400 = 125.7$ 10,807	126
BA Philosophy with Education	$403 \times 400 = 14.91$ 10,807	15
Bachelor of Laws	$1599 \times 400 = 59.18$ 10,807	59

The third stage was to determine how many students in each class in each year of each programme were selected. The study proportion of the university (400) was multiplied by the number of students in each class (in each programme), and then divided by the total population of the university (10,807). This procedure was done for all the 12 undergraduate programmes (see table 3.6).

**Table 3.5: Proportion of students selected per class in a year (Researcher, 2017)**

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>CALCULATIONS</b>	<b>STUDENTS NEEDED PER CLASS IN EACH YEAR</b>
BBA	First year $179 \times 400 = 6.62$ 10,807  Second year $282 \times 400 = 10.43$ 10,807  Third year $340 \times 400 = 12.58$ 10,807	7  10  13
BSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	First year $152 \times 400 = 5.62$ 10,807 Second year $254 \times 400 = 9.40$ 10,807  Third year $168 \times 400 = 6.21$ 10,807	6  9  6
BSc in Tourism	First year $36 \times 400 = 1.33$ 10,807  Second year $17 \times 400 = 0.62$ 10,807  Third year $46 \times 400 = 1.70$ 10,807	1  1  2
BSc in Electrical Engineering	First year $31 \times 400 = 1.14$ 10,807	1

	<p>Second year  <math>19 \times 400 = 0.70</math>  10,807</p> <p>Third year  <math>20 \times 400 = 0.74</math>  10,807</p> <p>Fourth year  <math>12 \times 400 = 0.44</math>  10,807</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>0</p>
BSc in Civil Engineering	<p>First year  <math>22 \times 400 = 0.81</math>  10,807</p> <p>Second year  <math>3 \times 400 = 0.11</math>  10,807</p> <p>Third year  <math>10 \times 400 = 0.37</math>  10,807</p> <p>Fourth year  <math>2 \times 400 = 0.07</math>  10,807</p>	<p>1</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p>
BA in Mass Communication	<p>First year  <math>171 \times 400 = 6.32</math>  10,807</p> <p>Second year  <math>258 \times 400 = 9.54</math>  10,807</p> <p>Third year  <math>262 \times 400 = 9.69</math>  10,807</p>	<p>6</p> <p>10</p> <p>10</p>
BA in Public Relations and Marketing	<p>First year  <math>480 \times 400 = 17.76</math>  10,807</p> <p>Second year  <math>762 \times 400 = 28.20</math>  10,807</p> <p>Third year  <math>788 \times 400 = 29.16</math>  10,807</p>	<p>18</p> <p>28</p> <p>29</p>
BA in Economics	<p>First year  <math>31 \times 400 = 1.147</math>  10,807</p> <p>Second year  <math>86 \times 400 = 3.18</math>  10,807</p> <p>Third year  <math>179 \times 400 = 6.62</math></p>	<p>1</p> <p>3</p> <p>7</p>

	10,807	
BA in Sociology	First year $117 \times 400 = 4.33$ 10,807	4
	Second year $310 \times 400 = 11.47$ 10,807	11
	Third year $371 \times 400 = 13.73$ 10,807	14
BA with Education	First year $1041 \times 400 = 38.53$ 10,807	39
	Second year $1158 \times 400 = 42.86$ 10,807	43
	Third year $1198 \times 400 = 44.34$ 10,807	44
BA Philosophy with Education	First year $35 \times 400 = 1.29$ 10,807	1
	Second year $192 \times 400 = 7.10$ 10,807	7
	Third year $176 \times 400 = 6.51$ 10,807	7
Bachelor of Laws	First year $249 \times 400 = 9.21$ 10,807	9
	Second year $511 \times 400 = 18.91$ 10,807	19
	Third year $463 \times 400 = 17.13$ 10,807	17
	Fourth year $376 \times 400 = 13.91$ 10,807	14

In the fourth and last stage, systematic random sampling technique was used to select those who were considered as actual respondents in the study (table 3.7). In

systematic random sampling, every Kth case in the population frame is selected for inclusion in the sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). By using class registers as the sampling frame, the researcher divided the total number of students in each class in each year (in each programme) by the number of students needed (determined from table 3.6 in the previous stage) in order to get the sampling interval. Sampling interval is the distance between the cases that are selected for the sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). A total of 938 students were selected before using the sampling interval to determine the actual population that were final respondents.

**Table 3.6: Students selected from class registers (Researcher, 2017)**

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>CALCULATIONS FROM CLASS LISTS OF EACH YEAR IN EACH PROGRAMME</b>	<b>NUMBER OF STUDENTS SELECTED IN EACH CLASS IN EACH YEAR</b>
BBA	First year $\frac{179}{7} = 25.57$ Second year $\frac{282}{10} = 28.2$ Third year $\frac{340}{13} = 26.15$	26  28  26
BSc in Procurement and Supply Chain Management	First year $\frac{152}{6} = 25.33$ Second year $\frac{254}{9} = 28.22$ Third year $\frac{168}{6} = 28$	25  28  28
BSc in Tourism	First year $\frac{36}{1} = 36$ Second year $\frac{17}{1} = 17$ Third year $\frac{46}{2} = 23$	36  17  23

BSc in Electrical Engineering	First year 31 = 31 1 Second year 19 = 19 1 Third year 20 = 20 1 Fourth year 12 = 0 0	31   19   20   0
BSc in Civil Engineering	First year 22 = 22 1 Second year 3 = 0 0 Third year 10 = 0 0 Fourth year 2 = 0 0	22   0   0   0
BA in Mass Communication	First year 171 = 28.5 6 Second year 258 = 25.8 10 Third year 262 = 26.2 10	29   26   26
BA in Public Relations and Marketing	First year 480 = 26.66 18 Second year 762 = 27.21 28 Third year 788 = 27.17 29	27   27   27
BA in Economics	First year 31 = 31 1 Second year 86 = 28.6 3 Third year 179 = 25.57 7	31   29   26

BA in Sociology	First year 117 = 29.25 4	29
	Second year 310 = 28.18 11	28
	Third year 371 = 26.5 14	27
BA with Education	First year 1041 = 26.69 39	27
	Second year 1158 = 26.93 43	27
	Third year 1198 = 27.22 44	27
BA Philosophy with Education	First year 35 = 35 1	35
	Second year 192 = 27.42 7	27
	Third year 176 = 25.14 7	25
Bachelor of Laws	First year 249 = 27.66 9	28
	Second year 511 = 26.89 19	27
	Third year 463 = 27.23 17	27
	Fourth year 376 = 26.85 14	27

Finally, the researcher selected a random number between 1 and this value (namely the sampling interval) for each class in each year in each programme to get the first respondents of the samples that was the beginning point for the selection of the rest of the respondents (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). From this point, each Kth case on

the class register was selected using the sampling interval until the selection was completed (Ndati, 2013). This sampling procedure was used in all the 12 undergraduate programmes (table 3.8) to obtain a final list of 503 students that were used in the quantitative phase of the study.

For qualitative data, non-probability or biased sampling was used. In this case, the researcher used two out of the three types of non-probability sampling namely purposive sampling and snowball sampling. In purposive sampling, the researcher began by purposely selecting one respondent from each of the 12 programmes from the quantitative phase to help identify their colleagues who were not given questionnaires so that those selected formed part of those who were included in the FGDs (Kombo & Tromp, 2006) (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Snowball sampling begins with a few people that gradually increases the sample size as new cases are mentioned by the people one started with (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). In this case, the 12 students selected in purposive sampling aided in identifying their colleagues who were not used in the quantitative stage since they were familiar with each other. For example, in implementing snowball sampling, a BBA student who was selected purposely by the researcher led the researcher to a colleague who also led to another and so forth. This was done for all the 12 programmes. To enforce this approach and ensure that respondents who were in the quantitative phase do not participate in the FGD, the researcher cross-checked using a tag earlier prepared to differentiate them and eventually obtained the actual respondents (see table 3.3).

### **3.6 Data collection instruments**

#### **3.6.1 Structured questionnaires**

Questionnaires are one of the key instruments used in data collection. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observe that there are three types of questionnaires namely closed-ended or structured, open-ended or unstructured and finally a mixture of both types. Although each has its own strengths and weaknesses, closed-ended questionnaires provided the researcher with quantitative and numerical data that makes it efficient to

analyze data (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Although the survey is useful for measuring the incidence of a particular behavior, it cannot fully investigate motivations beliefs and values that affect behavior (Campbell, Clelan, Collumbien, & Southwick, 1999). However, with alternative approaches, such as FGDs and interviews, survey method can be complemented effectively (Campbell, Clelan, Collumbien, & Southwick, 1999). In line with this discussion, quantitative data was collected from undergraduate students using self-administered questionnaires.

A self-administered structured questionnaire is defined as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis (Babbie, 1990). Self-administered questionnaires were used to obtain important information about the population and each item in the questionnaire was developed to address a specific objective (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The self-administered structured questionnaire included structured questions that included specific questions with options for respondents to select from (Acharya, 2010). The questionnaire also included Likert-Scale that determined whether the respondents agree or disagree with statements. According to Acharya (2010), most of the quantitative data collection operations use structured questionnaires.

### **3.6.2 Focus group guide**

This is the second tool or instrument that was used by the researcher in data collection. Kombo and Tromp (2006) point out that focus group guide provide the respondent with an opportunity to provide genuine information directly to the researcher that can be easily interpreted in mixed research method. Also, the researcher gets first hand information from the respondent without hesitation due to the friendly interaction that exists (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Kombo and Trump (2006) observe that some of the strengths of interviews include ease of measuring attitudes and other related issues of interest, allows further probe, allows good interpretive validity, useful for confirmation and lastly relatively high response rates among others, hence the justification for using interview schedule. Focus groups are a special type of group used to gather information from members of a clearly defined target audience and consists of between six to twelve people (Rennekamp & Martha,

2008). A facilitator guides the group based on a predetermined set of topics in a focus group guide and creates an environment that encourages participants to share their perceptions and points of view (Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins, & Popjoy, 1998).

Focus groups are a qualitative data collection method, meaning that the data is descriptive and cannot be measured numerically (Rennekamp & Martha, 2008). FGDs elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context and enable the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time (Rennekamp & Martha, 2008). They can be used either as a method in their own right or as a complement to other methods and validity checking (Rennekamp & Martha, 2008). FGDs aid the researcher obtain information in a natural way which would otherwise not have been acquired in the quantitative method where questionnaires are used (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

Freitas, Oliveira, Jenkins and Popjoy (1998) point out that a single FGD is inadequate since it is not representative of the population and has the danger of members' reluctance to participate. Also, in determining the size of the FGD, the researcher ensured that the group is small enough that all participants have an opportunity to share their views and large enough to accord everyone an opportunity to provide a diversity of perceptions (Oppenheim, 1993) (Krueger, 1994) (Morgan, 1998) (Mattar, 1994).

### **3.7 Data collection procedure**

Data was collected using mixed methods approach through structured questionnaires, FGDs and interviews. Explanatory Sequential Design is characterized by first collecting and analyzing quantitative data followed by collecting and analyzing qualitative data as a follow-up to the quantitative results (Creswell, Plano, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). In the third phase, the researcher connected the first two phases by using the quantitative results to shape the qualitative research questions (Creswell, Plano, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The aim of this approach was to offset weaknesses in one method with the strengths of another. The quantitative data was crucial to guarantee a generalization of the results and to analyze data statistically

(Ndati, 2013). Complementary qualitative data was collected to ensure consistency with the survey research or comparison (Creswell, 2009). Using both structured questionnaire and interview schedule to collect data assisted in validating the findings (Ndati, 2013).

### **3.7.1 Survey**

The researcher used survey method. Survey is defined as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables and needs the collection of quantifiable information (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) with self-administered structured questionnaires as tools to obtain data.

The researcher self-administered the questionnaires where respondents were requested to personally complete them after hand delivery by the researcher and research assistants. In this study, the researcher opted to personally deliver the questionnaires to the respondents with the aid of two research assistants for the following reasons. First, it is a cheaper and quicker method since questionnaires can easily be distributed in large numbers to scattered respondents in a short time (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Secondly, self-administered questionnaires are objective and do not suffer from bias (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

Third, self-administered questionnaires are appropriate since questions follow a certain order and respondents can answer questions procedurally without being confused (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Also, self-administered questionnaires give respondents an opportunity to fill in answers independently (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Lastly, self-administered questionnaires are convenient for respondents since they can fill them at their own time and speed without interference (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Questionnaires are a well-established tool in social science research for acquiring information on particular social characteristics, present and past behavior, standards of behavior or attitudes and their beliefs and reasons for action concerning the topic under investigation (Bulmer, 2004).

### **3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions**

The researcher, using a focus group guide as a tool in the FGD, purposively selected six to seven students who were active on social media for each FGD with the assistance of a respondent from each programme of each year who was not previously in the quantitative stage and who was familiar with colleagues and share a class. In total, 39 students participated in FGDs with each group having six to seven students and a total of six FGDs with each respondent representing a specific year of study. For instance, a three year programme had three respondents while a four year programme such as Bsc Electrical Engineering and Bsc Civil Engineering were represented by four respondents. In addition, apart from the years of study and programmes represented as criteria for selection into the FGD, the researcher attempted to consider gender where applicable so as to get a variety of views although it was not the main focus of the study. The researcher ensured minimal familiarity among respondents in order to ensure free maximum participation, for concentration purposes and freedom to express oneself which helps to achieve objectivity of the process (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). This cannot be easily attained due to distractions from side discussions when they are too familiar to each other . There was note taking to ensure that responses are captured.

According to Ndati (2013), each focus group should begin with an introduction and the researcher must outline the goals of the study and the reasons for recording the sessions. The researcher had one research assistant who captured information in writing. In addition, respondents should be allowed to express themselves freely in order for the researcher to exploit group dynamics and benefit from quality data in FGD (Ndati, 2013). Issues that were covered in the FGD were guided by the objectives of the study.

The data collection was conducted in two months for both quantitative and qualitative phases by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants.

### **3.8 Pilot test**

A pilot test is defined as feasibility studies which are a small scale version(s), or trial run(s), done in preparation for the major study (Barlett, 2013). One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated (Barlett, 2013). This gave the researcher a justification to conduct it.

According to Simon (2011), data and respondents from the pilot study should not be included again in the main study in order to avoid bias. In view of this, the researcher, through respective lecturers, selected a total of 39 undergraduate students. Each undergraduate programme had three to four representatives depending on the duration of the respective programme. For instance, if it was a three-year programme, there were three representatives each representing a year and if it is a four year programme such as BSc Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering or Bachelor of Laws, there were four representatives each representing a specific year. This led to the researcher obtaining 39 respondents for the quantitative stage. As for qualitative data, the researcher, again through lecturers, selected a total of 12 students with each representing the 12 programmes regardless of the year of study of the students to form two FGDs with each having six students in total. Those selected at the pilot stage were not used in the final study either in the quantitative or qualitative data in the main stage. The results of the pilot study revealed that students used various social media sites depending on their needs. Facebook and WhatsApp were the most popular sites with the latter leading in use followed by the former.

Questionnaires were pre-tested to check the vocabulary, consistency and ambiguity so as to provide a basis for any amendments to be made (Acharya, 2010). For instance, the researcher noted that some questions were open-ended and respondents found it difficult to answer with some providing varying answers that would have made analysis difficult. In addition, the questionnaires were too long and respondents took more time to fill them. This led to some amendments to ensure that respondents took a short time to fill with minimal mental fatigue. After the pilot study, the

researcher amended the questionnaires by including Likert-Scale that had more specific questions that had the same meaning to all respondents and accommodated their answers, which is in line with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). Also, the questionnaire was shortened by either merging some questions or deleting unnecessary ones so as to capture more relevant and measurable responses. The FGD guide was also reduced by merging some questions so as to capture key responses since they were too long and some questions repetitive.

### **3.9 Data processing and analysis**

#### **3.9.1 Quantitative data**

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey and making deductions and inferences (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). It involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences (Ndati, 2013). Both qualitative and quantitative data were triangulated in order to enhance validity and reliability of findings. After conducting multi-stage sampling method at different stages (see this chapter), the study acquired 400 respondents in the quantitative stage and 39 respondents in the qualitative stage which totals to 439 respondents.

The researcher conducted descriptive and inferential statistics in data analysis. Correlations were also done to determine if there was any relationship or association between variables. First, a correlation was done to determine if there was any association between variables, which is in line with the views of Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). This was done namely between social media and self-esteem, self-esteem and communication skills and use of social media and communication skills. Further correlations were done between demographic characteristics and self-esteem and between demographic characteristics and communication skills. Regression is defined as a statistical tool used to investigate the relationship between variables where the researcher seeks to ascertain if there is a causal effect of one variable on another (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In view of the study, regressions were done namely between social media and self-esteem, self-esteem and communication skills

and to determine whether demographic characteristics moderate the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills.

The results of correlation were used to determine whether self-esteem plays a mediation role between social media and communication skills and whether social class moderates the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills. A conclusion was made using descriptive statistics where statistical procedures to specifically describe the population being studied were done, in this case, undergraduate students at SAUT, Mwanza Campus. Inferential statistics were used to provide inferences about the population based on results from the sample which were used to generalize the entire undergraduate population at SAUT, Mwanza Campus. Data was presented using pie charts, tables and percentages.

### **3.9.2 Qualitative data**

Qualitative data were described using themes or objectives of the study and was presented in narrative form. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) point out that in qualitative analysis, the researcher focuses on respondents' narratives in response to questions asked. In line with this observation, the researcher organized data in terms of questions asked and their respective responses and any inconsistencies or consistencies were noted. The recorded responses were written during the FGD phase which were connected to identify relationships between issues and establish conclusions.

The qualitative data from FGD and interviews were classified into common themes and were interpreted using thematic analysis (Ndati, 2013). Data from the survey, interviews and FGDs were triangulated to enhance validity and reliability of results (Creswell, 2009). All the qualitative data were presented in narrative form.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

The researcher sought consent from all respondents, namely undergraduate students, who were to provide responses before engaging them in the study. Also, relevant procedures from university authorities and Tanzanian Government were adhered to by the researcher. The researcher assured respondents of confidentiality of information that were to be collected. In addition, participants in interviews and FGDs were asked to consent to written recordings of the discussions so that they do not feel compelled to participate.

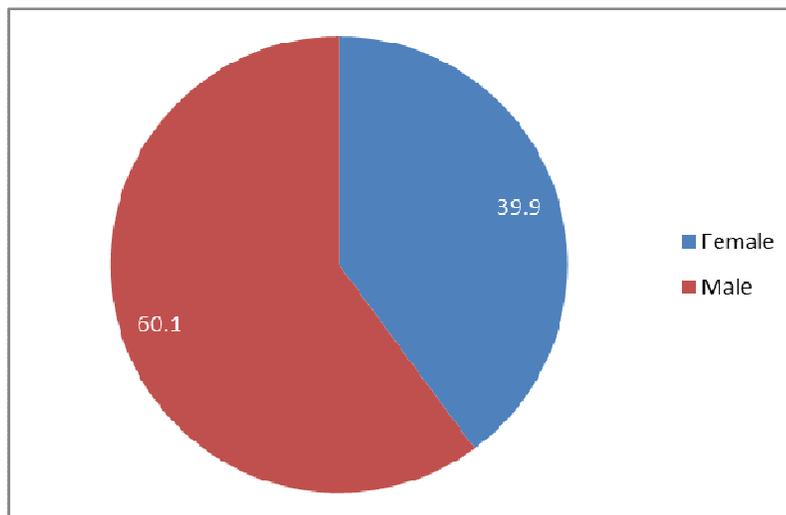
## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the study concerning the relationship between social media and communication skills among undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania with specific reference to undergraduate students at Mwanza Campus.

Figure 4.1 shows that there were more male (60%) than female respondents (40%) at SAUT. This situation is replicated in other private and public universities in Tanzania (Mahai, 2014b) and could be due to the patriarchal system similar to other African countries where the male child has more access to higher education unlike their female counterparts (Assie-Lumumba, 2006). Although this is not the primary focus of this study, it nevertheless helps in understanding the composition of the respondents and could open more insights for further studies as far as gender issues are concerned.



**Figure 4.1: Gender representation of respondents in the study.**

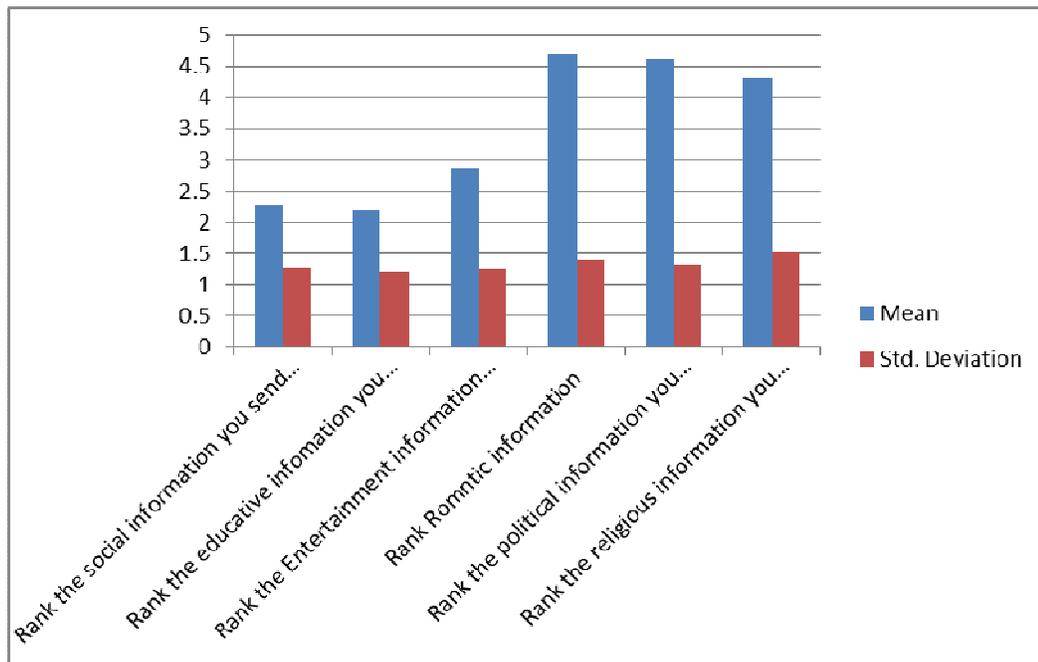
Table 4.1 indicates that students were aged between 19-35 years which represents 97.2% of the population from the high cumulative percentages while the rest (2.8%) were above 35 years of age with very low cumulative percentages. According to UNDP (2014), a person is classified as belonging to the youth category if he or she is between 15-35 years of age. Therefore, this finding concludes that the majority of students who use social media are youth. In addition, the finding also concurs with various scholars (Pempek, Yermorayelva, & Calvert, 2009) (Vanhergen & Husband, 2011) who noted that youth form a majority of social media users.

**Table 4.1. Age of respondents**

		Frequen cy	Percen t	Valid Percent
Valid	19	3	.6	0.6
	20	13	2.6	2.6
	21	45	8.9	9.1
	22	70	13.9	14.1
	23	107	21.3	21.6
	24	69	13.7	13.9
	25	65	12.9	13.1
	26	35	7.0	7.1
	27	15	3.0	3.0
	28	17	3.4	3.4
	29	9	1.8	1.8
	30	10	2.0	2.0
	31	5	1.0	1.0
	32	6	1.2	1.2
	33	3	.6	.6
	34	5	1.0	1.0
	35	5	1.0	1.0
	36	5	1.0	1.0
	38	3	.6	.6
	39	1	.2	.2
42	1	.2	.2	
43	1	.2	.2	
44	1	.2	.2	
45	1	.2	.2	
46	1	.2	.2	
	Total	496	98.6	100.0
Missi ng	Syste m	7	1.4	
Total		503	100.0	

#### 4.2 Objective one: Types of information accessed on social media and communication skills

Figure 4.2 presents the relationship between the type of information accessed on social media and the influence on communication skills of users which shows that respondents ranked educative information as the most accessed on social media (2.21) closely followed by social information (2.28) then entertainment information (2.88). Head and Eiselberg (2011) argued that university students use social media not only for academic but for other educative (non-academic) purposes as well. Such areas of interest include health, dieting, lifestyle, and male-female relationships among others as noted by various scholars such as Scanfled, Scanfled, and Larson (2010), Preece (1998) and Wing and Jeffrey(1999) among others.



**Figure 4.2: Type of information accessed on social media.**

For example, in one of the focus groups, when asked what kind of information they access on social media, respondent 2 (in FGD 4) noted, “At times I use social media to send educative information which may or may not be academic in nature to my colleagues online which nevertheless helps them to have knowledge on various life issues.”

Notley and Tacchi (2005) observed that social media platforms are crucial in complementing formal education and users can integrate their learning into daily lives. Respondent 1(in FGD 4) pointed out saying “Locating various materials on educative topics physically in the library is a daunting task since some of them are not found on the shelves either because other students have borrowed them or they do not exist or are outdated unlike those available online that are more recent. Some websites of useful references are shared via WhatsApp and other platforms to make it easier for us. ” The researcher also noted that female respondents in particular were more keen to share with their online colleagues articles that advice on dieting and how to exercise since they were more concerned about their weight and obesity issues which make them not appealing or “attractive” enough to male colleagues. In FGD 3 (respondent 3), one of the female respondents attested, “ My boyfriend left me on campus due to obesity. It was a bad experience since I tried to reduce my weight in vain.” A key observation by the interviewer was that male respondents were more concerned about health issues but specifically used social media to know how to be “strong” in sexual matters (sexual prowess) through articles they received and sent to colleagues. Respondent 6 (FGD 2) said, “ I want to be good in bed and I’m careful with the way I manage my body. A real man is one who is good in that area.”

In view of the findings, it appears that most respondents in the FGDs who are in the youth stage (see Table 4.1) were more concerned about having a long and healthy life and how to address or prevent lifestyle diseases that are a threat to not only the old but the youth as well. Thus, sexual prowess (for males) and obesity or the need to have a “good body figure” (for females) are key concerns that are a threat to their self-worth and identity. In terms of social information, respondent 5 in FGD 3 noted,

“ I send information about my social life to colleagues so that I update them on what is happening in my life.” Social information was also popular among respondents which include information about events in their lives that they share with online colleagues in order to update them. For example, in one of the discussions, respondent 5 in FGD 2 said, “I recently posted about my journey to South Africa in my Facebook page so that my online colleagues can see and appreciate me.” Respondent 3 in FGD 4 said, “I always share more pictures of myself on my birthdays on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp than on any other event that happens in my life.” This confirms what Burns and Morey (2009) observed about the power of social media in addressing social needs among users who are connected online.

Entertainment information was also sent and received among users and included news about celebrities in sports, music and movie industries respectively. For example, respondents were interested in scandalous information involving celebrities such as Miss Wema Sepetu (a popular Tanzanian movie actress) where she was alleged to have been romantically involved with a popular musician Mr. Naseeb Abdul Juma (popularly known as Diamond Platinumz). Respondent 6 (in FGD 6) was excited about the scandal and said, “That scandal painted a bad image about Diamond since he already has a fiancée. How can he be unfaithful at this time when we expect his wedding soon.” Another scandal involved another Tanzanian musician Miss Rehema Chalamila (popularly known as Ray C) who was alleged to be a drug addict. Respondent 3 (in FGD 1) was keen on this story and noted, “ Ray C was my role model in the music industry but I’m now disappointed with her drug addiction.” Also, respondents, particularly males, were more interested with information concerning sports personalities especially in the English Premier League (EPL) such as Mr. Wayne Rooney, Mr. Jack Grealish and Mr. Aaron Ramsey among others. Respondent 2 (in FGD 5) observed “I’m an ardent fan of the English Premier League and if I don’t see him playing I haven’t seen football. He is my star since he not only plays professionally but earns more than half the budget of many African countries.” This observation concurs with O’Keeffe, Clark-Pearson and Council on

Communications and Media (2011) about the power of social media in entertainment among users.

The researcher intended to find out whether respondents were concerned about the quality of language or grammar used on the information they accessed online. Most respondents were not much concerned about the quality of grammar used. The main concern was whether the information serves and satisfies the need. As one (respondent 1 in FGD 2) noted, “The end justifies the means. As long as the recipient of my message understands, or if I’m the receiver and I understand, language format or appropriateness does not really matter.” The researcher noted that some of the information forwarded by online colleagues included languages that had certain codes and symbols (popularly known as *sheng* and use of *emojis*) that they understood.

In view of the findings, the focus on the type of information accessed by students negatively affects their communication skills since the issues of concern are merely to serve their needs whether educative, social, entertainment among others and not on whether the grammatical expression and other academic rules on appropriateness of language were observed. This finding concurs with Valkenburg and Peter (2007) and Bessiere, Kiesler, Kraut, and Bonera (2008) who observe that use of social media has a profound effect on users’ communication skills.

#### **4.3 Objective two: Level of use of social media and communication skills**

Table 4.2 shows a summary of the usage of social media platforms in a week where the mean reflects the number of days in a week and N denotes the number of users per social media platform. As shown in table 4.2, from a total population of 503 undergraduate students who were respondents in the quantitative aspect of the study, WhatsApp had a higher preference of use with a total count of 451 users (which is 90% of the population) and an average use of 6.3 days in a week than other social media sites followed closely by Facebook with a total count of 436 (which is 87% of the population) and an average use of 4.25 days in a week. This was followed by Google+ with a total count of 299 users (which is 59.44% of the population) and an

average use of 5.44 days in a week then Instagram with a total count of 270 users (which is 53.67% of the population) and an average use of 5.72 days in a week. The popularity of WhatsApp, with its highest daily use concurs with various scholars in chapter two such as Yeboah and Ewur (2014) Soliman and Salem (2014) and Devi and Tereva (2014) who observed that WhatsApp is convenient and offers accessibility and ease of communication using mobile handsets carried by users. WhatsApp links users who discuss or share various topics of interest and can easily interact and get immediate feedback, hence the increased use. Although Facebook is the second highest generally used social media site, it seems that people use it for fewer days (four days on average) compared to Instagram that seems to have less number of users but has a higher use on a daily basis (five days on average).

**Table 4.2: Level of use of social media in terms of days spent in a week**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Days you use Facebook in a week	436	1.00	7.00	4.2500	2.32317
Days you use WhatsApp in a week	451	1.00	7.00	6.3814	1.48653
Days you use Twitter in a week	185	1.00	7.00	3.1892	2.21209
Days you use MySpace in a week	22	1.00	7.00	2.9091	2.20193
Days you use LinkedIn in a week	49	1.000	7.000	3.85714	2.549510
Days you use Instagram in a week	270	1.00	7.00	5.7296	1.86063
Days you use Flickr in a week	18	1.00	7.00	3.7222	2.34660
Days you use Google+ in a week	299	1.00	7.00	5.4482	1.98649
Days you use Blogs in a week	123	1.00	7.00	4.8211	2.14641
Days you use Skype in a week	70	1.00	7.00	3.4429	2.31339
Days you use Hangouts in a week	72	1.00	7.00	5.1944	2.41264
Days you use Viber in a week	105	1.00	7.00	4.4190	2.42099
Days you use Immo in a week	2	4	7	5.50	2.121
Valid N (listwise)	0				

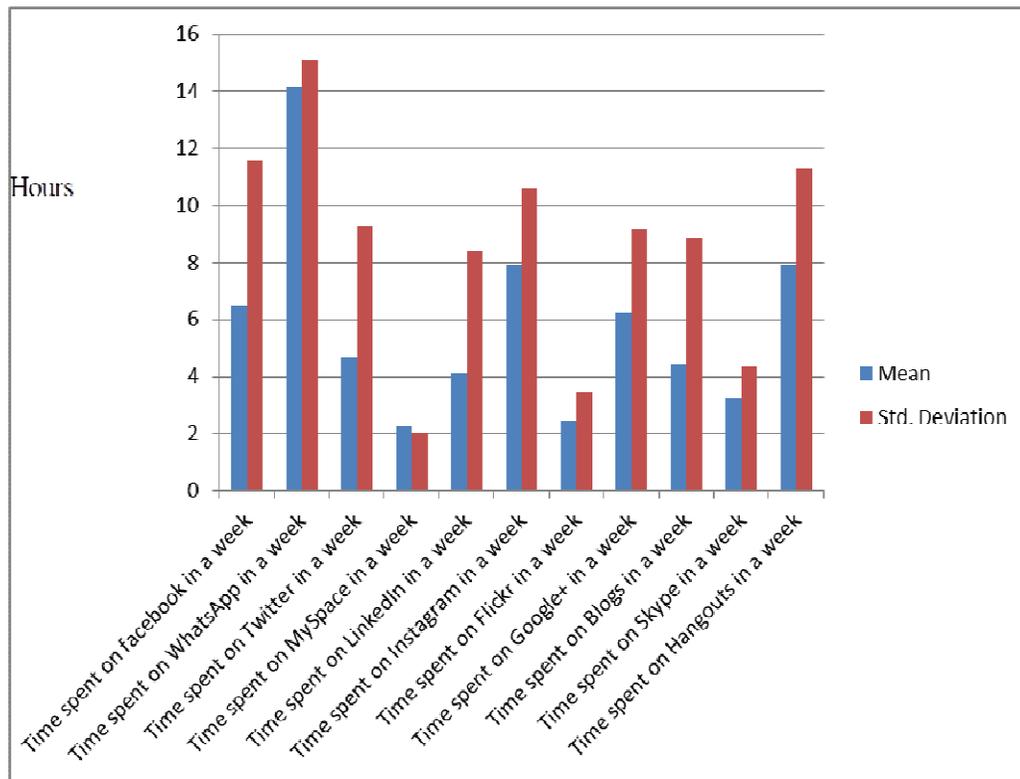
In the focus groups, when asked why they prefer certain social media platforms compared to others, respondent 1 (in FGD 4) observed, “WhatsApp is convenient for me since I can use it on my mobile phone with ease regardless of my physical environment as long there is network. Also, WhatsApp provides an opportunity for instant response at the click of a button and responds faster when I change my profile picture.” Respondent 3 (in FGD 3) noted, “As much as I use WhatsApp, Facebook is more convenient since it gives me an opportunity to include details of myself and my profile to be viewed by online colleagues. This makes me feel as a “real communicant” since I can access information about other people and they can get to know me as a person.” However, respondent 4 (in FGD 2) argued saying, “I enjoy using Instagram since it allows for privacy and only original videos and photos which cannot be shared from and to other sites. This feature is not found in Facebook.”

The interest in using other networks apart from WhatsApp and Facebook, according to Jackson (2015), is partly attributed to key factors namely users’ desire to be trendy (fashionable) by using a newer network such as Instagram compared to Facebook which is more familiar to many people. This finding also concurs with IBM (2013), Grahl (2014) and White (2014). This aspect attracts more youth under 30 years of age most of who constitute respondents (see Table 4.1). In addition, Instagram has a higher engagement rate compared to Facebook where users interact frequently online. The other factor that makes Instagram to be increasingly popular is that Facebook takes slightly longer to create a profile and is more cluttered unlike Instagram that mainly focuses on content. Also, Instagram activity is more confidential than Facebook which exposes users to online bullying (Jackson, 2015).

Instagram also offers an advantage of only allowing original photos and videos and content can be uploaded unlike Facebook where majority of the content is not original and has lots of curated blog posts, news or content that is being shared from other online accounts (Jackson, 2015). This finding implies that Instagram users, though fewer than Facebook, use it more frequently in a week. From the FGDs, the researcher noted that WhatsApp and Facebook were the most common social media

sites used and although others were also used, they were not as popular. This finding also concurs with various scholars such as Carpenter (2012) and Mehdizadeh (2010) among others. In essence, the use of a respective social media site is also determined by the type of social network that includes its respective characteristics which appeal to different users depending on their need(s).

Figure 4.3 reveals that more time was spent by undergraduate students in WhatsApp (14 hours) than in any other social media site in a week followed by Instagram and Hangouts where users spent an average of 8 hours per week. WhatsApp had a higher standard deviation (15.11325 hours) than all other sites, this implies that there are users who use it at extremes namely for very long hours to very few minutes. The findings in terms of time spent correspond with the number of days spent on WhatsApp earlier discussed in chapter two (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014) (Soliman & Salem, 2014) (Devi & Tereva, 2014) which revealed that users spend their time using WhatsApp on a daily basis (seven days in a week). The convenience of WhatsApp means that one can access it for a very short or long time depending on his or her need(s). It is easily accessible on a portable mobile phone and responds faster than other sites regardless of user's physical location (depending on network availability in a respective geographical area).



**Figure 4.3: Level of use of social media in terms of time (hours) spent in a week**

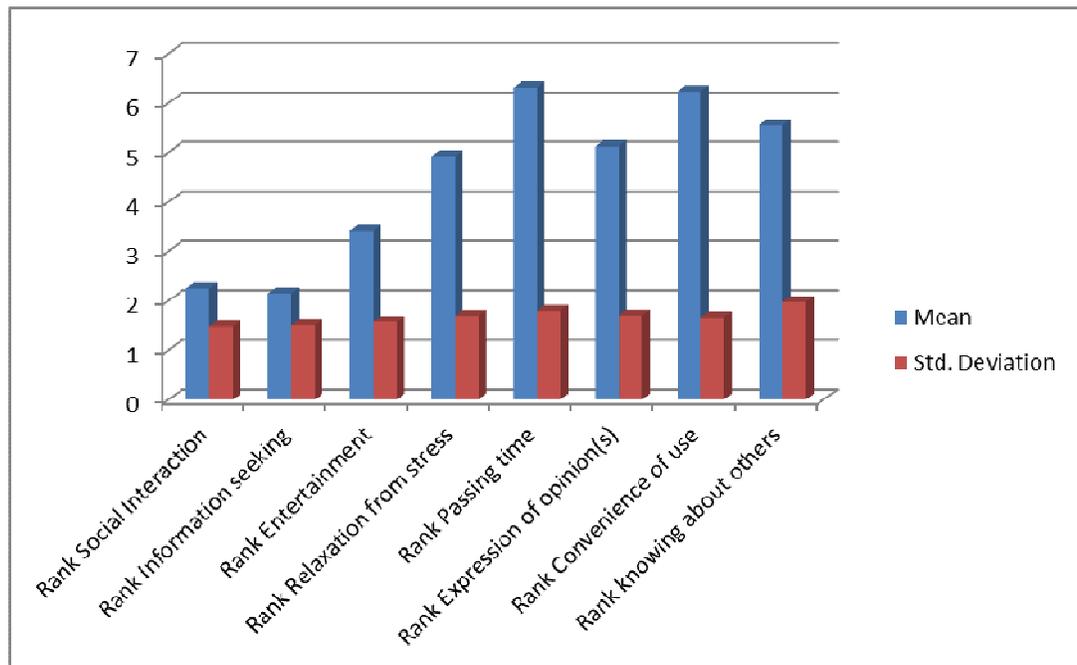
The researcher got the following responses in the FGD when finding out what determines the length of time they spent on certain social media sites. Respondent 5 (in FGD 6) said, “I use WhatsApp due to its convenience, accessibility and availability of time to peruse the sites. The ease of access to WhatsApp cannot be compared to Facebook that requires some process before opening up and using it. Also, Facebook is slower than WhatsApp in terms of responding when one is in a hurry or in an emergency.” Respondent 1 (in FGD 1) observed, “I take time on Instagram since it has protective features and is not easily hacked like Facebook. I feel more secure in it since one can only post original videos and pictures. I fear taking lots of time on networks that can easily be hacked.”

As the second most popular site, Instagram appears to have some attractive features (see earlier discussion on days used in a week). Hangouts are also popular and are used for eight hours a week on average because it is a video conferencing tool and

text and is accessible and works in computers and android mobile phones (Thornton, 2014). The contents in a Hangout integrate directly with YouTube besides providing an environment for private group discussions (Thornton, 2014). During the FGD, Hangouts and YouTube were not popular.

Figure 4.4 reveals that students ranked use of social media sites for information seeking purposes (mean of 2.15) as the foremost reason for using social media. This was closely followed by the need for social interaction which was ranked second (2.25). The use of social media for entertainment purposes was third in terms of ranking (3.42). This finding, which was ranked first (information seeking), concurs with Notley and Tacchi (2005) (see chapter two) who observed that social media are a significant tool in complementing education and providing relevant information (though it may not necessarily be academic) for users in higher learning institutions.

The need for social interaction (ranked second) helps students bond with colleagues as they update each other concerning the latest trends on various issues especially those that concern their age-groups. This is what Burns and Morey (2009) (see chapter two) referred to as “building self-efficacy” which is necessary for physical and psychological growth. Also, the need for social interaction confirms what various scholars such as Collin, Rahilly and Richardson (2010), Hartup & Stevens (1999), Bukowski, Newcomb, and Hartup (1996), also Valentine and Holloway (2002), Gross, Juvonen and Gable (2002) pointed out, namely on the benefit of social media in terms of facilitating interaction between users. This means that social media complements a person’s need for social inclusion.



**Figure 4.4: Key reasons for using social media site(s)**

In one of the FGDs, when asked about the key reasons or factors that encourage them to use social media respondent 4 (in FGD 2) observed, “I use social media to get information about certain issues that suit my personal interests. For example, I want to know about certain trends in the music or fashion industry shared by colleagues online.” Respondent 6 (in FGD 6) said, “I prefer social media since it connects me to colleagues online and this makes me feel “normal.” This is the digital world and I cannot stay away from it.”

The use of social media for entertainment was ranked third. This implies that students watch various music or videos in various sites when they are not engaged in academic activities and confirms what other scholars such as Clark, Lee and Boyer (2007), O’Keefe, Clark-Pearson and Council on Communications and Media (2011) who observed about the use of social media as an entertainment tool. This is further made possible through the android mobile phones that a large number of them own that contain features that can support these sites. Respondent 1 (in FGD 1) noted, “Social media entertains me in form of sharing ideas, jokes, quotes from reputable people that is shared and forwarded online regardless of whether the information is

authentic or not. As long as it makes me laugh, I don't care." Another respondent (respondent 5 in FGD 3) added, "Social media helps me to express my opinion on various issues of concern to society. I feel that it is a platform of change in society." The quantitative study findings concur with those of the FGDs which revealed that most students preferred using social media for information-seeking and social interaction purposes compared to other purposes.

Table 4.3 shows respondents who provided photo as profile in various social media sites. It was crucial to note that the researcher was categorical that one indicates "photo" only if the respective social media user included his or her photo and not of any other person(s) or object(s). In cases where one included a picture of any other person or entity, it was deemed that there is no profile photo or picture.

The table also shows that most photos were found on Instagram (93.3%) closely followed by Facebook (88.6%). Instagram offers an opportunity for users to create profiles such as photos faster than Facebook (Jackson, 2015). In addition, Instagram offers confidentiality for such images and content since some users may not have been comfortable to have their photos circulate online especially to strangers (Jackson, 2015).

**Table 4.3:. Photo as profile existing in a social media site**

					Total	
	No		Yes		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Have a photo on Facebook profile	50	11.4	387	88.6	437	100.0
Have a name on Facebook pprofile	60	13.8	376	86.2	436	100.0
Have Age on Face book profile	180	41.3	256	58.7	436	100.0
Have Interests on Face book profile	207	47.5	229	52.5	436	100.0
Have contacts on Face book profile	197	45.2	239	54.8	436	100.0
Have association on Face book profile	296	67.9	140	32.1	436	100.0
Have religion on Face book profile	212	48.8	222	51.2	434	100.0
Have a photo on WhatsApp profile	52	11.8	389	88.2	441	100.0
Have a name on WhatsApp profile	109	24.7	333	75.3	442	100.0
Have age on WhatsApp profile	396	89.4	47	10.6	443	100.0
Have interests on WhatsApp profile	373	84.2	70	15.8	443	100.0
Have contacts on WhatsApp profile	227	51.5	214	48.5	441	100.0
Have association on WhatsApp profile	405	91.6	37	8.4	442	100.0
Have religion on WhatsApp profile	403	91.2	39	8.8	442	100.0

(Note: In table 4.3, the rate or preference for each social network is shown in terms of percentages (%) under the “Yes” count for each table)

The researcher was interested in finding out whether they post their photos as profile in various social media networks. The FGD discussants confirmed and attested about the confidentiality of information in Instagram compared to other social media sites such as Facebook that is often hacked. Respondent 6 (in FGD6) was categorical

saying, “I’m always worried about someone hacking into my Facebook account. I prefer Instagram due to its security features.”

Facebook was ranked second in terms of those having profile photos due to a large number of users who are not concerned or worried about the privacy of their photos being seen by other people online. WhatsApp was ranked third (88.2%) in terms of having profile photos (see table 4.6) since it is one of the most popular sites although it has less space for having large photos (Jackson, 2015) compared to Facebook. However, its popularity is due to its accessibility and ease of communication that is instant.

From the FGDs, some respondents who prefer Instagram were concerned about the privacy of their authentic photos being accessed by strangers, hence their preference of that particular social network (Instagram). However, those who preferred Facebook argued that most of their online colleagues do not use Instagram or any other social network and as a result, they feel that if they use other networks they will lose colleagues.

In table 4.4, a majority of respondents (86.2%) included their authentic names on Facebook that accompany their respective photos. This was closely followed by MySpace where 82.4% have their respective names then Instagram (80.1%). In this scenario, MySpace appears to be among the popular social networks due to its feature of allowing colleagues to form networks as earlier observed by Grahl (2014) and White (2014). It is crucial to note that the researcher was categorical on the questionnaire that one was considered as having a “name” only if he or she included an original name and not of any other person or entity. Nicknames were not considered as original names. As such, those with nicknames were considered as not having included their names.

**Table 4.4: Name as profile existing in a social media site**

					Total	
	No		Yes		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Have a name on Facebook pprofile	60	13.8	376	86.2	436	100.0
Have a name on WhatsApp profile	109	24.7	333	75.3	442	100.0
Have a name on Twitter profile	52	30.4	119	69.6	171	100.0
Have a name on MySpace profile	3	17.6	14	82.4	17	100.0
Have a name on LinkedIn profile	10	20.8	38	79.2	48	100.0
Have a name on Instagram profile	54	19.9	217	80.1	271	100.0
Have a name on Flickr profile	5	41.7	7	58.3	12	100.0
Have a name on Google+ profile	90	30.8	202	69.2	292	100.0
Have a name on Blogs profile	53	54.1	45	45.9	98	100.0
Have a name on Skype profile	20	34.5	38	65.5	58	100.0
Have a name on Hangouts profile	30	48.4	32	51.6	62	100.0
Have a name on Viber profile	39	40.6	57	59.4	96	100.0

Throughout the FGDs, a large majority of respondents pointed out that Facebook remained as the most popular social media sites where they share their authentic names in order to get more personal and close to their online colleagues which enhance interpersonal relationships. Also, in the FGD, some respondents noted that MySpace allows users to modify and build a user profile according to already made themes, a feature not in Facebook, as earlier noted by Grahl (2014) and White (2014). However, respondent 1 (in FGD 2) said, “I still prefer Facebook since it is more popular and I connect easily with my online colleagues compared to other networks that though advanced does not have many users.”

Table 4.5 reveals that Facebook had the highest number of users (58.7%) as one of the profiles. As earlier noted, by Tosun (2012) and Sheldon (2008), Facebook is one of the sites that helps in seeking new relationships and avoid loneliness. In addition, due to its nature, it provides an opportunity for users to include personal details such as date of birth (Mehdizadeh, 2010) (Carpenter, 2012).

**Table 4.5: Year of birth as profile existing in a social media site**

					Total	
	No		Yes		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Have Age on Facebook profile	180	41.3	256	58.7	436	100.0
Have age on WhatsApp profile	396	89.4	47	10.6	443	100.0
Have age on Twitter profile	143	84.1	27	15.9	170	100.0
Have age on MySpace profile	12	70.6	5	29.4	17	100.0
Have age on LinkedIn profile	40	83.3	8	16.7	48	100.0
Have age on Instagram profile	226	83.4	45	16.6	271	100.0
Have age on Flickr profile	12	100.0			12	100.0
Have age on Google+ profile	259	88.7	33	11.3	292	100.0
Have age on Blogs profile	92	92.9	7	7.1	99	100.0
Have age on Skype profile	48	81.4	11	18.6	59	100.0
Have age on Hangouts profile	62	100.0			62	100.0
Have age on Viber profile	85	88.5	11	11.5	96	100.0

The FGDs generally revealed a trend where female respondents were uncomfortable to reveal their year of birth unlike their male counterparts. A female respondent (respondent 5 in FGD 1) said, “I fear losing out on potential male romantic companions who prefer younger ladies especially first years who often give us competition as they are usually younger than those in higher academic years.” Another female respondent (respondent 3 in FGD 1) pointed by saying, “The concept of being labelled “old” makes me uncomfortable. Why should I disclose my age?” As a result, some either provided untruthful information as far as their year of birth is concerned. The concern is that advancement in age diminishes the chances of being eligible for a boyfriend-girlfriend romantic relationship or that it may jeopardize their chances of getting fiancées for marriage in future.

Table 4.6 shows that more users (52.5%) exhibited their interests on Facebook than on any other site. This was closely followed by LinkedIn (41.7%) that also had users’ interests. According to Grahl (2014) and White (2014), both Facebook and LinkedIn provide an opportunity for users to show their interests such as hobbies that their online colleagues can be aware of. In addition, they further observed that these networks are increasingly becoming popular due to their feature that easily connects users.

**Table 4.6: Interest(s) as profile existing in a social media site**

					Total	
	No		Yes		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Have Interests on Facebook profile	207	47.5	2	52.5	436	100.0
Have interests on WhatsApp profile	373	84.2	70	15.8	443	100.0
Have interests on Twitter profile	140	82.4	30	17.6	170	100.0
Have interests on MySpace profile	11	64.7	6	35.3	17	100.0
Have interestrs on LinkedIn profile	28	58.3	20	41.7	48	100.0
Have interests on instagram profile	197	72.7	74	27.3	271	100.0
Have interests on Flickr profile	10	83.3	2	16.7	12	100.0
Have interests on Google+ profile	263	90.1	29	9.9	292	100.0
Have Interests on Blogs profile	90	90.9	9	9.1	99	100.0
Have interests on Skype profile	47	81.0	11	19.0	58	100.0
Have interests on Hangouts profile	59	95.2	3	4.8	62	100.0

The FGD findings revealed various interests or hobbies mainly on Facebook where interests such as driving, socializing, writing and various sports activities. Most respondents in FGDs, however, did not include any interests on Linked In and one of them (respondent 5 in FGD 5) noted, “LinkedIn cannot be compared to Facebook since it is not popular. I still prefer Facebook, in fact, its high preference among us cannot be underestimated.” This finding contradicts that in the quantitative section of the study which indicated the increasing popularity of LinkedIn and confirms the dominance of Facebook as earlier noted by Grahl (2014) and White (2014).

Table 4.7 shows that more than half (54.8%) of all respondents displayed their genuine contacts on Facebook which include address, mobile phone number and e-mail. This was closely followed by those using WhatsApp (48.5%). According to Carpenter (2012), Facebook users usually display their genuine contacts so as to connect with online colleagues where they share various topical issues. In addition, Facebook features allow users to show many elements of their profile including contacts (Carpenter, 2012).

**Table 4.7: Contacts as profile existing in social media site**

					Total	
	No		Yes		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Have contacts on Facebook profile	197	45.2	239	54.8	436	100.0
Have contacts on WhatsApp profile	227	51.5	214	48.5	441	100.0
Have contacts on Twitter profile	135	79.4	35	20.6	170	100.0
Have contacts on MySpace profile	10	58.8	7	41.2	17	100.0
Have contacts on LinkedIn profile	31	64.6	17	35.4	48	100.0
Have contacts on Instagram profile	209	77.1	62	22.9	271	100.0
Have contacts on Flickrprofile	11	91.7	1	8.3	12	100.0
Have contacts on Google+ profile	239	81.8	53	18.2	292	100.0
Have Contacts on Blogs profile	89	90.8	9	9.2	98	100.0
Have contacts on Skype profile	40	69.0	18	31.0	58	100.0
Have contacts on Hangouts profile	54	87.1	8	12.9	62	100.0
Have contacts on Viber profile	68	70.8	28	29.2	96	100.0

The researcher was interested in knowing respondents' views in the FGDs and one of the respondents (respondent 3 in FGD 3) noted, "The dominance of Facebook is due to its features that allow more personal information to be included unlike WhatsApp which mainly allows only contacts to be automatically included."

In table 4.8, Facebook had more users (32.1%) revealing their associations followed by LinkedIn (31.2%). In both sites, a large number of users are members of certain associations. This implies that students who use Facebook belong to various associations in order to have a sense of "belonging" and feel "complete" as observed by Hartup and Stevens (1999). However, LinkedIn provides an opportunity for users to start early enough to identify with particular areas of interest in various spheres (White, 2014). In addition, LinkedIn provides an opportunity for users to link up with colleagues who have common interests that may not necessarily be academic or professional in nature (White, 2014).

**Table 4.8: Association as profile existing in a social media site**

					Total	
	No		Yes		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Have association on Facebook profile	296	67.9	140	32.1	436	100.0
Have association on WhatsApp profile	405	91.6	37	8.4	442	100.0
Have association on Twitter profile	159	93.5	11	6.5	170	100.0
Have association on MySpace profile	15	88.2	2	11.8	17	100.0
Have association on LinkedIn profile	33	68.8	15	31.2	48	100.0
Have association on Instagram profile	239	88.2	32	11.8	271	100.0
Have association on Flickr profile	12	100.0			12	100.0
Have association on Google+ profile	274	93.8	18	6.2	292	100.0
Have association on Blogs profile	93	94.9	5	5.1	98	100.0
Have association on Skype profile	55	94.8	3	5.2	58	100.0
Have association on Hangouts profile	60	98.4	1	1.6	61	100.0
Have association on Viber profile	91	94.8	5	5.2	96	100.0

Respondent 1 (in FGD 1) observed, “I prefer LinkedIn compared to any other social networking site since I belong to student associations such as AIESEC which connects me globally to other undergraduate university students.” Another respondent (respondent 4 in FGD 4) added, “ I use both Facebook and LinkedIn to share issues related to SSPRA that links those either pursuing the field of public relations within the university and alumni who pursued the same field in SAUT.” Lastly, another respondent (respondent 6 in FGD 5) said, “I belong to Tanga Regional Association, a Facebook regional platform which provides an opportunity for us to share regional matters that affect us. Most of our members are not on LinkedIn and that is why we prefer Facebook.” These are associations that connect those who originate from such regions where they share and discuss issues that affect them in order to propose solutions. In this scenario, for both quantitative and qualitative sections of the study, Facebook remains dominant over other sites in popularity (Hartup & Stevens, 1999).

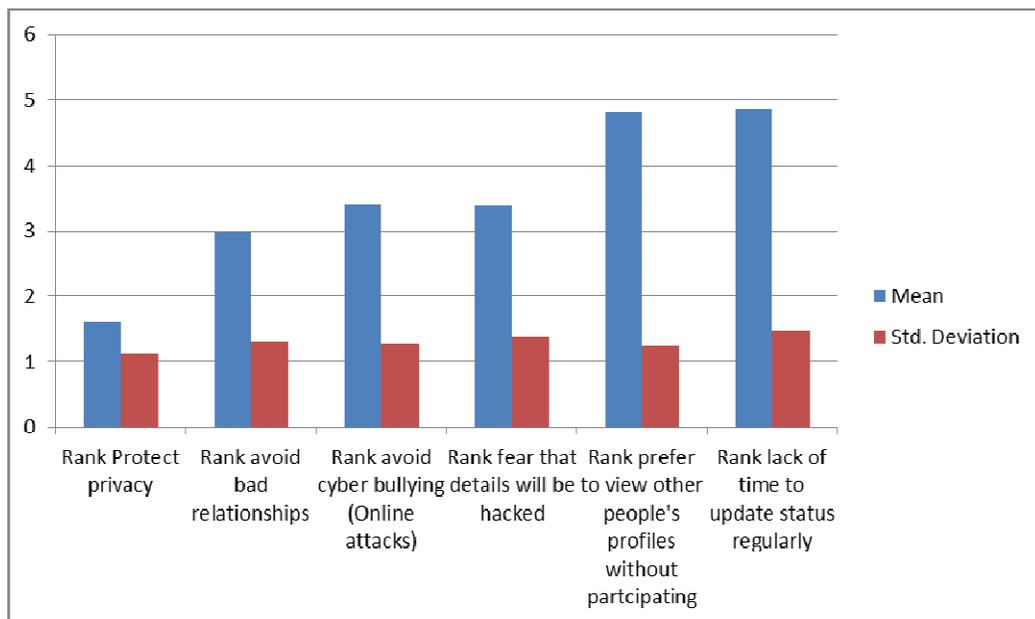
Table 4.9 shows that more than half (51.2%) of respondents indicated their location on Facebook than any other social media site followed by LinkedIn (18.8%) and others not as popular.

**Table 4.9: Location as profile existing in a social media site**

					Total	
	No		Yes		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%		
Have location on Facebook profile	212	48.8	222	51.2	434	100.0
Have location on WhatsApp profile	403	91.2	39	8.8	442	100.0
Have location on Twitter profile	156	91.8	14	8.2	170	100.0
Have location on MySpace profile	14	82.4	3	17.6	17	100.0
Have location on LinkedIn profile	39	81.2	9	18.8	48	100.0
Have location on Instagram profile	239	88.5	31	11.5	270	100.0
Have location on Flickr profile	12	100.0			12	100.0
Have location on Google+ profile	278	95.2	14	4.8	292	100.0
Have location on Blogs profile	95	96.9	3	3.1	98	100.0
Have location on Skype profile	56	96.6	2	3.4	58	100.0
Have location on Hangouts profile	59	96.7	2	3.3	61	100.0

In the FGD findings, respondent 5 (in FGD 4) said, “I want my colleagues to know my whereabouts such as physical location on Facebook so that we can easily trace each other. I’m also interested in knowing where my former colleagues who schooled with me in primary and secondary schools or those we met with in different circumstances or events.” Respondent 3 (in FGD 4) emphasized, “Indicating my physical location makes me “feel connected” and helps in tracing on my valuable colleagues.” From both quantitative and FGD findings, the popularity of Facebook as the most personal details such as physical location as observed by Tosun (2012) and Reich, Subrahmanyam preferred social media site exists since it offers opportunities for people to share and Espinoza (2012).

Figure 4.5 shows that protection of privacy was the highest ranked (1.62) reason for students’ not including all details of their profile on social media site. This was closely followed by the need to avoid bad relationships (3.0) and the lack of time to update and have a complete profile on one’s respective profile was least ranked (4.86).

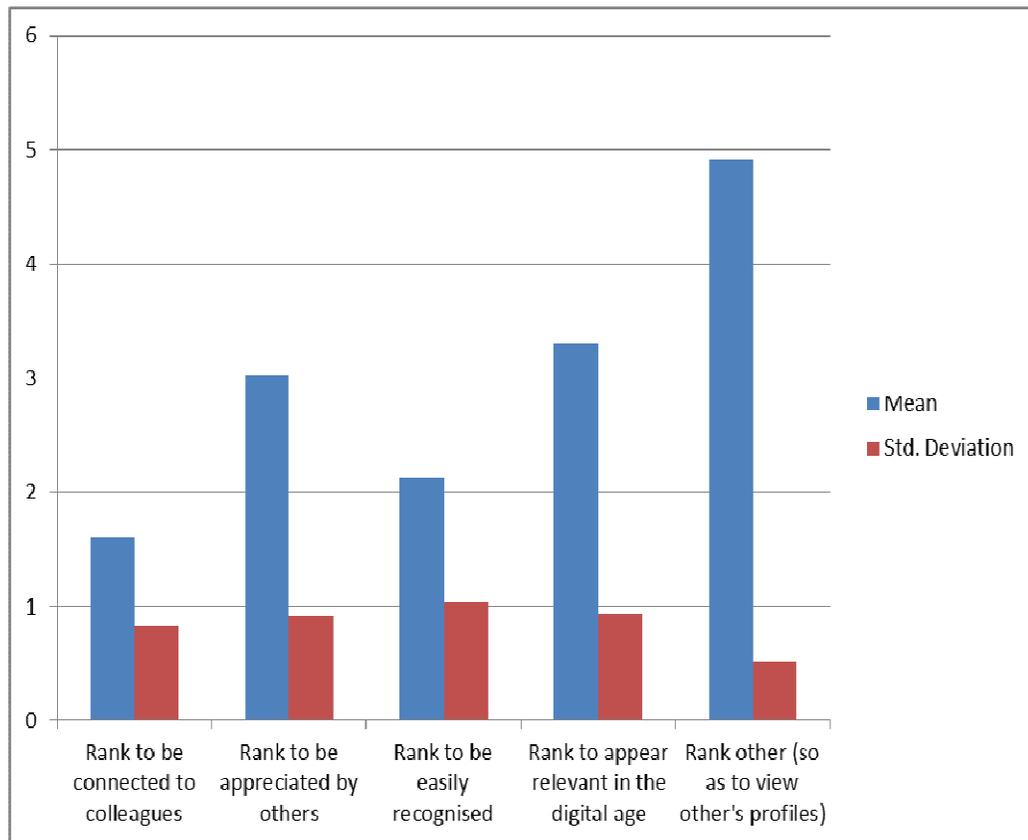


**Figure 4.5: Reasons for not having a complete profile in a social media site**

In the FGDs, the researcher was interested in finding out why some respondents were uncomfortable in having their complete and accurate information about themselves on social media sites. Respondent 4 (in FGD 5) vehemently defended his position saying, “I cannot reveal all my true details on social media because my account was once hacked by an unknown person and posted pornographic content using my Facebook account. I was humiliated and embarrassed since I’m not the one who posted the content but my online colleagues thought I’m the one who posted it and nobody believed me and to date I’m very careful about my new Facebook account.” Respondent 3 said, “I was once insulted by an unknown person and this made me doubt about my online security.” Respondent 5 said, “My picture on Facebook was used on another person’s image with another lady through Photoshop which created a big scandal that led to my girlfriend leaving me due to alleged unfaithfulness.”

From the FGD observations, Facebook was ranked as the most abused social media site due to its popularity and lack of privacy. These findings concur with various scholars’ observations like Lenhart (2007) and Kowalski, (2007) on different forms of cyber bullying on social media especially Facebook that make users to be more concerned about their privacy. These scholars pointed out on various forms of cyber bullying where social media users receive threatening text messages and degrading pictures or videos being shared online among other forms that are likely to damage ones reputation or personality.

Figure 4.6 shows that the most highly ranked reason by respondents for having a profile on social media are mainly to be connected to colleagues (1.60). Being easily recognized (2.13) was ranked second by respondents. The least ranked reason was to view other peoples’ profiles (4.90). As earlier noted by Collin, Rahilly and Richardson (2010), Valkenburg & Schouten (2006), social media provides an opportunity for users to link up with others online regardless of distance. Also, its convenience at the click of a button makes it revolutionary in terms of communication and users connect and share a variety of topical issues that are of interest to them. The researcher was interested in finding out why they have accurate details of their profiles in social media sites.



**Figure 4.6: Reason for having a profile in a social media site**

From the FGD, respondent 2 in FGD 2 said, “I include my profile details since it makes me feel “worthy” in the digital society. Also, it allows my online colleagues to know something about me which I don’t mind.” Respondent 2 in FGD 4 noted, “Social networks make me feel proud of myself when I share my details.” Respondent 3 (FGD 6) said, “What is there to hide about myself? I’m not a criminal. Let others know that I exist.” Respondent 5 in FGD 2 noted, “Social networks provide an opportunity for me to show myself to the online world.” The information in their profiles includes authentic photos, name(s), interests, location, mobile contacts and associations among other personal information. The observations on FGD show that to some extent, SNS can be used by users to boost their self-esteem (see (Valkenburg & Schouten, 2006) (Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe, 2007).

Table 4.10 reveals that most respondents updated their status most frequently on WhatsApp (mean of approximately 23 days ago). Flickr was more frequently (mean of 48.8 days which is approximately one and a half months ago) visited by users who changed their online status. This was followed by Instagram (mean of 53.34 days which is about two months) respectively. As various scholars (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014), Soliman & Salem (2014), Devi & Tevera (2014) pointed out, the convenience of using WhatsApp on a portable mobile phone handset enables users to frequently changing their status online at any place depending on availability of service provider and the features of the respective handset. Flickr was ranked second in terms of frequency of user changing status since it allows users to post and store photos online and provides an opportunity for comments to be made on the respective photos (Jackson, 2015).

The need to be trendy and discover more network sites among the youth could account for the increased use of Flickr (Jackson, 2015).

**Table 4.10: Last time one updated status in a social media site**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The last time you updated your Facebook status	400	1	840	87.31	122.445
The last time you updated your WhatsApp status	423	1.00	450.00	23.1135	54.62549
The last time you updated your Twitter status	149	1.00	690.00	88.4574	106.28795
The last time you updated your MySpace status	14	1.00	270.00	86.0000	85.83795
The last time you updated your LinkedIn status	42	1.00	360.00	75.8333	87.94175
The last time you updated your Instagram status	233	1.00	690.00	53.3433	80.59944
The last time you updated your Flickr status	21	1.00	160.00	48.8095	51.73260
The last time you updated your Google+ status	209	1.00	690.00	91.9426	109.90956
The last time you updated your Blogs status	74	1.00	300.00	69.9730	72.73389
The last time you updated your Skype status	48	1.00	600.00	106.0417	106.58649
The last time you updated your Hangouts status	49	1.00	300.00	60.3878	78.27324
The last time you updated your Viber status	82	1.00	300.00	66.4512	73.51529
The last time you updated your Immo status	5	60.00	540.00	171.0000	208.81810
The last time you updated your Snap chat status	1	142.00	142.00	142.0000	.
The last time you updated your Telegram status	3	7.00	150.00	102.0000	82.27393
Valid N (listwise)	1				

The researcher was interested in finding out why they post status updates on social media sites and the following are some of the responses in the FGD. Respondent 1 in FGD 4 said, “I update my status in order to “feel good.” It offers a sense of renewal online.” Respondent 2 in FGD 6 noted, “It makes me feel updated and not outdated

with my online colleagues. In other words, it makes me feel trendy.” Respondent 5 in FGD 5 observed, “Changing my status online enables my colleagues to know new events in my life. It makes me feel “worthy.” Respondent 4 in FGD 3 said, “Changing my online status creates a feeling of belongingness to the online community.”

These findings attest to the need by social media users to update their status so as to appear “active” and not out of touch with others. Failure to update status online creates an impression that one is dormant and irrelevant and this is what most of them want to avoid. The researcher was interested in finding out when respondents last updated their status on social media sites and it was revealed that out of the 39 respondents interviewed, a majority of them frequently changed their status updates on WhatsApp than on any other social media site. This again, confirms what various scholars such as (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014), Soliman & Salem (2014) and Devi & Terreva (2014) observed about the convenience of WhatsApp that is user friendly.

Table 4.11 reveals that more than half (58.4%) of respondents strongly agreed that they shorten words to save time when texting their colleagues online. This was followed by another group of respondents (47.3%) who strongly agreed that at times, they speak *slang* when in the company of colleagues. The finding also reveals that 30.5% (153 respondents which is the highest in this skill), must repeat reading a text several times in order to understand it. This shows how reading, as a communication skill has been adversely influenced by social media.

**Table 4.11: Relationship between level of use of social media and communication skills**

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Count
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
When texting my colleagues on social media site(s), I use short words to save time	17	3.4	19	3.8	33	6.6	140	27.8	294	58.4	503
I prefer to use face to face communication than public speaking	16	3.2	40	8.0	132	26.5	186	37.3	125	25.1	499
At times, I speak slang (mixture of English, Kiswahili and other languages) when with my colleagues	9	1.8	24	4.8	51	10.2	180	35.9	237	47.3	501
The physical appearance of a communicator determines the way I understand his/her message	27	5.4	37	7.4	94	18.7	192	38.2	152	30.3	502
I often have to speak loudly for my message to be understood	54	10.9	107	21.6	139	28.0	128	25.8	68	13.7	496
I often have to repeat my message to be clearly understood	39	7.8	77	15.4	98	19.6	157	31.5	128	25.7	499
I'm very fast to respond to a message from a colleague	15	3.0	34	6.8	130	25.9	163	32.5	159	31.7	501
During a group discussion, I always have confidence that my opinion is the best	11	2.2	35	7.0	126	25.1	160	31.9	170	33.9	502
I prefer to use Kiswahili during class sessions	79	15.7	106	21.1	166	33.0	91	18.1	61	12.1	503
I often have to repeat reading several times in order to fully understand a text	43	8.6	73	14.5	87	17.3	146	29.1	153	30.5	502

From the FGDs conducted by the researcher, respondent 5 in FGD 6 said, “Using social media has shaped the way I communicate online especially in written form. In most cases, I need to send messages faster and get rapid responses and I’m not concerned about grammatical errors in either Kiswahili or English. After all, it is not an academic setting but a free for all.” Respondent 3 in FGD 2 noted, “Typing using correct and formal grammar in either language proves to be laborious and tiring and as a result, using short hand and sheng is the most appropriate method when online. Proficiency in English or Kiswahili is appropriate for class settings but not for other settings.” Another respondent (respondent 4 in FGD 1) noted, “I prefer to use sheng and coded language including use of *emojis* since it is a way of being “trendy” since I don’t want to be old fashioned.” In line with this, coded languages develop and a mixture of slang, English and Kiswahili is used which eventually becomes a ‘standard’ form of communication and is acceptable within their groups. In addition, most respondents admitted that their communication skills when in formal (academic) and informal (social) settings has changed due to the influence of the way they communicate online.

These findings concur with Huang (2010), Nie & Hillygus (2002) and Drusell (2012) who argued that use of social media adversely affects both written and spoken communication competence as it continues being a powerful tool of communication among users through different gadgets. The researcher’s finding is that there is no absolute general conclusion on whether social media are used on a higher, moderate or lower rate. The study can only posit that the rate of use depends on the respective social media site and its features that are either convenient to the user or not. For example, WhatsApp, due to its convenient features such as ease of operating on a mobile handset anywhere as long as there is a network provider and its fast response (Yeboah & Ewur, 2014) leading it to be popular.

The same applies to Facebook that is popular among users and also has a higher rate although lower than WhatsApp (Carpenter, 2012). Instagram is also gaining popularity but cannot be compared by the two dominant ones (WhatsApp and Facebook) and can be ranked as being used moderately. Other sites though used are not as popular and fall in the category of low use.

#### **4.4 Objective three: Mediating effect of self-esteem between social media and Communication skills**

Table 4.12 indicates that a majority of respondents have a positive view of themselves, meaning that they have a high self-esteem as shown through the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale that was used to measure self-esteem. The high self-esteem was reflected by the respondents who strongly agreed with statements that showed a positive feeling about themselves. For instance, 51.5% strongly agreed that *On the whole, I think I am satisfied with myself*, 48% strongly agreed that *I feel that I have a number of good qualities*, 49.2% strongly agreed that *I am able to do things as well as most other people*, 39% strongly agreed that *I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others*, and finally 64.2% strongly agreed on the statement *I take a positive view of myself*.

However, others had a low self-esteem by strongly agreeing with the following statements; *At times I think I'm not good at all* (30.3%), *I feel they do not have much to be proud of* (30.7%), *at times I feel useless* (40.5%), *I wish I could have more respect for myself* (43.9%), and *all in all I'm inclined as a failure* (53.3%). In view of this finding, those with a high self-esteem are generally more than those with low self-esteem.

**Table 4.12: Self-esteem scale of respondents (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978)**

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	On the whole. I think I am satisfied with myself	10	2.0	14	2.8	59	11.8	160	31.9	258		
At times I think I am not good at all	36	7.2	86	17.2	125	25.1	101	20.2	151	30.3	499	100.0
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	11	2.2	13	2.6	56	11.2	180	36.0	240	48.0	500	100.0
I am able to do things as well as most other people	9	1.8	10	2.0	50	10.0	186	37.1	247	49.2	502	100.0
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	64	12.7	92	18.3	89	17.7	103	20.5	154	30.7	502	100.0
I certainly feel useless at times	32	6.4	68	13.6	94	18.8	104	20.8	203	40.5	501	100.0
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others	28	5.6	42	8.4	67	13.4	168	33.6	195	39.0	500	100.0
I wish I could have more respect for myself	219	43.9	129	25.9	85	17.0	31	6.2	35	7.0	499	100.0
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	20	4.0	29	5.8	74	14.8	110	22.0	266	53.3	499	100.0
I take a positive view of myself	12	2.4	10	2.0	39	7.8	119	23.7	323	64.2	503	100.0

From the FGDs, the researcher found out that respondents had different sources of self-esteem that influence them differently. The following are some of the responses from the discussion conducted in different groups. Respondent 2 (in FGD 2) said, “I feel my self-esteem is boosted when I have good interaction with colleagues who respect and accept me the way I am.” Respondent 1 (in FGD 1) said, “My parents shaped the way I perceive myself up to now because they brought me up with lots of discipline and they made me feel worthy of myself. I feel proud of myself. Also, the kind of words used by my parents when communicating to me shaped my self-esteem.” Respondent 1 (in FGD 2) said, “My step-mother negatively rebuked me since childhood using words like “*bure kabisa, haufai wewe na huna chochote*”(meaning you are useless and good for nothing) and other unprintable insults before other people especially when my academic performance dwindled, which adversely affected my self-esteem to date. However, Im starting to recover my self-esteem.”

Respondent 5 in FGD 4 explained, “Rejection by a *dem* (young and beautiful lady) that I really admired and approached for a romantic relationship made me undermine myself and I felt *kama sifai hata kidogo* (Im not worthy at all).” Respondent 6 (in FGD 3) observed, “As for me, my physical appearance is very crucial for me to have a high self-esteem. I must ensure I maintain my *figure eight* (a terminology that is associated with beauty where a woman has a shape that is moderately large on the upper part, slim in the middle part and moderately large in the lower part that is common among urban ladies).” (to the astonishment and laughter of colleagues in the FGD). *Figure eight* was defined as the standard of beauty among a majority of female respondents.

From these discussions, it appears that inspite of different sources of self-esteem, the role of parents cannot be underestimated since they shaped the respondents’ childhood and the way they perceive themselves. This is mainly because they are the first source of interaction and therefore have the highest probability of influence. This finding concurs with reviewed literature with scholars such as Kashubeck and Christensen (1995) and Emler (2001) which emphasized the role of parents in the

development of self-esteem through acceptance, affection and the degree to which clear standards of behavior were promoted and expected. The other influences such as rejection/acceptance, appearance, and interpersonal relationships are secondary and influence a person along his or her life either by affirming the high self-esteem or low self-esteem that have been instilled by parents.

However, as earlier observed by Emler (2001) and one can change from low to high self-esteem especially when it has been influenced by parents although it is a gradual process. The FGDs also revealed that acceptance or rejection by colleagues determines the self-esteem of individuals. Rejection is a detrimental factor that can lower the self-esteem of a person as shown in the FGD where a respondent who was interested in a romantic relationship was rejected by a beautiful lady. This experience concurs with Emler (2001). Some respondents also noted that interpersonal relationships with others also influence their self-esteem on a regular basis. This occurs when colleagues either reject or accept them or their views on various issues and how these colleagues respond to them in various communication settings. However, the influence of interpersonal relationships on self-esteem varies depending on the reception or reaction from colleagues. For instance, when they get approval or acceptance from colleagues, their self-esteem is boosted but adversely affected when they are rejected or humiliated before others. This implies that the impact of interpersonal relationships on self-esteem varies depending on the kind of interpersonal relationship existing at a certain point in time. These observations also concur with Emler (2001) who acknowledges the significance of interpersonal relationships on self-esteem.

Although Emler (2001) in chapter two argues that concern about physical appearance is mainly by adolescents, the finding from FGDs indicate that this concern is also found in higher learning institutions where the concern among mature ladies in the youthful stage who are concerned about the 'ideal' body shape in order to be the object of envy and desire. This could be attributed to the increased use of social media and internet that portrays certain celebrities with the "desired" physical appearance. The concern about physical appearance for both genders confirms what

various scholars such as Mendelson, Mendelson and White (2001), Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper and Bouvrette (2003) and American Association of University Women (1992) earlier posited in chapter two.

Table 4.13 shows that 39.2% of respondents strongly agreed that social media makes them more confident through knowing how to interact with colleagues online in the digital world. This is because they do not feel outdated and can use various types of social networks some of which are recent such as Hangouts, Flickr, Skype and Viber among others. However, there were varying answers concerning whether social media makes them feel they have not achieved as much as their colleagues with 26% having a neutral answer. About 47.3% strongly acknowledged that social media links them to colleagues thus making them feel appreciated.

**Table 4.13:. Establishing the mediating effect of self-esteem between social media and communication skills**

											Total	
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Count	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
Social media has helped me to be more confident	15	3.0	20	4.0	79	15.7	191	38.0	197	39.2	502	100.0
Social media makes me to feel that I have not achieved as much as my colleagues	64	12.7	124	24.7	131	26.0	120	23.9	64	12.7	503	100.0
Social media has connected me to colleagues and this makes me feel appreciated	4	.8	11	2.2	57	11.3	193	38.4	238	47.3	503	100.0
My self confidence enables me to communicate new ideas without fear of failure	4	.8	3	.6	21	4.2	165	32.9	309	61.6	502	100.0
I often have a feeling of inadequacy which negatively affects the way I communicate	59	11.8	114	22.7	174	34.7	107	21.3	48	9.6	502	100.0
My self confidence enables me to effectively engage in interpersonal relationships	13	2.6	20	4.0	69	13.7	208	41.4	192	38.2	502	100.0
Social media has been beneficial in improving my communication skills	8	1.6	12	2.4	49	9.8	171	34.1	262	52.2	502	100.0
Social media has negatively influenced the way I communicate to my colleagues	101	20.1	156	31.1	110	21.9	84	16.7	51	10.2	502	100.0
I often use social media to replace face to face communication to colleagues	27	5.4	58	11.6	103	20.6	175	35.0	137	27.4	500	100.0

The researcher was interested in finding out whether social media influences the self-esteem of respondents. Respondent 6 (in FGD 6) observed, “I feel good about myself when I get many “likes” or comments that support my views or appreciate pictures that I post online. But when I get very few or no “likes”, I feel that I’m ignored and a feeling of rejection occurs in me.” On the other hand, respondent 4 (in FGD 5), noted, “Social media opens me up to the world without which I feel alienated and life would be boring and almost without meaning. I can’t imagine life without social media.”

This finding, to some extent, reveals the influence of social media among university students as described and concurs with Liu and Yu (2013), Kim & Lee (2011) and Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007) who observed the influence of social media on self-esteem. However, during the FGD sessions, some of the respondents opened a debate by disagreeing with this observation noting that their self-esteem is not mainly influenced or determined by use of social media. This is because they have other sources of building their self-esteem such as family, especially through parents, the kind of interpersonal relationships they have with colleagues who either reject or accept them among other key determinants of self-esteem. For example, respondent 1 in FGD 1 argued against the influence of social media on self-esteem saying, “My self-esteem was shaped a long time by my parents and close colleagues even before I started using social media. I cannot allow technology to determine the way I perceive myself.” This is confirmed by Emler (2001) who earlier mentioned and emphasized the existence of other sources of self-esteem.

The finding on the relationship between social media use and self-esteem differs from the findings of Mehdizadeh (2010), Carpenter (2012) and University of Georgia (2012) who argued that social media influences self-esteem. This contradiction appears since a majority of respondents (in both quantitative and qualitative stages) observed that they have other avenues to shape their self-esteem notably family, religion and peer social groups among other sources and not necessarily social media. This scenario is also in line with Mead’s Symbolic Interactionism Model developed in 1934 which attests that people internalize ideas and attitudes expressed

by significant others in their lives and as a result, they respond to themselves depending on the way their social group treats them, hence showing the power of interpersonal relations with social groups (Heatherton & Wyland, 1991). The most possible explanation of this disparity is through Hofstede's Individualism-Collectivism dimension and Hall's distinction between Low-context and High-context cultures (Hofstede, 2001). Africans and Asians belong to the collectivism or high context culture which emphasizes increased socialization among its members and communication is explicit, direct and unambiguous unlike the individualistic culture of the West that does not encourage this set up (Hofstede, 2001).

In contrast, most information is part of the context or is internalized in the person and less is explicit as part of the message (Hofstede, 2001). In view of this observation, it can be argued that social media sites are powerful tools in influencing self-esteem among North American and Western European users since they belong to the individualistic- low context culture that lacks high socialization between people. As a result, social media appears to be a replacement tool for socialization hence its strong influence on the self-esteem of users. In contrast, Africans and Asians belong to the collectivist-high context orientation where members have a tendency to socialize more and although the use of social media appears to be increasing rapidly, the effects on self-esteem appear to be insignificant.

This view is supported by Wangwe (2005) who observes that Tanzania has achieved a fairly high level of social stability and unity compared to many African countries. This is due to the efforts of the late father of the nation President Julius Kambarage Nyerere who created a sense of national identity and cohesion among Tanzanians in public policies (Wangwe, 2005). This observation could possibly explain the weak influence of social media on self-esteem of Tanzanian undergraduate students at SAUT in spite of increased use of social media sites. In essence, this implies that students, in spite of existing in a highly globalized world characterized by Western influence, have been inculcated by a level of patriotism and unity. In view of this, all studies highlighted concerning the influence of social media on self-esteem was

conducted in Western contexts which is different from the context of this study, in Tanzania.

Concerning the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills, about 61.6% of respondents have self-confidence that enables them to communicate new ideas without fear of failure while 52.2% of them strongly agree that social media are beneficial in improving their communication skills. In the FGDs conducted, the researcher was interested in finding out two aspects from respondents, first, whether there is a relationship between the way they perceive themselves and the way they communicate and secondly, which element of communication skills (whether verbal, reading, written or non-verbal) was affected more negatively or positively as a result of having either a low or high self-esteem and how.

Respondent1 (in FGD 3) observed, “Whenever I have a high self-esteem or self-confidence, I have no problem communicating verbally. *Najiamini sana kwa kuongea nikilinganisha na njia nyingine ya kuwasiliana* (I have more confidence when speaking than in any other form of communication). I have self-confidence to interact freely without fear of rejection from colleagues, especially when making my contribution to a debate and is acceptable or supported by all.

Respondent 5 (in FGD 4) said, “I feel uncomfortable with a course called “Public speaking” that requires each student to make class presentations as part of the assessment. I always dread this unit in our BAMC and BAPRM programmes. I wish we could focus on written form to compensate the verbal presentation. I’m more comfortable in written than verbal communication. I cannot effectively answer questions after presentation due to fear (stage fright) in spite of understanding the content that I’m presenting. Respondent 6 (in FGD 2) added, “Whenever I do a class presentation and my colleagues and lecturer applaud or appreciate me, I feel my self-esteem and confidence is high. I feel worthy as a human being.

This finding implies a strong relationship between self-esteem and the ability to communicate either effectively or ineffectively, including the way one interacts with others in an interpersonal relationship environment. This finding also reveals an

inter-relationship between the variables, namely self-esteem influencing communication skills and vice versa and concurs with Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly and Falcione (1977), Bean (1992), Al-Hebaish (2012), Park and Adam (2005) and Eom and Choi (2010). These scholars emphasized the inter-influence between self-esteem and communication skills. The finding also reveals that some elements of communication skills (for instance verbal and/or written) are influenced more than others. However, throughout the FGDs, one of the elements of communication skills, namely non-verbal communication, did not feature among respondents compared to written and verbal skills.

In essence, from both quantitative and qualitative findings in this chapter, self-esteem appears to have a strong influence on communication skills of respondents. Also, there is a strong relationship between social media and communication skills. However, social media has some relationship with self-esteem although not significant (see figure 2.3 for conceptual framework). Therefore, it can be noted that self-esteem does not play a strong mediation role between social media and communication skills. This is seen in the response in the FGD when there was debate and disagreement on the influence of social media on self-esteem and in table 4.3 where less than a half of respondents (39.2% and 46%) acknowledged that social media influenced their self-esteem.

#### **4.5 Objective four: Moderating role of demographic characteristics between self-esteem and communication skills**

Table 4.14 shows that the social class of respondents influences their self-esteem and communication skills of 26.5% of respondents which is closely followed by those who strongly disagree (24.6%). About 24% of respondents had a neutral view on whether gender affiliation influences their self-esteem and communication skills closely followed by those who strongly disagreed (22.4%) on the same. Concerning age, about 35.5% concurred that their age influences how they feel about themselves and the way they communicate. This was followed by 27.9% that agreed on the same. At the same time, 9% of respondents strongly disagreed that age influences their self-esteem and communication skills.

**Table 4.14. The moderating effect of demographic characteristics on self-esteem and communication skills**

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
My social class influences my self-esteem and communication skills	123	24.6	88	17.6	69	13.8	88	17.6	133	26.5	501	100.0
My gender affiliation influences my self-esteem and communication skills	112	22.4	104	20.8	120	24.0	99	19.8	66	13.2	501	100.0
My age influences my self-esteem and communication skills	45	9.0	55	11.0	84	16.7	140	27.9	178	35.5	502	100.0

The researcher was interested in finding out whether social class influences their self-esteem and communication skills. Respondent 4 (in FGD 4) noted, “My social class does not determine how I feel about myself neither does it have an effect on my communication skills. I relate with all people from all social classes freely without any inhibition.” However, respondent 1 (in FGD 1) refutes and said, “At times I feel uncomfortable when in the company of my colleagues from high social classes

because some of them have a bad attitude towards those from lower social classes. They make some of us feel like we are not worthy of being human beings especially when they discuss some topics that are only relevant to them.” Concerning gender affiliation, a female respondent (respondent 3 in FGD 3) noted, “At times, I have a low self-esteem because in my Maasai culture, women are not regarded as key decision makers. I feel this way whenever I return to my village during the long vacations between semesters. In spite of being in university, women are still considered as low class citizens.” Also, throughout the FGDs, respondents overwhelmingly concurred that their age does not influence their self-esteem or communication skills.

Generally, the FGDs revealed that demographic characteristics of respondents such as social class, gender and age influenced the self-esteem of respondents in some cases but not communication skills. This finding partially concurs but also contradicts the ideas of Emler (2001), Porter & Washington (1993), Johnson (1996), Hyde (2005), Merchant (2012), Huang (2010) who argued that demographic characteristics such as social class, gender and age influence communication skills and self-esteem of respective individuals.

The findings of the study concur with Wangwe (2005) who observed that nationalism in Tanzania supersedes social class and ethnicity which are not considered as significant factors that define a Tanzanian. Wangwe (2005) also observes that due to globalization, empowerment and enlightenment of the digital society and generation that are in higher leaning institutions gender and age are not significant factors that determine a person’s worth. The findings contradict Emler (2001) who observed that social class has an effect on self-esteem of individuals. The explanation for this difference is that as students from different social classes intermingle in various environments in their high context environments, they do not consider their social class as a barrier to their interactions. This is because they mainly interact with their colleagues or peers from the same social class and thus have something in common and as a result, their self-esteem or communication abilities are not significantly influenced.

The other possible explanation for this difference is that certain students appear to have appreciated their abilities to communicate now that they are at university level regardless of their social class. The university environment seems to have “equalized” them as undergraduate potential degree holders who all strive to excel academically. The other possible explanation is described by Wangwe (2005) on Tanzania’s strong social stability characterized by decades of *Ujamaa* where all citizens are considered equal. Although the capitalist system exists and is growing strong, the strong inculcation of patriotism by the late founding President Julius Nyerere exists among most citizens including the youth in higher learning institutions (Wangwe, 2005). As such, the social class of individuals cannot be a major factor in determining the way people communicate or how

As earlier observed in chapter two, *Ujamaa* system and nationalism propagated by the first president Julius Nyerere continues to be practiced such that social class is not considered as a determining factor in an individual’s success or recognition in Tanzanian society (Wangwe, 2005). Gender and age are also not significant factors in determining one’s worth partly due to the ongoing ideology of “equality” in the current generation where there are activities on affirmative action by various agencies for the female (Wangwe, 2005). The findings reveal that demographic characteristics do not influence self-esteem nor do they influence communication skills, which is the dependent variable. Therefore, demographic characteristics do not play a moderating role.

#### **4.6 Correlations**

As reflected in table 4.15, correlations were done between the following variables namely between use of social media and self-esteem, self-esteem and communication skills, whether demographic characteristics moderate the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills and finally between social media and communication skills and the results were as follows;

First, there is a significant relationship between extent of use of social media and communication skills of users ( $r = -0.92$ ,  $p = 0.038$ ). This implies that as use of social

media index increases (denoted by the negative or – sign that is  $r = -0.92$ ) the communication skills index of users decreases. For example, more than half (58.4%) of the respondents preferred to use short words, popularly known as *slang* (mixture of Kiswahili, English and other languages) to communicate to their colleagues on social media in order to save time. This finding shows the negative influence of social media on language and communication skills of users. The correlation finding concurs with Huang (2010), Nie and Hillygus (2002) and Drusell (2012) who argue that social media has a strong influence or relationship on communication skills of individuals.

Secondly, social media has no significant role or influence on the self-esteem of users ( $r = -0.38$ ,  $p = 0.400$ ). This finding contradicts Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007), Sponcil and Gitimu, (2012) and Ahn (2011) who argued that there is a strong relationship between social media and self-esteem.

Third, the correlation revealed that self-esteem influences communication skills ( $r = 0.148$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This concurs with explanations by Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly and Falcione (1977) and Sternberg and Vroom (2002) who pointed out the strong relationship between self-esteem and communication skills.

Last, demographic characteristics are not significant moderators of the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills ( $r = 0.000$ ,  $p = 0.306$  for demographic characteristics and self-esteem) ( $r = 0.000$ ,  $p = 0.329$  for demographic characteristics and communication skills). This finding, though concurring with Emler (2001), contradicts Porter & Washington (1993) and Hyde (2005) who argued that demographic characteristics influence communication skills. Also, the research findings contradict the observation by Huang (2010) and Johnson (1996) that demographic characteristics and self-esteem are strongly related.

**Table 4.15: Correlations between variables**

		Social Media Index	Self-esteem	Comm Skills	Social Class
Social Media Index	Pearson Correlation	1	-.038	-.092*	-.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.400	.038	.467
	N	503	503	503	503
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	-.038	1	.148**	.306**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.400		.001	.000
	N	503	503	503	503
Comm Skills	Pearson Correlation	-.092*	.148**	1	.329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.001		.000
	N	503	503	503	503
Demographic characteristics	Pearson Correlation	-.033	.306**	.329**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.467	.000	.000	
	N	503	503	503	503

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.7 Regression

From table 4.16(a), the regression model of social media index on self-esteem was not significant ( $F(1,501) = 0.709, p = 0.400$ ). Therefore, this finding implies that social media has no significant effect on self-esteem and contradicts what various scholars such as Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007), Sponcil and Gitimu (2012) and Ahn (2011) who observed that social media influences self-esteem of online users.

**Table 4.16: Regression summary (a)**

<b>a. Model Summary</b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.038 <sup>a</sup>	.001	.000	.50560

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Index

<b>b. ANOVA<sup>b</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.181	1	.181	<b>.709</b>	.400 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	128.074	<b>501</b>	.256		
	Total	128.255	502			

To test the moderation effect, the regression models were used (see table 4.17 b). In the 1<sup>st</sup> model the predictor was entered into the model, in the second model, the suspected moderator was entered/added and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> model, the interaction term was added. The three models were significant ( $p < 5\%$  in all cases). After adding the moderator to the model containing self-esteem, the model F change was significant (F change=49.762,  $p < 0.001$ ). But on adding the interaction term, the F change was not significant (F change=.002,  $p = 0.968$ ). This implies that social class has no moderating effect on the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills and contradicts Emler (2001) who argued that demographic characteristics influence both self-esteem and communication skills.

**Table 4.17: Regression summary (b)**

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F
1	.148 <sup>a</sup>	.022	.020	.52783	.022	11.253	1	501	.001
2	.332 <sup>b</sup>	.110	.107	.50388	.089	<b>49.762</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>.000</b>
3	.332 <sup>c</sup>	.110	.105	.50438	.000	<b>.002</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>.968</b>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem

**Table 4.18: Regression summary(c)**

**ANOVA<sup>c</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3.135	1	3.135	11.253	.001 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	139.582	501	.279		
Total	142.717	502			
2 Regression	4.213	2	2.106	7.604	.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	138.505	500	.277		
Total	142.717	502			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self Esteem

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self Esteem, Social Media Index

c. Dependent Variable: Comm Skills

In table 4.19, the regression model of self-esteem index on communication skill index was significant ( $F(1,501)=11.253$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) with R squared of 0.022 implying that self-esteem explains 2.2% of the variation in communication skills. The coefficient of the regression model was significantly different from zero ( $B1=0.156$ ,  $t=3.355$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Therefore self-esteem has significant effect on communication skills. The researcher's findings concur with Mc Croskey, Richmond, Daly and Falcione (1977) and Sternberg and Vroom (2002) on the strong relationship between self-esteem and communication skills.

**Table 4.19: Coefficient table**

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics	
		Std.					
Model		B	Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance VIF
1	(Constant)	2.307	.024		98.030	.000	
	Self Est	<b>.156</b>	<b>.047</b>	.148	<b>3.355</b>	<b>.001</b>	1.000 1.000
2	(Constant)	2.307	.022		102.691	.000	
	Self Est	.056	.047	.053	1.189	.235	.907 1.103
	Interaction	.196	.028	.313	7.054	.000	.907 1.103
3	(Constant)	2.307	.023		98.209	.000	
	Self Est	.056	.047	.053	1.187	.236	.906 1.104
	Demographics	.196	.028	.312	6.971	.000	.889 1.125
	Interaction	.002	.052	.002	.040	.968	.976 1.025

a. Dependent Variable: Comm Skills

#### **4.8 Interpretation**

First, quantitative results in this study reveal that social media does not have a significant influence or effect on the self-esteem of users. However, in the FGDs (qualitative study), a few respondents noted that SNS has some influence on their self-esteem although their numbers are insignificant compared to those in the quantitative phase. This implies that generally, according to researcher's findings, self-esteem is not a significant mediator between social media and communication skills. Second, social media influences the communication skills of users as was evident in the findings of both quantitative and qualitative sections. Third, self-esteem influences the communication skills of social media users. However, it should be noted that the self-esteem of social media users is shaped by other factors such as family and social groups among others and not solely social media. Undergraduate students preferred searching for educative information that may or may not be academic in orientation. WhatsApp and Facebook were the most dominant in terms of use compared to other social media sites. Last, the demographic characteristics of respondents do not have a significant relationship with either self-esteem or communication skills. This implies that it is not a significant moderator between self-esteem and communication skills.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a discussion, conclusions and recommendations based on the objectives of the study.

#### 5.2 Summary of findings

Majority of respondents use social media mainly for educative information seeking purposes for interesting topics which may or may not be in the academic arena. This was followed by need for social interaction with online colleagues. The need for entertainment was the third most ranked response. Also, a majority of respondents sent and received educational information on social media. The effect on communication skills of users cannot be ignored since the urge for information supersedes the desire to read and improve their grammatical expression skills in both written and spoken forms as was evident from the FGDs. In terms of use, WhatsApp had a higher preference among respondents due to its fast features when used.

This was closely followed by Facebook although Facebook is gradually facing competition from other sites such as Instagram and LinkedIn. Protection of privacy was ranked as the most common concern among social media users that prevented them from providing complete and accurate information about them online. Social media does not have a significant influence on self-esteem, however, self-esteem influences the communication skills of social media users and while social media use influences communication skills of undergraduate students. Demographic characteristics of undergraduate students do not have a significant influence on self-esteem of social media users neither does they have a significant influence on the way they communicate. Undergraduate students were more concerned with using social media sites to access various information and satisfy their needs at the expense of having effective communication skills in written and spoken language.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Majority of respondents use social media for information seeking purposes on both academic and non-academic aspects followed by the need for social interaction and entertainment information respectively. The urge or desire to get information was considered as more important than concern about what was being posted to them or what they posted to others online. As a result, the frequent online interaction adversely influenced their written and verbal communication skills than any other skill(s) in the same sphere. WhatsApp had a higher preference of use than other social networking sites followed closely by Facebook. Facebook was the second most used in terms of frequency but with less users on a daily basis compared to Instagram. For instance, Instagram appeared to have less number of users but a higher use on a daily basis than Facebook. The findings reveal that a majority of social media users are youth, aged between 19 to 35 years who are in university and use social media sites compared to higher age- groups.

The study found out that protection of privacy was the most common concern among social media users as some of them experienced cyber-bullying and other forms of online attacks that affected their self-esteem. The need to be socially connected to online colleagues was the highest ranked factor that determined users' desire to exhibit their profiles with WhatsApp as the most frequently used site in terms of users updating their status. In terms of level of use, WhatsApp and Facebook were ranked high while Instagram was considered moderate in terms of use. However, other sites were considered as low in terms of use. Generally, in terms of findings, social media influences communication skills of users especially in written and oral forms. Social media does not have a significant influence on self-esteem. However, other factors such as parental influence, interpersonal relationships and success or failure determine self-esteem. Self-esteem influences the communication skills of social media users. Social media influences communication skills of users who prefer to use short words to communicate online with colleagues and as a result their language and interpersonal skills are adversely affected. Also, self-esteem does not play a mediation role between social media and communication skills. Findings

reveal that social media and self-esteem directly influences self-esteem separately. Lastly, demographic characteristics do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between self-esteem and communication skills. This means it does not have a significant influence on self-esteem or communication skills of social media users.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations were made:

First, there is need for universities' administration to engage various stakeholders including the Tanzanian Government through Ministries of Higher Education and Information respectively and other ICT experts to continually and periodically organize various symposia in universities. The theme of such symposia should be centred on the significance of accessing beneficial information and how to manage or balance the time spent between use of social media and academic activities. From scholars' observations and study findings, it was revealed that students spend lots of time on certain social media sites especially WhatsApp and Facebook, which can negatively affect their academic performance.

Secondly, universities and other higher learning institutions in partnership with linguists, sociologists and media houses should periodically focus on sensitizing students and the wider society through various symposia on the appropriate use of social media in order to minimize its negative effects on their communication and interpersonal skills.

The Tanzanian Government, through the Ministry of Information and other relevant bodies such as parliament, and mobile phone providers must come up with practical measures that can address the problem of cyber-bullying and other inappropriate ways of using social media sites. Although Tanzania enacted laws to address violations on use of social media in 2015, implementation has been a major challenge (Ndumbaro, 2016). According to Ndumbaro (2016) and Baerendtsen (2015), the justice system has not been able to provide direction or judgment in cases where an internet service provider is a mere transmitter of information considered

unlawful. This creates confusion and is likely to impede progress that could have been made against those who violate cyber laws. The researcher suggests that stern action needs to be taken on those tasked with implementation of these laws but fail to do so. This may include determining the real cause of failure to implement action against culprits before acting on policy implementers who fail to do so. In essence, a multi-sectoral approach consisting of scholars, ICT experts, legal experts and anti-corruption bodies among others to address this concern needs to be established so that students are aware of the legal implications to avoid repercussions. This approach will go a long way in ensuring that all are committed to address appropriate use of social media sites.

Fourth, although the study did not find a strong relationship between social media use and self-esteem, there is a high possibility that if university students are not guided on responsible use of social media, the effect on their self-esteem will be detrimental. This is partly due to the lengthy periods they spend on various sites. The researcher therefore suggests that various stakeholders together with university managements organize symposiums that will include counselors who will offer advice on how to ensure that self-esteem and psychological well-being will not be adversely affected by social media.

Fifth, the Tanzanian Government, through the Ministries of Education and Information respectively should establish ways of motivating local academicians in higher learning institutions to publish articles, essays or books concerning use of social media, trends associated with it and its influence on students in higher learning institutions. As earlier observed, Tanzania is ahead of Burundi but lags behind her East African counterparts by failing to invest more in ICT and other related spheres (Ng'ang'a, 2012). According to Kashorda and Waema (2011), Mahai (2012) and Shembilu (2013), there is scanty academic information concerning social media issues in Tanzania. One of the ways of motivating scholars is by providing more grants that are easily accessible to fund researches conducted by local scholars and waiving taxes on all academic materials published locally. By doing so, more publishers will participate thus creating local solutions and ideas concerning social

media issues and challenges of using them since they understand the context unlike their foreign counterparts.

### **5.5 Recommendations for further research**

The following are recommendations that scholars can venture into for further research.

First, there is need for further research on whether there is a relationship between use of social media and one's gender. Secondly, further research should be conducted on whether there is a difference on the impact of the use of social media on communication skills and interpersonal relations between people from different cultural contexts, considering that cultural orientations determine the way people communicate and relate.

Third, further studies should be conducted to examine whether the stability of self-esteem stability is produced by cognitive biases (that is, selective attention to positive versus negative information about self). Fourth, comparative studies on the relationship between social media use and communication studies should be conducted in other countries to determine if the study will yield similar results.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

My name is Denis Ikachoi, a lecturer in Communication and Public Relations at Maasai Mara University (Narok, Kenya) and currently pursuing a Phd in Mass Communication at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology based in Nairobi, Kenya. I am conducting a study entitled Relationship between social media use and communication skills of undergraduate students in Tanzania.

The purpose of this study is to investigate to the relationship between social media and communication skills among undergraduate students.

In this questionnaire you will be requested to respond by selecting the appropriate answer according to your opinion. Also, I hereby declare that the data gathered will solely be used for the purpose of this dissertation. The data obtained will be used confidentially and anonymously and no details will be collected that could possibly reveal your identity and personal information.

I would like to welcome and thank you in advance for taking your time to respond to this questionnaire.

## SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(Please select by putting a mark (x) on the relevant space provided)

1. Gender:      \_\_\_\_\_ Male              \_\_\_\_\_ Female
  
2. Age:        \_\_\_\_\_ years
  
3. Undergraduate programme undertaken: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Year of study:    \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup>    \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup>    \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup>    \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup>

## SECTION B: TYPE OF INFORMATION ACCESSED

5. Please identify by ranking in order of preference by putting a ranking number (between **1** and **6**) on the top 6 kinds of information that you send on social media site(s). (Where **1** is the most accessed type of information and **6** the least accessed type of information). (Please note that there should be **no tie** between the reasons. All should be ranked separately in order of preference).

TYPE OF INFORMATION	RANK
1. Social	
2. Educative	
3. Entertainment	
4. Romantic	
5. Political	
6. Religious	
7. Other (Specify)	

**SECTION C: LEVEL OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

6. Select by putting a mark (X) on the number of days that you visit the respective social media site(s) in one week.

<b>SOCIAL MEDIA SITE</b>	<b>7 DAY S</b>	<b>6 DAY S</b>	<b>5 DAY S</b>	<b>4 DAY S</b>	<b>3 DAY S</b>	<b>2 DAY S</b>	<b>1 DAY</b>
1. Facebook							
2. WhatsApp							
3. Twitter							
4. MySpace							
5. LinkedIn							
6. Instagram							
7. Flickr							
8. Google+							
9. Blogs							
10. Skype							
11. Hangouts							
12. Viber							

7. Fill in the spaces provided by indicating the amount of time (whether in **hours** or **minutes**) that you spend on the respective social media site(s) in a week.

<b>SOCIAL MEDIA SITE</b>	<b>HOURS</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
1. Facebook		
2. WhatsApp		
3. Twitter		
4. MySpace		
5. LinkedIn		
6. Instagram		
7. Flickr		
8. Google+		
9. Blogs		
10. Skype		
11. Hangouts		
12. Viber		
13. Other (Specify)		

8. Identify the best eight reasons for using social media site(s) and rank them by putting a number in order of preference (**where 1 is the Best Reason ---- 8Worst reason.** (Please note that there should be **no tie** between the reasons. All should be ranked separately in order of preference).

REASON	RANK
1. Social interaction	
2. Information seeking	
3. Entertainment	
4. Relaxation from stress	
5. Passing time	
6. Express opinion(s)	
7. Convenience of use	
8. Knowing about others	
9. Other (Specify)	

9. Please put a mark (X) below the respective element of your profile that exists in the respective social media site. (**Note:** Please place a mark (X) on the respective space below the respective element of your profile **ONLY** if it is your true representation online)

SOCIAL MEDIA SITE	PHOTO	NAME	AGE	INTERESTS	CONTACTS	ASSOCIATION	LOCATION
1.Facebo ok							
2.WhatsA pp							
3.Twitter							
4.MySpac e							
5.Linkedi n							
6.Instagra m							
7.Flickr							
8.Google +							
9.Blogs							
10.Skype							
11.Hango uts							
12.Viber							
13.Other (Specify)							

**10.** Please identify by ranking in order of preference by putting a ranking number (between **1** and **5** where **1** is the best reason and **5** is the worst reason) on the reason why you don't have all the details of your profile on a particular social media site(s). (Please note that there should be **no tie** between the reasons. All should be ranked separately in order of preference).

<b>REASON</b>	<b>RANK</b>
1. Protect privacy	
2. Avoid bad relationships	
3. Avoid cyber bullying (Online attacks)	
3. I fear my details will be hacked by cybercriminals	
4. I prefer to view other people's profiles without participating	
5. I have not time to update my status regularly	
6. Other (Specify)	

**11.** Please identify by ranking in order of preference by putting a ranking number (between **1** and **4**) on the reason why you have a profile on social media site(s). (Where **1** is the Best Reason and **4** the Worst Reason). (Please note that there should be **no tie** between the reasons. All should be ranked separately in order of preference).

<b>REASON</b>	<b>RANK</b>
1. To be connected to colleagues	
2. To be appreciated by others	
3. To be easily recognized	
4. To appear relevant in the digital age	
5. Other (Specify)	

**12.** Please fill in the spaces in the table provided indicating the last time you updated your status in social media site(s).

<b>SOCIAL MEDIA SITE</b>	<b>MONTHS</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
1. Facebook			
2. WhatsApp			
3. Twitter			
4. MySpace			

5.LinkedIn			
6.Instagram			
7.Flickr			
8.Google+			
9.Blogs			
10.Skype			
11.Hangouts			
12.Viber			

**SECTION D: MEDIATING EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM BETWEEN  
SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**13. SELF-ESTEEM**

Below is the Rosenberg self-esteem scale used to measure your self-esteem. Please circle the appropriate number for each statement depending on whether you **Strongly Agree (SA)**, **Agree (A)**, **Neutral (N)**, **Disagree (D)** or **Strongly Disagree (SD)**

STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. On the whole, I think I am satisfied with myself					
2. At times I think I am not good at all					
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities					
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people					
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of					
6. I certainly					

feel useless at times					
7.I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal level with others					
8.I wish I could have more respect for myself					
9.All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure					
10.I take a positive view of myself					

## 14. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

**Instructions:** The following index is intended to measure the effectiveness of your communication skills. Please put a mark besides each statement depending on whether you **Strongly Agree (SA)**, **Agree (A)**, **Neutral (N)**, **Disagree (D)** or **Strongly Disagree (SA)**.

STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. When texting my colleagues on social media site(s), I use short words to save time ( <b>WRITING SKILLS</b> )					
2. I prefer to use face to face communication than public speaking ( <b>VERBAL SKILLS</b> )					
3. At times, I speak slang (mixture of English, Kiswahili and other languages) when with my colleagues ( <b>VERBAL SKILLS</b> )					
4. The physical appearance of a communicator determines the way I understand his/her message ( <b>NON-VERBAL SKILLS</b> )					
5. I often have to speak loudly for my message to be understood ( <b>VERBAL SKILLS</b> )					
6. I often have to repeat					

my message to be clearly understood( <b>VERBAL SKILLS</b> )					
7.I'm very fast to respond to a message from a colleague( <b>LISTENING SKILLS</b> )					
8.During a group discussion, I always have confidence that my opinion is the best ( <b>LISTENING SKILLS</b> )					
9.I prefer to use Kiswahili during class sessions( <b>VERBAL SKILLS</b> )					
10.I often have to repeat reading several times in order to fully understand a text( <b>READING SKILLS</b> )					

**Instructions:** Please put a mark (X) on whether you **Strongly Agree (SA)**, **Agree (A)**, **Neutral (N)**, **Disagree (D)** and **Strongly Disagree (SD)** concerning the following statements in the following three tables

### 15. SOCIAL MEDIA AND SELF-ESTEEM

STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.Social media has helped me to be more confident					
2.Social media makes me to feel that I have not achieved as much as my colleagues					
3.Social media makes me feel appreciated					

### 16. SELF-ESTEEM AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.My self confidence enables me to communicate new ideas without fear of failure					
2.I often have a feeling of inadequacy					

which negatively affects the way I communicate					
3. My self confidence enables me to effectively engage in interpersonal relationships					

### 17. SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Social media has been beneficial in improving my communication skills					
2. Social media has negatively influenced the way I communicate to my colleagues					
3. I often use social media to replace face to face communication to colleagues					

**SECTION E: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AS MODERATORS OF SELF-ESTEEM AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**18. Instructions:** The following index is intended to determine your social class. Please put a mark (X) on whether you **Strongly Agree (SA)**, **Agree (A)**, **Neutral (N)**, **Disagree (D)** and **Strongly Disagree (SD)**.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. At times, my social class determines my self-esteem and communication skills					
2. At times, my gender affiliation determines my self-esteem and					

communi cation skills					
3. At times, my age determine s my self- esteem and communi cation skills					

**Thank you very much for taking your time to fill this questionnaire. God  
bless you**

## **Appendix II: Focus Group Guide for focus Group Discussions**

**Note: For each group, the age, sex, academic programme taken (that is, year of study of their programme) of the participants will be written down**

### **Objective 1: Type of information accessed on social media**

- (a) What kind of information do you mainly access on social media?
- (b) Are you concerned about the quality of language or grammar used on the information you access?

### **Objective 2: Level of use of social media**

- (a) Why do you use certain social media sites than others? (*probe for reasons for certain preferences*)
- (b) What determines the length of time that you spend on a particular social media site?
- (c) What are the key reason(s) that lead you to use social media?
- (d) Why don't you have complete and accurate details of yourself on social media site(s)? (*Probe for reasons why they don't have such information online?*)
- (e) Why do you have details of your profile on social media?

- (f) Why do you post status updates on social media?
- (g) When did you last update your status on social media?
- (h) Is there a relationship between your use of social media and the way you communicate? *(Probe for ways in which it affects communication skills? Probe for the specific communication skills affected? If not then why?)*

**Objective 3: Mediating effect of self-esteem**

- (a) What is your source of self-esteem? *(Probe for different sources and let them elaborate)*
- (b) What is your definition or standard of ideal beauty?
- (c) Is there a relationship between your use of social media and the way you perceive yourself (self-esteem)? *(Probe for ways it influences use of social media and if not, why?)*
- (d) What is the relationship between the way you perceive yourself and the way you communicate?*(Probe for ways in which self-esteem influences communication skills and vice versa showing which element of communication skills whether written, oral ,non-verbal and reading skills is/are highly influenced than others. Also, include the element of whether interpersonal relationships are influenced and in what way?)*

**Objective 4: Moderating role of demographic characteristics**

- (a) Is there a relationship between your social class and the way you communicate?

- (b) Is there a relationship between your social class and the way you perceive yourself?
- (c) Is there a relationship between your gender affiliation and the way you communicate?
- (d) Is there a relationship between your gender affiliation and the way you perceive yourself?
- (e) Is there a relationship between your age and the way you communicate?
- (f) Is there a relationship between your age and the way you perceive yourself?

**Thank you very much for your time and cooperation**

### Appendix III: Research Permit

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
**REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**



MWANZA REGION:  
Address : "REGCOM"  
Telephone No: 028 – 2500690  
Fax:028-2541242/2501057  
In Reply please quote:  
Email:rasmwanza@pmoralg.go.tz  
In reply Please Quote:

REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,  
P.O.BOX 119,  
**MWANZA.**

Ref. No. **FA. 222/264/01/52**

**8<sup>th</sup> June, 2015**

Jomo Kenyata University of Agriculture & Technology,  
P. O. Box 62000 – 00200 City Square,  
**NAIROBI - KENYA**

**RE: RESEARCH PERMIT TO MR DENIS C. IKACHOI**

Refer to the above heading and your letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 with Ref. No.JKU/HD.421 – C002 – 3869/12.

Please be informed that your student Mr. Denis C. Ikachoi has been granted permit to conduct his research proposal is entitled "**Self Esteem as a Mediator Between Social Media and Communication Skill.**"

A case of Undergraduate students at St. Augustine University of Tanzania Mwanza Campus.

Fundisha, A. H.

For: REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY  
**MWANZA**

Copy: Deputy Vice Chancellor, ✓  
Academic Affairs,  
SAUT,  
P.O. Box 307,  
**MWANZA**

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY  
M WAN - A

" Denis C. Ikachoi,  
**Researcher**